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Zion Assembly Church of God



The Station Approach to Children's Ministry

Maintaining a child's undivided attention is an age-old challenge for every teacher. In order to assure learning, the teacher must keep the student's mind focused and his body active throughout the entire class session. Boredom is detrimental when ministering to children. When a young child is required to sit and listen for a lengthy amount of time, he will often become sleepy, restless, or even disruptive. Inactive, disinterested students will dread attending class and will likely hinder the learning of other students. While young children do need to learn respect for God's house, they also have an innate desire to touch, smell, see, hear, and taste everything around them. This inborn need is the child's way of understanding new surroundings and ideas. A teaching chart which I read years ago expressed it this way:

"I listen with my ears
But surely it is true,
That eyes, and mouth,
Hands and feet
Can help me listen too!" (Author Unknown)

A good teacher not only focuses on what she has to say, but she also provides activities to engage the whole child in learning. These opportunities will allow the student to explore and apply new information. A teaching method which gives students an opportunity to experiment is called the "Station Approach." The Station Approach is a means for organizing hands-on activities that appeal to a child's five senses by moving through different learning areas throughout the room. Whether you are ministering to children for a one-hour class session or an all day event, you can keep them focused and learning by presenting the Bible story with many different techniques.

Think of your classroom or learning area in four equal segments. One section of the room will be designated to sit with the students and read the Bible story together.

The next segment will be an area for singing songs which relate to the Bible story. A piano, a variety of musical instruments, or a CD player would be helpful in this area. Another portion of the room can be dedicated to arts and crafts. This should be a place where children can gather around a table to construct an object to remind them of the central point of the lesson. The last area in the room can be a space where children wear biblically thematic costumes and act out the roles of the characters in the story. If your learning environment is large, you may add other areas such as a snack station for sharing a small food item together.

Once the room is sectioned off and re-arranged, consider how to best utilize your time and teachers. If your class session lasts for one hour and your group of children is small, one or two teachers can rotate to teach each of the stations in fifteen-minute time slots. For those blessed with a large group of children, one teacher should remain at each of the stations. The children should be divided into small groups and then rotated at fifteen minute intervals to allow each group to visit every station during the class hour.

The Station Approach does require organization and planning on the teachers' part but offers great rewards to the teachers and students. This teaching method creates opportunities for teachers to interact with their students while also allowing the children to learn from one another. As students remain alert and active, teachers will be amazed at the new information they will glean and the excitement which the children bring to class each session.

Chalk Talk:

Let's talk. I want to hear from you. If you implement the Station Approach into your ministry in any way, please let me know how it works. E-mail me at childrensministries@zionassemblychurchofgod.com
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