



# children's ministry 2012

a joshgen church ministry



# children's ministry 2012

compiled by:  
Niki Breinstampf  
Childrens Ministry Coordinator – Joshua Generation Church

12 Wingate Crescent | Sunningdale | Cape Town | South Africa  
Tel: +27(0)21 557 6020 | Fax: +27(0)21 557 5492

[www.joshgen.co.za](http://www.joshgen.co.za)  
[www.facebook.com/joshgenchurch](https://www.facebook.com/joshgenchurch)

Reproduction, printing and distribution of this document is prohibited  
without the prior consent of Joshua Generation Church.

# table of contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Introduction</b> to children's ministry .....   | 1  |
| The vision.....                                    | 1  |
| The core values.....                               | 1  |
| Family matters.....                                | 2  |
| The dream .....                                    | 2  |
| <b>Nextgen</b> overview & ministries .....         | 3  |
| The coordinator .....                              | 3  |
| Feeding the lambs.....                             | 3  |
| Teaching tools.....                                | 4  |
| The servant heart.....                             | 5  |
| Having a lasting impact.....                       | 5  |
| So how do I get involved?.....                     | 5  |
| <b>Preparing for your class</b> .....              | 6  |
| The different classes .....                        | 6  |
| Preparing your lesson .....                        | 6  |
| To infinity and beyond.....                        | 7  |
| Discipline in class.....                           | 7  |
| Children's worship.....                            | 8  |
| <b>Reaching the children</b> .....                 | 8  |
| The Large Group and The Small Group .....          | 8  |
| Teaching children in a smaller group setting ..... | 8  |
| Teaching techniques .....                          | 8  |
| <b>The object lesson</b> .....                     | 10 |
| Quick overview .....                               | 10 |
| Blameless and Holy before God .....                | 11 |
| Forgiveness .....                                  | 11 |
| Sacrifice .....                                    | 11 |
| Protection .....                                   | 12 |
| <b>Final thoughts</b> .....                        | 12 |



# children's ministry 2012

## Introduction to children's ministry

If you have received this manual your journey as a Children's Church Volunteer has begun. This manual will help equip you to serve in this ministry and give you an overview of Nextgen. As you start, my prayer is that you will cultivate a deep love to teach, lead and equip the children that God has placed in Joshua Generation Church (Joshgen).

### The vision

*"To Awaken Their Passion For Jesus"*

What a joy it is to see children worshiping God with all their hearts, falling into a deeper love with Jesus and being devoted to His word. We want to see children to be filled with a passion for Jesus that will carry them throughout their childhood years, into their teens and adult life. We are here to make disciples for Jesus, fulfilling the Great Commission and what better place for you to do this than with the future leaders that God has entrusted to us.

Nextgen will continue to awaken passion for Jesus in hearts of children for many years to come. As you partner with us, together we will see the next generation rise up and do far more than what we will be able to achieve in our lives.

### The core values

There are 3 core values that are set in place for everyone who serves in Children Ministry across all the Joshgen congregations. They are the following:

#### Safety

Safety come first. As we serve the children, we want every child that comes through our doors to be welcomed into a safe environment with teachers and volunteers that are above reproach. We ask all volunteers to complete an affidavit and a copy of your ID which we will submit to the police for a name clearance. This is to ensure that the heart of each volunteer is to lead the children into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

We want our children to be safe from physical, emotional, spiritual or sexual danger and we need to recognize the responsibility and trust parents place in us when they leave their children in our care.

#### Truth

As we disciple the children and bring the Gospel to them in fun and creative ways, we need to make sure that what is being taught is the truth. Every teacher is given the freedom to explore and expand on their lessons, this allows for fresh revelation and freedom for the Holy Spirit to flow through each teacher. Every class needs to have 2 adults present at all time, in this way teachers are accountable for what is being taught.

We are not merely a babysitting service, but have, as an objective, the raising of young men and women into the fullness of Christ.

#### Fun

This often can be one of the most difficult values to sustain as we can be so focused on the running of a service, ensuring everyone is in place, making sure lessons are well prepared and the children are all accounted for, often fun can take a back seat. Fun is not only there for the children but for you and the team. For a successful children's ministry it is vital that the children can see you are having fun with them.

