

FAMILY TOOLBOX



SERIES

TEACHING KIDS ABOUT THE CHURCH



Children's Ministry

Golden Hills Community Church

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A Note to Families

The Children's Ministry of Golden Hills Community Church exists to "*Glorify God by helping families develop age-appropriate disciples who impact their world for Christ*".

In order to accomplish this task, we at GHCC have attempted to describe the discipleship of a believer, which includes these three elements:

- **Worship**
- **Grow**
- **Serve**

We believe that children, as followers of Christ, can also participate in the discipleship process. We have further identified twelve specific spiritual growth issues within these three elements of discipleship.

It is our desire in Children's Ministry, to create a balanced program, which addresses all of these spiritual growth issues, helping to produce a healthy, age-appropriate disciple.

However, statistics tell us that the national average for children attending Sunday school is 26 hours each year (that's only half of the time). And our church is no exception to this. Our average Sunday attendance is roughly half of our total registration. What does this mean? Well, we could have the best programming, the best teachers and staff (which, by the way, I think we do) and we would still have a very hard time in accomplishing the goal God has set before us. But there is a way.

The way in which we can realize the goal of making age-appropriate disciples is stated in our purpose: "...by helping *families* develop age-appropriate disciples..." In fact, the best approach to aiding your child's faith development is *not* in the formal setting of the church, but in the informal, everyday life of your home. God's Word clearly reminds us of this in Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. The commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress (teach) them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down at night and when you get up."

We encourage you to take advantage of every opportunity to "impress upon your children" spiritual truth. Use dinner conversation, driving in the car, bedtime routines and getting ready each morning as times to reflect and teach about God and his faithfulness.

To help you in these discussions, we have developed a series of tools for you to use. These tools are series of booklets (**THE FAMILY TOOLBOX SERIES**), each addressing the spiritual growth issues. In them you will find information, discussion questions and activity suggestions to help you guide your children on their spiritual journeys.

Dear Parents,

Teaching our kids about the church has more to do with our actions and our own practices than with just our words. However, I think it is important to review some basic principles regarding the church. At the conclusion, there will be several questions for you to ponder as you guide your children into an understanding and participation of the church

This booklet (part of the **FAMILY TOOLBOX SERIES**) is designed to offer a basic understanding of the church. There are several other booklets in the series that may be of help to you and I will refer you to those throughout.

God bless you as you teach and model what being part of Christ's church means to your children.

Pastor Mark

Teaching Kids About the Church

To help our kids understand what the church is and what it represents, it may be helpful to review some basic principles to firm up our own understanding.

What is the Church?

When we speak of the “church”, we can be referring to one of two meanings. In both meanings it is to be understood that the church is made up of those believers who have put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The first meaning is the *universal church*. Since the church refers to believers, the universal church is every Christian who has or ever will live in every country on every continent of the world.

The second meaning of church is the one we use most often. It refers to a *local* group of believers usually associated with a particular geographic location. It is the universal church being expressed locally. Golden Hills Community Church is an example of a *local church*.

The church is God’s family, and each Christian is related to every other Christian through the spiritual life he or she has received from Christ (see the **FAMILY TOOLBOX SERIES**, *Leading Your Child To Christ*). Children need to understand that when they give their lives to Christ, they become part of God’s family, the church. This is not something that happens when they get older. However, “official” membership in a local church body such as Golden Hills Community Church is encouraged.

What Did Jesus Say?

In a dialogue between Jesus and His disciples (Matthew 16:15-18), Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” To this, Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and this rock *I will build my church*. And the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” We see that it is Jesus who will build His church.

Not only is Jesus the founder of the church, He is also the foundation. The church belongs to Him. The church is the body of Christ as the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians, “Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is Savior” (Ephesians 5:23).

Jesus also tells us in His conversation with Peter that the church will last forever. He said, “...the gates of hell (the power of death) will not prevail against it (the church).” Although Satan is busy attempting to destroy the church and its work, the battle has already been won through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

So, we see that Jesus says,

- * He is the founder and foundation of the church.
- * He is the head of the church.
- * The church will last forever.

What Is the Purpose of the Church?

Since Jesus is the head of the church, it seems logical that He is the one who sets the direction and purpose of the church. And that is exactly what He did in giving instructions to His disciples (and us) just before His ascension into heaven. We read in

Matthew 28:18-20, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*”

Jesus gave a two-pronged purpose for the church, one, to make disciples of every nation (evangelism), and two, to baptize and teach believers (edification). So, here we find the “business” of the church, to tell people about Jesus and grow them in their faith.

