

WHITE WING

MAY 2022

MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY



A NEW DAY

IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEARFULNESS
BUT ONE OF POWER, LOVE, AND SOUND JUDGMENT.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 (HCSB)



PRAYER MINISTRIES

CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

PRAYING FOR OUR CHILDREN

Prayer Points: May 2022 Contributor: Bishop Shaun McKinley, PhD

One of the most powerful ways to pray for children is to use Scripture. Because the Bible is the living Word of God, you can pray his Word back to him, interceding for your children and grandchildren about the very things that matter to God and impact your children emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Pray for Things Mentioned in a Verse:

"Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52 NIV).

Pray for the child by name, asking that he or she will increase in wisdom (the mind), in stature (physically), in favor with God (spiritual), and in favor with man (social).

Focus on God's Desires:

"Your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14 NIV).

Pray for your child's salvation based on God's will for the child (see also 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; 3 John 1:4).

Insert Children's Names into a Verse:

"He will command his angels concerning [names] to guard [them] in all [their] ways" (Psalm 91:11 NIV).

Prayer Directives

- Pray for the salvation of your child or children you know (Acts 16:31).
- Pray for understanding and wisdom in bringing up your children (Proverbs 2:6).
- Ask that your children be taught by the Lord and experience peace (Isaiah 54:13).

- Pray that the power of the Gospel will change and fill the lives of children you know (Romans 1:16).
- Pray that your child will be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19).
- Pray that your child will learn to be content with what they have (Hebrews 13:5).
- Pray that they do not forget to do what is right and to share (Hebrews 13:16).
- Ask that they grow in wisdom and in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9-12).
- Pray that they submit to their elders and show humility to one another (1 Peter 5:5).
- Ask the Father to provide them peaceful sleep and safety throughout the day (Psalm 4:8).
- Ask God to rescue them from evil attacks and preserve them in their faith (2 Timothy 4:18).
- Pray that they be enabled to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only (James 1:22).
- Pray that they would learn to effectively share their faith (Philemon 1:6).

Additional Prayer Resources

- *Praying Circles Around Your Children* by Mark Batterson
- *Blessing Your Children* by Jack Hayford
- *Power of a Praying Parent* by Stormie Omartian
- *Prayers that Avail Much for Parents* by Germain Copeland



ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR:

Bishop Shaun McKinley serves as international director of Children's Ministries, administrative liaison to the general overseer, and prayer coordinator for the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices in Cleveland, Tennessee. He and his wife, Stephanie, serve as preschool teachers at the Peerless Road Church, also in Cleveland. Shaun is a graduate of Bryan College having earned a Master of Business Administration in Marketing from Bryan College and is a licensed bishop with the Church of God of Prophecy. He was awarded a Ph.D. in Religion and Leadership Studies by the University of the Cumberland.





A NEW DAY

Six Significant Shifts in Ministry to Renew Passion, Commitment, and Ministry Effectiveness

Shaun McKinley serves as international director of Children's Ministries, administrative liaison to the general overseer, and prayer coordinator for the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices in Cleveland, Tennessee. He and his wife, Stephanie, serve as preschool teachers at the Peerless Road Church, also in Cleveland. Shaun is a graduate of Bryan College having earned a Master of Business Administration in Marketing from Bryan College and is a licensed bishop with the Church of God of Prophecy. He was awarded a Ph.D. in Religion and Leadership Studies by the University of the Cumberlands.



BISHOP SHAUN MCKINLEY, PhD | INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of our ministries. As a result, the way we serve children and families has changed, and it has left many of us wondering how to confidently move forward in our ministries. While this "new normal" of our day has its unique challenges, it also positions us to reevaluate our leadership and ministries and adjust them for greater influence.

Fear and uncertainty sought to overwhelm many of us over the past year. However, in the midst of this shaking season, God is just as present now as he was previously. In this new day, the Spirit is calling us to walk in faith and not fear. Our present actions, attitudes, and words are telling the next generation what they need to know about the God we serve. So we must determine to walk with confidence (2 Timothy 1:7), not leaning on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5), taking bold steps forward in faith (Matthew 14:29), so that he can direct our path. As we set our eyes on him, he promises to establish our work (Psalm 90:17).