So if there is one thing I would ask of you while you are serving in Nextgen, it is to "HAVE LOADS OF FUN".

## Family matters

Nextgen is here to support parents in the spiritual growth of their children. Family is the primary place where the child's spiritual needs are met. The amount of time that you will have with a child will add up to about 30 hours a year. This is not enough to build solid Christian foundations in their lives. We are here not as their main spiritual nourishment, but to be a support and strengthening to what is being taught at home by the parents.

You will however have children in your care that don't get spiritually fed at home and you might be their only direct access to Jesus. When you spot these children, make sure you love and take care of their needs during the short time they are with you.

While you are ministering to the children you are also indirectly serving their parents who need to be in church to hear God's Word. As time goes on you will start to build a relationship with them and your influence will increase, this is vital in having lasting impact in the families you serve.

Nextgen is not only about teachings every Sunday, we are also here to build friendships with the children and to shepherd them. Children need to feel a part of Joshgen and we can show them their value and acceptance into the family by the friendships we make with them. They are not junior Christians, or part of another church; they are Joshgenners who deserve as much commitment and love as any other.

## The dream

Before I came onto staff at Joshgen, Jesus gave me a dream of what He will be asking me to do for children's ministry. In my dream I was on an ocean liner overlooking the sea below, like that scene from Titanic with Leo in the front arms wide open. As far as my eyes could see I saw the ship was surrounded by ice. I surveyed the area and my eyes were drawn to below the stern where I saw a school of dolphins trapped in a space of water. The ice had surrounded them from the open sea. My heart was filled with compassion and needed to do something to help them. I instantly had an idea to free the dolphins; I would use the ocean liner to break away the ice so the dolphins can follow behind, leading them to freedom. As this thought came to my mind, I heard a voice saying; "This is what I want you to do". It was clear, God had spoken to me.

I believe God's heart for everyone who serves in Nextgen is to help break open the way for children to be easily be led into the presence of Jesus. The reality is that leading children can be difficult work at times. They can be disruptive, distracted and disobedient in class which makes it difficult for a teacher. Breaking ice is never easy - the hardest part is getting started. Once you gained momentum by showing the children where you are leading them, you will see them following you with joy and excitement into the presence of Jesus. At the end of their time with Nextgen I want them to feel that you have led them closer to Jesus.

The key to a successful time with the children is our preparation and prayer during the week. This sets the ship into motion for Sunday's meeting for when we start leading them. Don't underestimate the importance of your time preparing at home, it will help you enormously when it's your turn to serve.

I am super amped to be doing God's work with you and pray with all my heart that you will be excited to lead our children into all that God has for them.



# find out who we are

## Nextgen overview & ministries

Under the banner of Nextgen we have 2 ministries in which people can serve which enables us to be effective in the Kingdom.

- **The first is Children's Church**

This takes place on Sunday's where the focus includes lessons, rosters, getting volunteers, class setups, meeting the needs of the children and other general running's of Sunday meetings. At Children's Church it's all about serving the church and our little lambs that have been placed in our care. This may also involve helping out at other meetings during the year, other than Sundays, e.g. Global Gatherings on a Saturday.

- **The second is Children's Ministry**

This is a separate ministry focusing on reaching and meeting the needs of children outside the church walls. In this ministry it is not about the Sunday runnings of Children's Church, however it does involve Sunday volunteers and the children in your congregation. Children's Ministry takes what we are teaching the children and brings it into action outside of the walls of the church. There are many areas that Children's Ministry can serve the community, it's just a matter of finding a need, getting teachers and children to join the vision and start serving the community.

I want to encourage you, that as God lays on your heart to serve your community, that lives will be changed and hearts will come to know Jesus. Let's not only speak it to the children on Sundays but show them by our lifestyle what it is to be a true follower of Jesus.

### The coordinator

God's heart for us as a church is to reach the city for Jesus. If we take a look at the number God gave Andrew, our Lead Elder, 24 000 people, this will include children, lots of children. A faithful coordinator has been appointed in each congregation is that looks after volunteers, children and helps with the general running of the ministry. They are also there to assist in helping you minister effectively to the children, giving pointers and tips that help make your class an easy fun environment for you and your children to be in.