The local church (such as Golden Hills Community Church) accomplishes the task of evangelism by sending and actively supporting missionaries around the world. It also provides events, opportunities and outreach into the local community in order to present the Gospel message.

GHCC also teaches and instructs believers in order to mature them in their faith. This is accomplished through classes, literature, programs, sermons, Bible studies, small groups and fellowship.

Children can take part in both of these tasks. Please refer to the **FAMILY TOOLBOX SERIES** for ideas and discussion starters for your family. Some titles to consider are: *Teaching Kids About Outreach, What Are Missions? Bible Content, What the Bible Says About...*, and others.

What Do Believers Do When They Are At Church?

God’s Word gives us insight as to what we should be doing when we are at church (this includes our kids!):

- * **Sing** “Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...” (Ephesians 5:19)
- * All the people were **praising God** for what had been done. (Acts 4:21-22)
- * Jesus said, “You will **be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and in every part of the world.” (Acts 1:8)
- * Christ gave each one of us a special gift. Each one received what Christ wanted to give. Christ gave those gifts to prepare God’s people for the work of **servicing**. (Ephesians 4:7,12)
- * “Then Jesus began to **explain** everything that had been written about Himself in the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:27)
- * The apostles were **telling people** that the Lord was truly raised from death. And God blessed the believers very much.” (Acts 4:33)
- * “You should **not stay away from church** meetings, as some are doing. But you should meet together and encourage each other. (Hebrews 10:25)
- * When a good man **prays**, great things happen. (James 5:13-20)
- * We can comfort others when they have trouble with the same comfort that God gives us. (2 Corinthians 1:4)
- * They spent their time **learning** the apostle’s teaching. They continued to **share...pray together...**and **gave** to those who needed it. The believers **met together** in the temple. (Acts 2:42, 42-46)

Is There Anything Else Jesus Expects Believers To Do In Church?

Yes. In fact, there are two. One happens just once, while the other is done frequently. They are: Baptism and Communion (or, The Lord’s Supper).

Both baptism and communion are known as “ordinances” of the church. An ordinance is regular practice that was ordered by Jesus.

Baptism

The word baptism comes from a Greek word (the New Testament was originally written in Greek), which means, “to dip, immerse, submerge, or overwhelm.” So, when we are baptized, it is by being completely immersed in water.

Baptism is for believers. We are baptized because Jesus commanded it (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus has also given us His example to follow (Mark 1:9). Baptism also demonstrates publicly the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 18:8; 1 John 2:3). We walk through the waters of baptism just once.

[Note: if you or your child desire to be baptized, contact any pastor. There are numerous baptism services throughout the year. Prior to each, there is also a class to help you and your child gain a more complete understanding of baptism.]

The Lord’s Supper (Communion)

Jesus initiated the Lord’s Supper with His disciples on the night before He was to be crucified. That night He shared what was about to happen to Him and that one of them was about to betray Him. When they had finished eating, Jesus took the bread, broke it into pieces and gave thanks to God. He told the disciples that the broken bread was His body that soon to be broken on the cross. He told them to remember what he had done for them whenever they ate the bread together.

Jesus also shared His cup with them. He said that the wine was a symbol of His blood that was going to be shed for them, making possible the forgiveness of their sins. Again, He told them to remember Him when they shared the cup.

So, when we take communion, we worship God as we remember Christ’s great sacrifice on the cross for our sins. This is something

we do often, and, just like baptism, it is intended for believers only.

What Is Your Response?

We have seen that the church is a family of believers in Jesus Christ who come together to worship God, tell others of the good news of Jesus and help other believers grow in their faith. So, what is your response? What is your fit in the church? To help you model to your children what church really is all about, please consider the following questions:

- * Are you and your family faithful attendees of worship services?
- * Are you and your family involved in the mission of the church to make disciples (missions, outreach)?
- * Are you and your family faithful and cheerful givers financially to the work of the church?
- * Are you and your family faithful servants, supporting the ministries of the church?

Our prayer is that you and your family will discover the blessing of worshipping and serving together as part of God's family.

The Spiritual Growth Issues:

Worship

- Salvation
- Worship

Grow

- Bible knowledge/Application
- Bible Memory
- Stewardship
- Healthy Relationships
- Using Gifts, Talents and Skills
- Church Commitment

Serve

- Outreach
- Missions Involvement
- Christian Service