In recent years, International Children's Ministries prayerfully started each new year seeking a verse of Scripture to serve as our "Verse of the Year." Each year's verse has served as a rallying point for our team and global network, as well as had influence in our strategic priorities for the year. Our 2022 verse has so perfectly aligned our hearts with what we believe the Spirit is speaking to those of us in ministry: "For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment" (2 Timothy 1:7 HCSB).

With this verse providing as our foundation, we are calling on our leaders, volunteers, parents, and other influencers of children to move forward into this NEW DAY with authentic, bold confidence. Real confidence is more than just words or rituals, going to church, having religion, or believing there is a God. Authentic confidence backs up words with actions. If it doesn't, it's not real confidence. As we exercise this spiritual muscle—

confidence—our faith grows as we make choice after choice to trust in God.

Our ministry has identified five foundational elements, or shifts, upon which to emerge from the difficulties of this season. We believe that attention to these areas of ministry, through Holy Spirit empowerment, will enable our ministries to serve children and families with renewed passion, commitment, and effectiveness.

DRIVEN BY VISION AND VALUE

Over the past decade, a popular leadership phrase has been repeated as a key principle for motivating people and advancing an organization's mission. That phrase is "lead with your 'why.'" In children's ministry, most of us know the WHAT of our ministry, things like staffing a nursery, offering kids church, or leading a midweek Bible club. Some of us can articulate the HOW we do WHAT we do. We provide our programs or ministries by recruiting volunteers, providing curricula, and making sure our teams show up on time. But very few of us know or are able to articulate our WHY—the purpose, kingdom value, or biblical reason we do what we do.

In this new day of ministry, it is critical that everything we do, whether virtually or online, flows from a clearly defined source.

For many of us, our goals are to bring heart transformation to the kids we serve and equip them to be lifelong disciples of Christ. But often, this goal fades from focus when making ministry decisions and leading our ministries week-to-week.

As we step into this new day of ministry with confidence, with shadows of uncertainty and instability still looming in some areas of our world, we must have a clear understanding of the WHY for our ministry. This understanding will inform our decisions and flow throughout every aspect of our ministry. The WHY of your ministry provides you with insight into the destination of your ministry as well as the guardrails for how you will arrive there. In understanding your WHY, or your purpose, you will also unify the evangelism, discipleship, and service efforts of your team.

God has not called you to accomplish his purposes on your own but, rather, he invites you to minister alongside members of your church community. Although sometimes difficult to see, he has placed individuals to work with you to fulfill his plan for the children in your ministry and community. Having a defined and written vision statement can unify those serving on your team by clarifying the purpose for your ministry and describing its desired future. Additionally,

by identifying your ministry's mission, goals, objectives, and core values, you ensure that you are in alignment with God's purposes for your church, able to measure progress, provide accountability, and guide your ministries' decisions and behaviors.

Has your ministry done the "hard work" of prayerfully seeking God's will for matters of vision, mission, and strategy? This new day requires these essentials to remain focused in reaching those God has given you to shepherd.

FOCUSED ON FAMILIES AND INFLUENCERS

The impact of your kids ministry is no longer simply about engaging and discipling children. In this new day of ministry, we must also include efforts to intentionally reach, equip, and partner with parents and families.

Parents must not only be awakened to their responsibility but also invited into the discipleship process. This occurs when they know we are on their side and willing to be there for them as they lead their children through the faith walk. There are many practical ways that we can equip parents and wonderful resources that we can provide to engage them in this process. We can also help them identify opportunities where spiritual conversations can occur with their children.

Because parents, and other influencers, spend a majority of their time with our children, they have many more opportunities to help them

learn and apply the Bible to their lives. If the church wants to disciple and influence children for Christ, then we need to realize that we must influence those with whom children are spending the majority amount of their time.

Therefore, our local congregations must develop a biblical vision for the families and inspire parents with the vision God has for them and their children. This vision must also include grandparents, single parents, foster parents, and other adults raising children. Then, the church must make every hour it has with children at church significant and find ways to extend that significance to the home as we equip influencers.