No two congregations run the same and no two classes are the same. Each individual coordinator has set in place a structure to manage and lead the children effectively according to the environment set before them. Some congregations will have more facilities to do more with the children, while others will have less and have to improvise by using their surroundings. So there will be challenges that you will face which may limit you for what you want to do with the children, however as we come along side each other, together we will effectively complete the work God has set before us.

### Feeding the lambs

There are many curriculums out there for children's ministry and some great programs that work well in certain church environments. When I first started in Joshgen, I was thrown into the deep end in what God wanted for the children.

God led me to the word:

*John 21:15. Jesus was having breakfast with some of the disciples. When they finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."*

*Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."*

*Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" Peter said, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you!"*

*He said to him, "Feed my sheep."*

The first instruction from Jesus was for Simon to 'feed the lambs', not the sheep but their offspring, to feed them the Word of God. That day Jesus showed me His heart for feeding children the Word of God.

God knows the implication when children are left without His Word. In Deuteronomy 4:9 God instructs Israel to teach their children and their grandchildren the commands He had given, so they would walk in His ways and not forget His commands.

We see later in Judges 2:10 the second generation who arose from the Promised Land did not know the Lord, His commands or the miracles which He had done for Israel, the children did evil in the eyes of God and started worshipping Baals. So a whole generation turned from God because His Word was not spoken over them. Nextgen is here to continue reminding the children of God's amazing Word spoken to us through the Bible.

## Teaching tools

### Ages 3 to grade 3

With the different age groups it's important to reach children where they are at. For 2012 the age group between ages 3 to Grade 3 will be starting on the Orange curriculum. It's a fun exciting program and a great tool to help all that serve this age group in bringing fresh new teachings and activities for the children, making their experience of Church and learning about God super exciting. There is always more work that needs to go into preparing for this age group and the Orange curriculum is going to help all the teachers give exciting dynamic lessons that will awaken the children's passion for Jesus. There are 4 main objectives that are repeated in the class

- **Making it fun** – This is where the teacher will begin the lesson with a fun game or object-talk which will lay a foundation for the children on what is going to be taught on the day.
- **Making it true** – This is where the children will do worship, prayer, offering and the bible story in a large group setting.
- **Making it stick** – Here the teacher will present an interactive craft or activity for the children to do. This allows for the children be a part of the story being told.
- **Making it real** – This is where the children will break up into smaller groups to discuss what they learned and to pray together.



### Grade 4 to 6's

For the grade 4 to 6's we will continue with our theme lessons with some new trimmings to better serve this age group. We are focusing on a bible study environment, creating a more meaty teaching that will feed and help sustain their walk with Jesus. Below is an overview of the structure in place to lead the Supernovas:

- **Memory verse time:** The main memory verse is shared and taught in four different creative ways over the month. The verse is then explained and is the foundation of the lesson.
- **Bible story time:** The bible story which is the basis for the application is shared.
- **Application time:** This is where we highlight what God wants us to learn from the lesson. This part links the lesson for the child sees the truth, understands the message and applies it to their life.
- **Action time:** This is time spent with the children where they take action on what they have learned. It's filled with prayer time, relationship building and a response opportunity to God on what was learned that day.

All lessons are made great by the people who use it, and bring their own flavour. You are the key in making the lesson great and impactful so that it changes the lives of the children who you minister to.

What will your role as grades teachers in preparing what you teach on Sundays?

I feel responsible for your growth in Children's Church and I need to keep you healthy. I don't want to give you a 5-point lesson to bring the children; this is like getting a microwave meal every time you serve. It's quick and easy but not very good for you.

You need to complete the lessons for the children, what I've given you is a skeleton overview on the direction we are leading them. I want you to get excited about the revelation of what God has completed in your heart during your time spent in His presence. In other words, the lessons I prepare are never complete, you complete it. Yet I do give you ideas and scriptures that will help you in bringing a common theme and direction that will be spoken across the city in all congregations.

Every Christian is called to serve God and He knows that we all have busy lives and preparing lessons can take time, however He still wants us to be faithful in serving Him with all our hearts. It was never going to be easy and it is going require you making sacrifices from your regular routine, but as you seek the Kingdom first I truly believe everything else will fall into place. It might take some time to get into a rhythm, but eventually you will get the hang of it. If you are struggling ask your coordinator for help, that's what they are there for. All lessons are found on the Joshgen website at [www.joshgen.co.za](http://www.joshgen.co.za) and click on resources. We also have resources which you can use ideas for crafts, games and color in pictures ext. Go to [www.kidssundayschool.com](http://www.kidssundayschool.com) the Username is **joshuageneration** and the Password is **nextgenkids**.

