

THE CHURCH IN IRVINE — CHILDREN'S WORK

CARING FOR THE CHILDREN ON LORD'S DAY IN THE DISTRICTS

- NURTURE:** The entire time we spend with the children is important, not just the lesson. We are here to shepherd and nurture them to have a proper humanity and to create an atmosphere so that they would be attracted to the Lord and enjoy being with God's people.
- CARE:** The most important qualification of a serving one is to have a caring heart. How we are with the children, through the singing, craft, snacks, walk to the park, etc. is just as important as the lesson. The entire time with the children is an opportunity for the serving ones to infuse God's love, to mold their character, to present a pattern of proper humanity, to deposit God's word in them little by little, and to cultivate their heart to receive the Lord's salvation in the future.
- FAMILY:** Our children's meeting should have a family atmosphere where you sit around the table or on the floor and talk in an informal way, with children of different age groups. The older children can help the younger ones in doing the crafts, in leading the hand motions of the songs, and serving the snack.
- NOT A SCHOOL:** Our children's meeting should not have the flavor of Sunday school (where there are grade levels and teachers and textbooks in a classroom setting). Not only should we not use Sunday school material; we should not even reference it.
- YOUNG PEOPLE:** We encourage the districts to use the young people as much as possible in the children's work. The young people can even give the lesson to the children. One older saint with 2-3 young people could take care of 10 children.
- SCHEDULE:** In some districts, the children might join the parents for the Lord's Table meeting in its entirety or in part, and then have their own meeting afterwards. In other districts, the children's meeting might be concurrent with the Lord's Table and prophesying meeting. Here is a sample of a full meeting schedule as a reference:

9:30am-9:45am	Welcome activities (simple games or coloring)
9:45-10:15am	Songs
10:15-10:35am	Snack
10:35-10:55am	Lesson
10:55-11:30am	Play or activities
11:30-Noon	Craft

NO LEAVEN: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump". We should not bring anything related to Halloween, Christmas, Easter or Valentine's Day into the children's work. Not only should we not speak about these things with the children we should also not have any craft or snacks related to these holidays and festivals.

SAFETY: For the safety and welfare of the children, there must be at least 2 serving ones each week. Limit the physical contact with the children.

DISCIPLINE: To maintain order where all the kids can benefit, a serving one may take a child who is being disruptive away for a "timeout" if a child is not helped by a gentle admonition. Please view this as an opportunity to shepherd the child, instead of a harsh discipline. We want the children to have many happy memories of their time spent in the children's meeting. If the child does not respond positively they should be taken to their parents.

REPORT: A summary report should be written every week and sent out by email to all the serving saints for continuity and improvement in our care for the children. Parents should be informed of anything special that happened with their child or any concerns.

KIT: Each district should prepare a kit that includes the lesson materials, a compilation of songs, suggested crafts, a chart to record attendance and memory verses, some books and games (e.g. puzzles and blocks), and some simple prizes for the children who memorize their verses or for the older ones who brought their Bibles, etc.

6th GRADE: In May each year the children in 6th grade will attend a conference in the mountains. The burden for the 6th grade conference is that all the children would be saved before entering Junior High. The majority of children will be saved before attending the conference. Therefore, the conference becomes an opportunity for those not saved to be saved and to confirm and strengthen the salvation experience for those who are already saved. It is NOT necessary for the 6th graders to have completed any particular set of lessons before attending the conference. On the Lord's Day morning we will not have a special set of lessons for the 6th grade children. They will join the advanced age group for lessons. Whenever applicable the gospel can be included in the lessons given to the advanced age group. If some parents are burdened for their children to cover the lessons "God's Full Salvation" previously given to the 6th graders, we would recommend that those parents have a children's home meeting during the week where they can cover those lessons with their children.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT DISTRICTING AND THE CHILDREN

What do we do if there are only 1 or 2 children in our district?

If the children are young it would be best to see if you can care for them in your district. If the children are older and/or need to be with some other children we would recommend that 2 districts combine their children's meeting on the Lord's Day.

How will the children in our district see the other children in the church?

There will be opportunities throughout the year for the children to see children in the other districts. Every two months each district will blend with another district at Hall 1. The whole church will also meet together twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. During the summer the children will be together for the Summer Bible Camp. It is also possible that during the year we could arrange special events (picnic) for the children to be together. These special events will depend upon the burden of the parents to help with the arrangements.

What if the children are different ages (in different grades)?

In a family it is an exception to have children of the same age. Our view for the children's meeting on the Lord's Day is that the atmosphere would be like that of a family rather than a school. The younger and older children can be together with the older children helping to care for the younger children. The serving ones would be like an older brother or sister (young people and college students) or an uncle or aunt. We also hope that the children could invite their friends from school to join the children's meeting.

Who will serve?

Saints who have both a heart for and a way with the children would be encouraged to serve. The young people can be a great help in carrying out the children's meeting and should be encouraged to lead the singing, give the lesson, and provide the craft or activity ideas.

What lessons and material will we use?

The church has prepared a new series of lessons for the districts to use. The lessons focus more on presenting a pattern of proper humanity than bible stories and truths. Therefore, it is not necessary that the serving ones be "good teachers" with extensive knowledge of the Bible. Along with the lessons there will also be songs (with audio files), craft and activities ideas, and a supply kit for the districts to use. The districts should not introduce their own material for the children's meeting.