EQUIPPING MISSIONALLY-MINDED KIDS AND FAMILIES

God's Word isn't just about listening and learning. Our journey of faith involves living and doing. Our journey with God isn't just about "come and hear," "come and receive," or "come and see." We are told to "go and show," "go and give," and "go and tell." Our

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A NEW DAY

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efforts to bring heart transformation to the children we serve must include opportunities for them to live on-mission among their family, friends, church, and communities. In this new day of ministry, we must prioritize opportunities to explore the “missional” life.

The meaning of the word *mission* is changing and developing in this postmodern culture. In the past, *mission* meant a new church plant or a ministry in another part of the world. Today the word *mission* implies practically living out God’s mission in the world today. It includes interacting with the culture around us, meeting the needs of our community and the world, and building authentic relationships that express Christ’s love. Research indicates that children with a strong sense of mission, of having something important to do, use words like “overcome,” “succeed,” and “make a difference.”

The most significant action we can take as we attempt to connect kids with Christ and with the church is to provide opportunities to live out their faith. As we teach kids how to intercede for lost people in their families and serve their communities, homes, and the world, we are helping them grow as disciples. As kids live missionally—learning to recognize a need and respond—they will bring glory to God.

EMBRACING NEW STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Without a doubt, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted all of our ministries. The way we gather, worship, plan, and interact has been impacted. The temptation would be to attempt to return to the old way of doing things, familiar rhythms, and/or preferences. However, a healthier approach to this new day of ministry is to determine those things of value that we need to maintain moving forward, uncover new strategies for integration into our ministries, and lay aside anything that is unnecessary to our mission or doesn’t meet the needs of our families.

Kids need relationships. It’s what connects us and nurtures us as part of God’s family. A big part of kids’ ministry is building those relationships with God and with others. Periods of quarantine or isolation may put a damper on this, but we can embrace technologies in communication and social networking to continue to minister to the heart of each child in your children’s ministry and stay connected with them.

CONNECTING RELATIONALLY AND INTENTIONALLY WITH KIDS, FAMILIES, AND YOUR TEAM

In this new day of children’s ministry, we must have a vision and strategy to reach beyond the boundaries of our church building. After all, throughout our recent (or current) season of isolation and quarantine, we’ve learned that to survive and fulfill our mandate, we can no longer depend fully on models that center around the church building.

While services, programs, and events are helpful, our families are looking for meaningful relationships. They need us to support them, almost as surrogate parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins in the family of God. They need our connections beyond just Sunday morning and Wednesday night. They need us in ways beyond just teaching or preaching. The connection of a spiritual family is important to building foundations of faith in the homes of our kids.

The biblical pattern of discipleship and promises found in Deuteronomy 6 were not just given to biological families, but to all of the people of God. Yes, parents are primarily responsible to influence the faith of their children. However, Deuteronomy 6 was actually spoken to a nation chosen to represent God, in community, as a light to the nations. Israel had a responsibility to one another; it was never intended to be just for the parents. An example can be found in the passage of Mary and Joseph losing Jesus on their way to the Passover. Often this is looked on as bad parenting, but this is inaccurate. Mary and Joseph lived in community, where the expectation was that somebody had Jesus, so there was no need to be concerned.

To successfully grow fully devoted followers of Christ, our families need communities that show care, will coach them, and even challenge them. In this new day, we will embrace the many opportunities to not only connect and spiritually form children, but also their parents. While there are no quick fixes to the problems, brokenness, and losses our families are facing in this day, we must intentionally seek to become a community that radically exemplifies “love for one another.”

It is a NEW DAY! How will your local church and children’s ministry awaken to the realities of it? It is my prayer that you will not seek to simply return to the preferences and patterns of the past. May you seek God’s direction to embrace his heart, his vision, and his will for you.



COMING NOVEMBER 2023

Throughout Scripture, we find the word “chosen” used to denote one who is examined, preferred by others, and selected by God. Throughout the Bible, we read of individuals who were chosen by God, often to do something challenging or seemingly impossible:

- Joseph was chosen to endure betrayal and prison to eventually rise to prominence and power, enabling him to not only save his family but an entire nation during a season of famine.
- Elijah was chosen to demonstrate confident faith in God, standing up to the evil King Ahab and wicked Queen Jezebel, leading to an ultimate victory against the followers of Baal.
- Queen Esther was divinely chosen to boldly speak to the king, reveal the wicked schemes of Haman, and save her people from total annihilation.
- Mary was chosen by God, favored to be the virgin mother and carry the hope and salvation of all mankind in her young womb.

