

the Chalkboard

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“Welcome to God’s House”

When I was growing up, my parents drove a church bus. Our entire family was up early on Sunday mornings and out on the bus route an hour or more before Sunday School began. After the worship services ended, we had the responsibility of returning all of the children to their homes. Although it was not an easy ministry opportunity, my parents made it fun. They created excitement about going to church. On occasion, they organized a tug-of-war competition, a high attendance challenge, a picnic, or a party. Every week, my parents gave bubble gum or candy to each child who rode their bus. You may call this a gimmick. But I was there, and it was fun. Growing up with this experience has caused me to realize that we can create a positive atmosphere about attending church. An old song says, “I love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God’s wonderful people!” There should be something exciting about the people of God being together especially when it comes to children’s ministry. We need to purposefully focus on three things: faith, fun, and fellowship.

Our common faith in Jesus is the central purpose for our gatherings. If we do not keep our focus on Christ, we become nothing more than a social group or service club. Hebrews tells us to “hold fast the profession of our faith” (Hebrews 10:23). Therefore, each children’s service must be structured with solid Bible teaching and discipleship. Many children come to church with personal and family problems. As we teach the Good News of Jesus, we encourage them to trust God completely. Our immediate problems are minimized when we focus on God’s power and greatness. Teaching children to hold tightly to God’s Word in every situation will help them to endure the trials they will face throughout their lives.

I believe God’s House should be an exciting place. In the book of Psalms, David wrote, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord (Psalm 122:1). I understand that church attendance is a discipline. However, it can become a stale and formal routine. If

given a choice, many children would choose to go to an amusement park rather than attending the house of God. I am not encouraging us to compete with worldly attractions. Instead, we should earnestly pray and plan for ways to create enthusiasm in our local churches. The Bible tells me that God “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20). When we pray and ask God to work in and through us, we must anticipate great things. There are many practical ways to generate excitement in your children’s ministry. First, you might encourage a friendly competition. For example, divide your class into small groups. Give the children a challenge such as, bringing the most friends to church or learning the most Bible verses. Offer a special prize to the winners. Hebrews 10:24 says, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” Next, establish ministry teams. One group might help with classroom clean-up, another may pass out treats, and a third group could offer a puppet show, song, or game. Rotate the teams each week to create opportunities to serve in each area. Finally, organize a class party or picnic. Pick a fun theme like “Sundae Saturday” and provide ingredients to make ice cream sundaes. No one will want to miss a single service when they never know what to expect.

We often think of fellowship as simply sharing a meal together, but it is so much more. The Bible instructs us not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is” (Hebrews 10:25). As the world becomes more and more wicked, God’s House must be a place of renewal, safety, and wholesome fellowship. Children especially need this friendship in the faith. They need to be with others who are living godly in an ungodly generation. Children also need teachers who value them enough to take time to listen to their stories and learn about their interests. In order to create an exciting atmosphere for faith-filled discipleship, every child should feel welcomed and loved at God’s House.

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