## The servant heart

---

In Mark 9:33 Jesus and the disciples came to Capernaum and Jesus asks them what they had been disputing about among themselves on the road. They kept silent for they had disputed who would be the greatest. Jesus in His love sits them down and says "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Therefore being a servant makes a great follower of Jesus.

I have seen such servant hearts in this ministry, people who have sacrificed so much to see children grow in God. Children's Ministry can often be a place where people serve more than any other ministry out there, due to the workers being few, loads of children and having to prepare your lessons during the week. Putting it into perspective; you can't eat every day without exercising, you will become overweight and unhealthy. It's the same with being a Christian, you can't be fed week-in and week-out without exercising what has been put inside you. Nextgen is a great place to serve and burn some calories, literally and figuratively.

The story does not end there. Jesus then takes a child and sits him in the midst of all the disciples, lifts him up in his arms and I can just imagine this moment as Jesus expresses His love for children.

*Jesus says, "Whoever receives one of these little children in my name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not me but Him who sent Me".*

That is powerful stuff. Jesus loved using children in His teachings and the teaching of being great in the Kingdom He used a child to explain it. This showed us that firstly children need to be served and taken care of and secondly that children are very important to Jesus and valued by the Father in Heaven. Isn't it awesome that every time we bring a child into our class we receiving Jesus, that's SUPER EXCITING.

## Having a lasting impact

---

Having a lasting impact in the next generation of God's children are going to take faithful servants who are committed. It's wonderful to know the work you do now will impact the future in the Kingdom of God and that God entrusts us to lead the next generation of His people here on earth.

In Genesis 24 Isaac is all grown up and needs a wife to carry on the promise that God gave to Abraham. Abraham then goes and gives the responsibility of finding the wife for his son to a servant in his house. Why did this happen to him? What was it that made Abraham give this incredible responsibility to a servant?

As we look, he was a chief servant in Abraham's house, one in charge of all that Abraham had. He became the chief servant by being faithful to Abraham for many years, he did things that were out of his job description and he is honored by having a direct impact in the future generation of Abraham's family.

Can I say that it's going to take faithful servants in the House of God who will have a lasting impact in the future generations?

It's an honor to serve in Nextgen, to be have been given this responsibility of sowing Gods Word into the lives of children and having an impact in their future.

## So how do I get involved?

---

If you have been inspired and motivated to take the challenge, the next step is to get on board with the team in your congregation and start serving. Find the coordinator in your congregation and start to shadow in a class for a few weeks so that you can see how things are run. Pray and decide where you think you will be best suited, be it pre-school or grades. Once you have made your decision, fill in the indemnity form together with a copy of your ID. There are a few criteria's which need to be in place for you to be able to serve in Children's Church they are the following:

- You are a member of Joshua Generation church and have completed Starting Point.
- You are a part of a community within your congregation.
- You are accountable to someone in your community.
- You do not have any history that would draw into question your working with children.

As teachers and volunteers you will have a direct influence over the children, as you do this, your motive will be to lead the child into a better understanding of who God is and to bring them into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Please be aware of the following that may be a concern for you to be serving in this ministry and leading children:

- **Darkness:** Is there any sin that you are living in that has not been brought to the light?
- **Dependencies:** Are you currently dependent on any medication, drugs or other narcotics?
- **Debt:** Is there currently heavy debt due to uncontrollable spending habits?
- **Doctrine:** Is your doctrine in line with Joshua Generation church?

The above is there to protect the children and to make sure that everyone who is a part of the team is in the right place with God to serve our Children. We do ask that if you decide to serve with us that you commit for a year. Dropping out affects the children, who have built a trustworthy relationship with you as their teacher. Can you imagine if a child sees this happening two or three times in a year? They will see that when times are tough it is ok to take our hands off the plough.