As we consider the world surrounding our children as they grow up, we realize the season in which we serve is not without challenge. Unlike any other time, the church is contending with a rising hostility toward the Gospel, the spread of secular culture, the influence of the media on society, the busyness and distraction of parents, and the collapse of the family, among many other challenges. The children of our families and churches are spending their formative years in peculiar, hard times that cause even the most committed of us to wonder, “Am I up for this challenge?”

Make no mistake: YOU WERE CHOSEN. 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV) reminds us, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

You have been chosen by God to serve him during this time for his kingdom purposes. He placed you in your family, church, ministry, and community to wage war on the schemes of the enemy and engage in the conflict for the hearts and minds of a generation.

At Chosen, the 2023 Institute of Children’s Ministry, we will

- seek God for personal renewal and refreshing,
- renew our commitment to echo God’s love for this generation of children,
- learn strategies, techniques, and tools for declaring his truth in relevant ways to kids,
- discover how to battle the schemes of the enemy to distract and confuse our children,
- return home to partner with God to see his purposes fulfilled for this generation.

2023 FEATURED PRESENTER
JIM WIDEMAN
 Author and Speaker
 Executive Operations Pastor
 The Belonging, Nashville, TN



“ICM was the most amazing experience I have ever had! My husband and I talked most of the way back home about our different breakout sessions and ideas we have. It was life changing for us! I loved the energy and excitement throughout the entire conference. The Holy Spirit was definitely moving!” - Mary, ICM '21 Participant



TEACHING KIDS ABOUT STEWARDSHIP: **ALL MY STUFF** BELONGS TO GOD

“Mine!” two-year-old Jessica shouts as she snatches the stuffed bear from another child’s hand. At age two, Jessica thinks everything she sees and wants is hers. This is normal age-appropriate thinking and behavior for a two-year-old, but if encouraged and indulged, Jessica will probably grow up to be a selfish, self-centered adult.

First Corinthians 13:11 NLT says, “When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.” One of the “things” includes a selfish attitude. As we grow and mature, we realize that everything is not ours. As a matter of fact, it is all God’s! According to Psalm 24:1, God owns everything. All the land, all the water, all the buildings, all the cars, all the houses, all the “everything” belongs to God. And he wants us to take care of it all.

Stewardship is taking care of something one does not own. From teaching toddlers to pick up toys to involving preteens in mission projects, we train our children that it’s all God’s and he has given us the privilege to take care of it for him. Teaching and training children to be responsible stewards begins in the nursery and continues throughout our lives.

How can I help children become good stewards?

1. Encourage a sharing attitude by providing practical opportunities for children to share.

Snack time. Give half of the children a snack that can be easily divided into two portions.

Ask the children with snacks what they can do to make sure that everyone has a snack.

Activity time. Have children work in groups and share supplies rather than working individually.

Sharing projects. Give children opportunities to share their gently used clothing, toys, and books with needy children in the community.

2. Involve children in decision making regarding giving projects.

Share a specific need with the children, and let them brainstorm ways that they could help meet that need. Then, as a group, choose the best way to begin working together to meet the need.

If the entire congregation is involved in a giving project, let the children determine how they will raise funds or what specific aspect of the project they will contribute to.

3. Share Bible truths related to stewardship. Use Bible stories to illustrate these truths. For example:

Bible truth: When I give generously, I work with God to accomplish his plans.

