

Building Relationships with Children

Perhaps these “ideas” will stimulate your thinking as to ways you can build relationships with the children who share their lives with you, letting them know that you care for them. They need you! And you will be blessed greatly from being with them!

Jot a few ideas or ways you plan to build relationships with the children whom you teach.

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In her book “Building Faith One Child at a Time” (Concordia Publishing House), Becky Peters talks about children needing time with role models. In “What Kids Need to Succeed” (Search Institute, Minneapolis), Peter Benson lists mentors as essential to children’s current and future success.

I began to ask, “How does one (How do I?) build relationships with children?” If children need time with and attention from adults, how do I “give” them this? How do I relate to the children who share their lives with me on Sunday mornings?

- Find a time to pray for the children each week, asking God to meet their needs; to help them make good choices; to live out Bible truths.
- As each child enters the classroom, greet each with a smile & a hello. (I must admit that this is not always easy, especially when the child is a challenge!)
- When a child is absent, contact him through a telephone call or mail.
- Be intentional about sending notes to the children...thank you for being in Bible study every Sunday in October; thank you for learning the Bible verses this month; congratulations on placing second in the swim meet.

Never forget the Happy Birthday, Christmas, Easter, or Valentine cards! (Your Valentine greeting is found in 1 John 4:10. Look in the Bible for your greeting.)

- When on vacation, send each child a picture postcard from that locale. (I carry in my wallet each child’s name, address, telephone number & birth date & some 24-cent stamps). A greeting may be something like this... “God did a great job when creating this world! Just look! I will see you in Bible study next Sunday.”

- You may want to leave a message for the child on the family’s voice mail...for no reason! “Hope you had a good day at school!”

- Plan at least one party each quarter; children still enjoy playing games! We get to know people by spending time with them. Consider having a party that parents attend and play the games!

I’ve had success having children’s parties immediately following morning worship and on Friday night. Perhaps Saturday morning would work well in your area.

- Plan to have lunch with 2 or 3 children each Sunday as a way to get to know them better and to give some individual attention in an “unstructured” environment. Learn about their likes & dislikes, their families, their pets, school, computers, their stressors!

- Have a goal! A worthy goal is to visit in the home of each child in your classroom!

From prior experiences, I know the benefit to me personally of visiting in the homes of the boys & girls...I will never forget Chris, age 5, who quickly closed the door after he had opened it, without inviting me in! I heard him yelling as he ran down the hallway, “Mama, Mama, my teacher is here!” I remember Claire, age 9; I had intended to make a quick 10-minute contact; we talked for 30 minutes while her Mom prepared supper!

- Make hospital visits when child or parent is hospitalized.

- Go to the funeral home when child loses a family member. Then follow-up with a visit to the child’s home.

- Consider taking children (2 or 3 at a time) Christmas shopping.

- Have a cookie-making time at the church house; deliver the cookies to someone in need of attention. (This helps children learn to minister/serve.)

- Greet children who have moved into another classroom. You still know them although they are 6th graders!