

Kids and SMALL Groups

Visit with Todd or Kami for more information

Kids are valuable members of our church family.

A challenge – how can we reap the benefits of deep, interpersonal Bible study in small groups while guiding the hearts of our children closer to Jesus?

No matter how you look at it, there are no easy solutions. Over the years, our groups have employed a variety of strategies with varying degrees of success.

An opportunity to shepherd

It is important for group members to continually evaluate the group's responsibility to provide spiritual guidance and opportunities for kids to grow in the Lord. Small groups can be an ideal environment for families to pray and study together. Even if your group decides to separate the kids for the meeting, work to build spiritual

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My Name welcomes Me; and whoever welcomes Me does not welcome me but the One who sent Me."

Mark 9:37 (NIV)

friendships between kids and adults.

"Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."

James Baldwin

Ever feel like you're being watched?

Our kids watch us constantly, even when we're not aware of it. Parents exert the single greatest influence on a child. So, it should be no surprise that

when we struggle with how to include our children in our small group, our children feel the tension too.

As your group discusses how to address these issues, consider the following:

- Consider the role your group plays in the spiritual development of the kids
- Don't view childcare as a problem to be solved; kids will pick up on this
- Decisions regarding kids should be made as a group
- The interests of all should be considered

Resources

Lots of us have struggled with what to do with kids in Small Group and have enjoyed success with some ideas and failed with others. There is no magic pill, but we have found some ways to make groups worthwhile for kids and adults:

- We provide curriculum for pre-school and early elementary ages. If you are interested in looking at the curriculum, visit with Todd.
- Many groups meet with the children at the beginning for a "child friendly" devotional time with singing and a brief devotional that brings the entire family together. The children can then leave for a lesson time with caregivers to give the adults a chance for deeper discussion.
- Harding Students can be found to help teach the children while the adults meet.
- We are committed to supporting kids in Small Groups. If we do not have the material you are looking for, we will help you get it.
- Talk to other small group facilitators to find out what has worked in other groups.

Three Popular Options

Babysitting – childcare provided by members or paid sitter.

Cool

- Requires little planning.
- Allows good adult discussion

Not Cool

- Provides little or no faith-building for children
- No mentoring or spiritual interaction with adults

Segregation – separate studies for kids and adults (at the building or in a home).

Cool

- Adults can have a good discussion
- Kids get safe & fun activities.
- Kids get an opportunity to learn the faith.

Not Cool

- Missing an opportunity for kids & adults to connect in mentoring relationships
- Requires site with at least two large rooms
- Adults have to miss meeting time (often just the women)
- Somebody has to devote significant time to developing kids' lessons

Integration – adults & kids interacting spiritually.

Cool

- Kids get an opportunity to learn the faith
- Kids & adults connect in mentoring relationships
- Requires only one large meeting room

Not Cool

- Adult discussion cannot be as deep during the formal meeting