

## WHO FOR AND WHY?

The most important question we can ask when ministering to children is “who am I doing this for?” Might sound like an obvious answer, right? We can all quickly raise our hands and say, “Jesus.”

But first let me ask you this: Who is Jesus to you?

This question can be found in one of my favourite pieces of Scripture that has really challenged me in my Christian walk.

Luke 9:18–20.

<sup>18</sup> One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only His disciples were with Him, and He asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

<sup>19</sup> “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead.” <sup>20</sup> Then He asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

Peter replied, “You are the Messiah sent from God!”

Peter didn’t simply repeat what everyone else thought or what their answer was. His answer came from his own personal revelation, from God to him, of who Jesus truly is.

And for us it is important to realise that the name “Jesus” cannot just be a name we say; it has to be a name we know.

Children need to know who Jesus is, so when we teach them, it can’t just be from a place of head knowledge, like saying the right words or the right answers. They need to see it in us. Our relationship with God must be authentic, because children can see right through the fake.

Often a great test question when someone wants to sign up is to ask “Why do you want to join Children’s church?” and most times the answer is “because I love children” or “because I am good with children”. I am sure many of us have heard or even said those words. But we need to catch the heart of this ministry.

Why do I want to join Kid’s ministry? For Jesus. Who am I doing this for? The answer is always for Jesus, the one we know, love and want to serve. This then adjusts the way we do it. When we make doing it for Jesus the focus, we realise the excellence we

need to bring.

As we get to know Jesus and read the Bible we can clearly see God's heart for His children. He uses language like train them, let them come to Me, teach them, remind them. These are all instructions from God to us as the church. And so of course this is another excellent answer to "why?". We do it for His children.

Yet again, our relationship with Jesus is essential to be able to get this right. Jesus says, "Do not hinder them.". How terrible would it be if my own unpreparedness or casual attitude toward this ministry hindered children from truly knowing Jesus? Have you considered the moment you have with them could be their only opportunity to find out who Jesus is?

In Matthew 18:6 we can read just how serious and important this is to God:

"but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for Him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

I don't know about you but this verse shakes me. The picture in my mind of someone drowning in the sea with a millstone around their neck is a call to take this seriously. There is a huge responsibility on us. God has entrusted us with His beloved children. Our actions and words can easily influence them. We need to be Godly examples. And we need to train them to love and live for Jesus, if we don't are we not leading them into a life of sin?

But there is also great joy in what we do. And so we should also be answering this question of "who for?" with "we do it for ourselves!" There is nothing more satisfying and valuable than to walk in the good plans God has for us. To experience Him using us for His glory. Wow, what a privilege.

While people encouraged by saying things like, "I feel like you'd be great serving at kids" my first thought was always, "No, not me." I love children, yes, but I assumed you had to be this loud, larger-than-life, extroverted person who could dance... and that's not me! I'm naturally more reserved, and I definitely can't dance!!

But after joining, God started to change my heart, and here's what I've learned:

Firstly, I don't love the question, "Who is called to teach Kid's Ministry?" because I believe it's not just about one person or the few that serve on a Kid's Ministry team. I believe that as a church as a whole, it's all of our responsibility to help raise up the next generation.

Secondly, God can use you the way He made you. You don't have to fit into a specific personality type mould because there is no mould. All you need is to step out in obedience and be faithful in what God is asking of you. At the same time, let God challenge you. Serving in Kid's Ministry will stretch you and I truly believe that if we want to make a real impact for His kingdom, we must be willing to be called out of what feels comfortable.

To end off, let's look at John 15:1-2  
Jesus, the True Vine

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true grapevine, and My Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and He prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.

I just felt this scripture on my heart for this time, sometimes we ask ourselves, am I still called to the area I am serving at? In this case maybe you are asking yourself about Kid's Ministry? But this verse really challenged me with the question that I want you to ask yourself: am I still bearing fruit?

In every area we serve, there are seasons of growth and stretching. Sometimes it can feel hard, and we may wonder if we should even be still here. But as we read in this verse there is always a cutting of some sort, the difference is - In the one you bear No fruit - but in the other you bear fruit and God is just pruning you so you can produce even more. So allow God to work IN you while He works through you!

And so take the time to ask yourself "Why and who for?" and let your answer be "FOR JESUS!".