

Theology, Philosophy, & Methodology of Students & Children's Ministry

Grace Community Church

The vision of Students and Children's Ministry at Grace Community Church is to "Present everyone mature in Christ" (Col. 1:28b). This vision accompanied with our mission, "To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12), is why we exist. Our intent is to not only teach the truth of Christ, but teach why it is true, and how it affects everyday life. We aim to teach God's Word with great conviction and boldness partnered with deep love and gentleness, and seek to be built up, strengthened, and equipped because of it. The Apostle Paul puts it wonderfully when he writes, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

Vision Statement: We exist to raise up young disciples towards maturity in Christ.

Mission Statement: To train young disciples to know, love, and serve Christ.

Below you will find sections on the theology, philosophy, and methodology of our vision and mission. Everything done in Students and Children's Ministry is built on our theology, which informs our philosophy, which, in turn, establishes our methodology. Much like the tip of an iceberg, what is often seen is the methodology and philosophy, but this must be grounded on a firm theology that propels it all.

The Theology Our Mission and Vision

Christ as the Foundation

"No one can lay a foundation other than that which has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Since Christ Jesus is the foundation of all reality, He is most definitely the foundation of a God-glorifying Students and Children's Ministry; all else is sinking sand. Christ is the purpose, the center, the focus, and the driving force of Students and Children's Ministry. Games, crafts, activities, entertainment, or things of that nature are great supplements, but should never be the main focus. With Christ as the foundation, and the Spirit-inspired Scriptures as the means, the Father becomes magnified and glorified in Students and Children's Ministry.

The Vitality of the Trinity

The teaching in Students and Children's Ministry must be understood in light of the Trinity. If we teach our students and children about God abstracted from Jesus and the Spirit, then it is not necessarily a Christian ministry. Students and Children's Ministry must be saturated with an understanding of the Trinity, because this is who our God is. At the core of all existence is a loving community made up of Father, Son, and Spirit. We do our kids a disservice by speaking vaguely about God. We want to serve the gospel well by having a rich Trinitarian understanding and vocabulary.

Students & Children as part of the Body of Christ

Students and children are not simply the future of the church like some people may think, they are a present, vital part of the church. Students and children are a part of the body of Christ just as much as an adult is, and this means that they have ways they can serve and build the body up and glorify the Father. Since they are a part of the body, Students and Children's Ministry is not a form of daycare, babysitting, or hanging out with friends while the adults are fed with the Word of God. Just as there is a focus on worship and transformation through the Word of God in the sanctuary, so should there be the same focus in Students and Children's Ministry.

The Philosophy of Our Mission and Vision

Parents as Disciple-Makers

The main disciple-makers of students and children are their parents. Therefore, the church is not to completely take over the role of discipleship in Students and Children's Ministry. We desire to enable and teach the parents how to disciple their children well and come alongside them in the process. A healthy Students and Children's Ministry looks like discipleship through a partnership between the home and church. However, with the case of non-Christian parents or absent parents, the church will step into the role of discipleship more, and encourage other godly families and leaders in the church body to pour into children who do not have this blessing.

One-on-One & Small Group Discipleship

One of the largest indicators that a child will remain committed to Jesus as they enter adulthood is the consistent presence of at least one Christ-following adult, other than a parent, who pursues and pours into them. Although parents hold the primary responsibility of discipleship for their children, the church will mirror this same model of discipleship through small groups (which reflect the family), and one-on-one discipleship from leaders (which reflect the relationship between a parent and child). Again, discipleship from Student and Children's Ministry does not replace discipleship from the family, but is indeed a wonderful additive.

The Methodology of Our Mission and Vision

Teaching From the Holy Scriptures

If Christ is the foundation, then the Scriptures are the blueprints, this is why the teachings in Students and Children's ministry will be saturated in Scripture. Jesus said clearly in the gospels, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 31b-32). This verse not only implies teaching and hearing God's word, but applying His transforming word in our lives. Special attention will be given to Scripture memorization and application in order to better abide in God's word and let it bear fruit in the lives of our students and children.

The "Relevance" of Media

The word "relevant" comes from the Latin word relevare, which means "to lessen, lighten," hence "to help, assist; comfort, console." Therefore, to be relevant is to actually provide relief and help. Although technology has its place, media and social media in particular, should be limited in Students and Children's Ministry. We do not want to become "tech dependent" or "media driven", because this often does the opposite of "lightening, comforting, and consoling." These things are chiefly found in Christ, His Word, and fellowship with the body of Christ.

Closing Remarks

It is of most importance to conclude with the truth that as parents, leaders, and pastors we must certainly labor for the gospel and be in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in our students and children (Gal. 4:19). At the same time, it is ultimately only the Lord who brings the increase (1 Cor. 3:6-7). His faithfulness far outweighs ours, and it is Him we can cry out to and trust to raise up and watch over our students and children.

“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1).