

Training Young Timothys

by Joey Ellis

he apostle Paul explains to us in Ephesians 4:11,12 that we are to be equippers of others for the work of ministry. At first glance, that Scripture guides our minds to the area of training adult volunteers for ministry. Yet it should also alert us to the potential of the kids in our churches. Notice that Paul did not put an age restriction on ministry. We should see ourselves as having the same relationship with our children as Paul had with Timothy. We should be training our young Timothys.

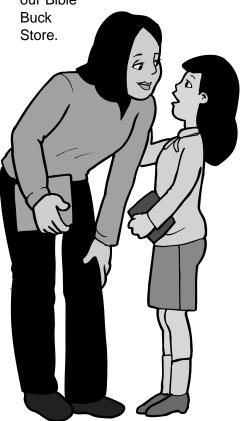
My wife, Carla, and I created a ministry for kids called "The Timothy Club" (TC). It is designed to teach leadership and ministry skills to the older kids in our churches. The theme verse is 1 Timothy 4:12, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example" (NIV). Our philosophy is that children can do anything adults can do if it is on their level of understanding and ability.

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

Sunday Morning Ministry

We patterned many of our

ministry opportunities after our adult congregation. In children's church we had greeters, ushers, registration attendants, and sound/video teams. We also had teams of children who would serve in areas that were tailored to our setting. The TC kids ran our Bible



They kept score for competition between our teams. They organized the review game materials and helped the leader run the game. We thought of as many areas as possible to involve our kids in ministry.

Specialized Ministry Teams

We had four specialized ministry teams in which children could participate. Our puppet, drama, altar/prayer, and praise/worship teams were designed to take our ministry training one step further. Each of these had weekly practices and rehearsals. The altar/prayer team generally met Sunday mornings with their adult leader for prayer and teaching on how to pray with kids at the altar. These teams were used on Sundays as well as during outreach events. After a few years, the kids who began in these ministries were becoming the leaders of them.

Believe in Your Children

Allowing your kids to experience being used by God will be life changing. They can become young ministers. In one of our very first Timothy Clubs, there was a young girl named Nicole Radney. She is now the children's pastor at Valley Life Center, in Dallas, Oregon. Invest in your kids! It does not matter what you call your ministry training with your kids, just do it!

Questions for Further Study—

1. What is the basic concept behind the "Timothy Club"?

2. What specialized ministry teams can you create using the resources available to you?

3. In what other ways could you make use of the "Timothy Club" concept?

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