

WHITE WING

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# MESSENGER

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*Let's*

CONNECT

CONGREGATIONS + FAMILIES + KIDS

# MAKING THE MINISTRY CONNECTION



EACH LOCAL CHURCH MUST CONSIDER  
ITS FUTURE AND INTENTIONALLY DEVELOP  
STRATEGIES THAT EFFECTIVELY EVANGELIZE  
AND DISCIPLE CHILDREN.

“Today I have preschool ministry duty.” “Duty” is a word that I occasionally hear from children’s ministry volunteers. While I am certain it is never meant to cause harm or degrade the ministry, it can sometimes reveal the individual’s perception of what we do.

While I am incredibly grateful for those who serve, it’s always my desire and hope that anyone serving children in the church would view their service as ministry. The foundation for this understanding is found in God’s Word, and what it says about the value of our children.

## SO WHAT MAKES A MINISTRY, MINISTRY?

The term “ministry” comes from the Greek word diakoneo, meaning “to serve” or douleuo, meaning “to serve as a slave.” In the New Testament, we see that ministry is viewed as service to God and to others in His name. Jesus is the ultimate example of ministry—He came to give, not to be served (see Matthew 20:28).

Today, it would seem that many view “true” ministry as being a vocation for those who can commit to full-time service, primarily in a preaching role to adults. However, through the lens of Scripture we see that they are not the only ones who are called to minister. Since the early New Testament church, all of God’s people have been called to minister, using diverse gifts (Romans 12:3–8, 10–13) to reach diverse needs. We are called to minister from our commitment to Christ and love for all people—including children.

## BUT WHY CHILDREN’S MINISTRY?

Children are important to God. From cover to cover, God’s Word reveals the importance of children and their great value as part of God’s Kingdom. From Scripture, we understand that children are made in the image of God and loved by their Creator. They have the capacity to understand their need for a Savior, to believe in Him, and relate with Him on an ongoing basis.

Jesus also understood the value of children to the Kingdom. That’s why one day when His disciples were impatient with a group of them, He emphatically stated, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14 NIV).

Throughout the Bible we also read stories of children who were set apart for a specific purpose in God’s plan. Think about the incredible accounts and influence of children in

the Bible like Mariam, Samuel, David, King Josiah, the boy with the loaves and fishes, and others. The faith of these little ones, and their inclusion in God’s Story, further reveals the importance of children to Our Father. Children are important to the church. Beyond their biblical, rightful place as fellow believers in the Body, children are important to the church—now and in the future.

By accepting the responsibility to evangelize and disciple children, and including children into the regular life of the church, the church is holistically fulfilling the mandate to “preach the gospel to ALL creation” (Mark 16:15 NIV).

Children bring life to the local church, perhaps unlike any other demographic, by bringing vibrancy to worship, an eagerness to serve, praying prayers that touch the very heart of the need, and displaying love that is genuine and sincere.

Beyond the present, we also realize that the church is always “just one generation from extinction.” Each local church must consider its future and intentionally develop strategies that effectively evangelize and disciple children.

## HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

When we recognize that ministry extends beyond the pulpits of our sanctuaries, and we see the importance of children to God and our congregations, we are left with the decision of how best to respond. Surrounding each one of us are marvelous opportunities to reach children. Many, like me, are called into this ministry, others are assigned it, while others see and fulfill the need for it in their local church.

No matter how you might be “called” into children’s ministry, it is important to recognize that it is ministry, that it has a present impact on young children at their most formative phase, and that it will impact the future for your local church and God’s kingdom. Given all of this, surely children’s ministry is worthy of our commitment and of our resources.

Children’s ministry can become more than just a “duty,” it can become a passionate fulfillment of God’s plan for our lives.

—**Shaun McKinley**  
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*Shaun and his wife, Stephanie, presently lead a team of over 50 volunteers in their role as Nursery and Preschool Pastors of the Peerless Road Church in Cleveland, Tennessee. Additionally, Shaun serves as Director of Accredited Ministry Development, Administrative Liaison to the General Overseer, and Prayer Ministries Coordinator at the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices.*