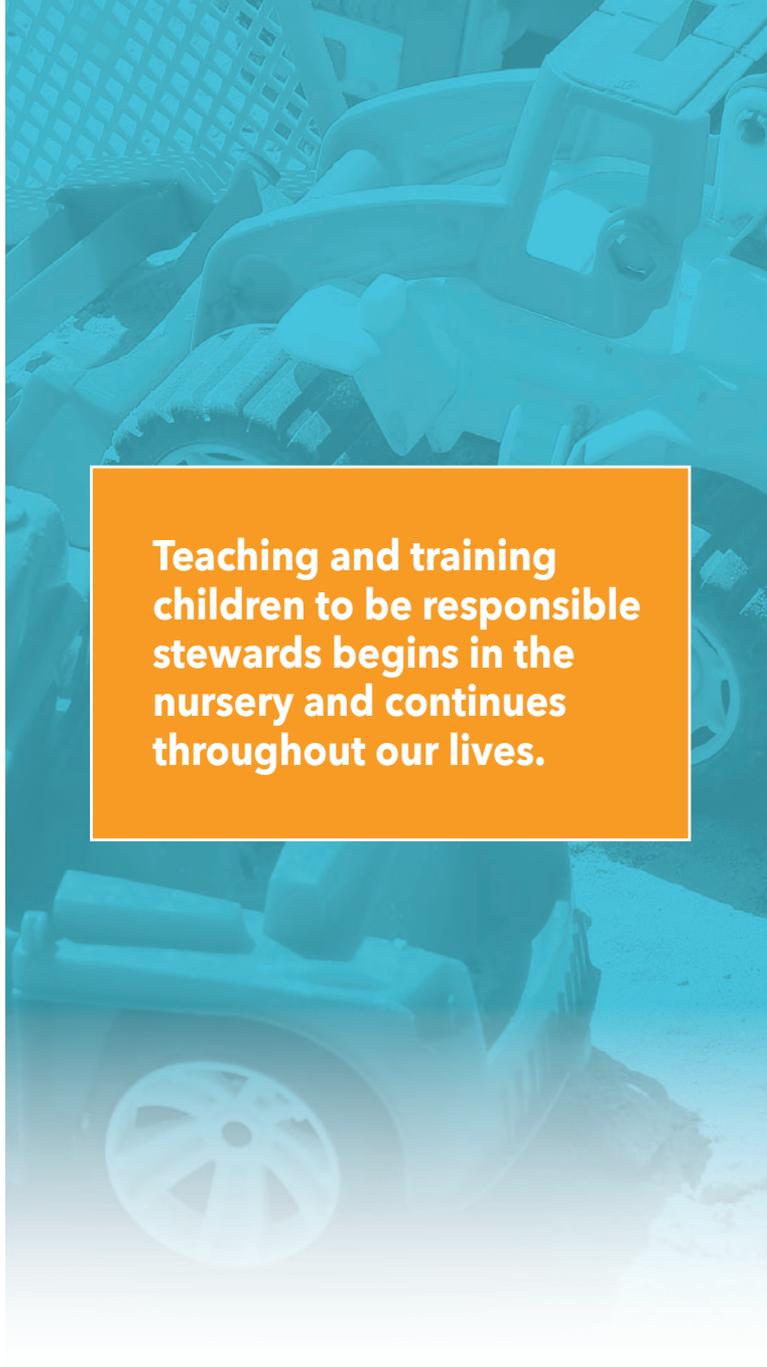
Bible story: “The Israelites Give of Their Possessions and Abilities to Build the Tabernacle” (Exodus 35)

4. Emphasize the importance of giving to the local church. Many times, we allow children to focus on specific giving and sharing projects but do not encourage them to give to the local church. But it is also important that our children learn that their offerings are needed within the local church so that the church can continue providing ministry to them and to others.

Weekly offerings. Consistently give children an opportunity to give weekly. Each week, share one of the ways their offerings are being used—building maintenance, supplies and equipment, provision for specific ministries, etc.

Prayer time for the local church. Let the children work with you to make a list of all the great activities they have experienced in the local church (i.e., fellowship dinners, musicals or plays, festivals, campouts, Bible school, etc.) Then talk about the ways the local church has changed the lives of people in the congregation, community, and around the world. Add these to your list. Remind the children that, as they give and serve in the local church, they are helping these things come about. Pray together for the local church's ministry and mission.

Stewardship means demonstrating that everything one is, one has, and one receives belongs to God! Christian stewardship is using everything as God wants the believer to use it. Children need to understand and be given opportunities to practice biblical stewardship.



Teaching and training children to be responsible stewards begins in the nursery and continues throughout our lives.

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