There are exceptions to this, if elders agree that the place you are in is not a healthy place anymore and they feel you need to step down for a season. This would need to be communicated through the elders to the Kids Coordinator of your congregation. Remember as part of this team you will have challenges to overcome during your year. Satan doesn't want you to have a lasting impact in the children you serve and will try make it difficult to get you away from the lives that you are about to change.

# enjoy being creative!

## Preparing for your class

Depending on which congregation you are in, you will have anything from 2 to 5 classes running on a Sunday. Some congregations will have fewer classes depending on the venues, some might just not have enough room to have age related classes, so they are divided into Preschool and grades 0 .

### The different classes

Our classes are divided into the following groups:

- **Toddlers age 1 to 3**  
This class is filled with games, activities and toys for the children to play. Our toddler classes are run generally by the parents and an overseer allocated to the class.
- **Movers & Shakers age 3 to 4**  
With a great puppet show, our puppets, Christian and Faith entertain the children and lead them into an exciting bible story which helps highlight the lesson for the day. Our Movers & Shakers have a blast with music, crafts and free time to make new friends.
- **Shooting Stars age 4 to Grade R**  
With awesome worship and creative lessons the Shooting Stars are becoming shining stars for Jesus. Undoubtedly this class has loads of fun with Jesus.
- **Comets Grade 1 to 3**  
Children are led into amazing time of worship. Comets learn more about God in an enjoyable and creative way. Their love to learn more about Jesus is so exciting to see.
- **Supernovas Grade 4 to 6**  
With action-packed worship this class is surely the coolest place to be. A passion for Jesus is birthed into our Supernovas with amazing time spent in God's presence. This class is based around the studying of the Bible on different topics which help these children face the world with Jesus as their strength.

### Preparing your lesson

The most important advice for a children's church leader I can give is to be well prepared. This will be vital in having a successful time with your class. There can never be an "I'll just wing it" attitude - the children deserve better than that. Spending time with Jesus on behalf of the children in prayer and preparation is essential for their growth and yours. There are three areas that when preparing are important for the children. They are the following:

- **God time:** This time is spent praying for the children and seeking God for your class, the lesson and getting creative ideas on how you will present your lesson.
- **Study time:** This time is used for completing your lesson by doing some research and finding Bible verses to reinforce what you will be speaking on.
- **Activity time:** Prepare your activity or craft for your class depending on your age group.

I recommend one hour during the week for each lesson should be enough. So that's only three hours that you would have to set aside for the children in a month as a teacher.

Before your class starts, have a vision on how you are going to bring everything together. I sit and play it out in my head how my class will run. I think of what I would need to do to make the meeting flow - setting everything in place in my mind helps me deliver it in the class with excellence.

The lesson needs to be impactful and memorable. As you spend your time prepping, God will lay on your heart how He wants you to present the message in a way that the children will never forget.

When I went up to Mossel Bay to minister to the team I was asked to teach on Sunday to the children. I was feeling very confident to do it, as I knew the lesson and thought I don't need to bother to prepare, boy was I wrong. As I looked through the outline of the lesson before the Sunday, I realized that still needed to spend time with God for ideas. It was a difficult lesson to teach and I needed God's help to show the children what happens when we are not spending time with Him, how our hearts can become hard.

Well, God woke me up at 3 in the morning when a cockroach came crawling under my bed cover. As I tried to kill it, it slipped under the door. Well that was it for me for the rest of the night. I just couldn't sleep after that and I was freaked out that it would come crawling back and lay eggs in my ear or something. Lying in my bed I started thinking about the lesson and asked God to help me complete it. I started looking round the room and was drawn to the table on which lay a large starfish that had been taken out of the water and hardened. I got so excited, this was what God wanted me to teach the children. So the next day I proudly brought the starfish into the class and surprised the children with it. I explained how I am a scuba diver and have seen many starfish and in water they are a soft spongy feeling. I sent the dead starfish around and got the children to feel the texture and examine it. I explained how when we remain in God it's like a starfish remaining in water, our hearts are soft towards His voice and what He asks us to do. If we don't spend time with God in prayer, worship and being in church, our hearts become like a starfish out of water. **THEY GOT IT!** We had such fun with Jesus that day - they left starfishes soaked in the presence of Jesus.

This is what I believe God wants to give each volunteer who spends time with Him in preparation - unique creative ways in bringing the message to the children. I pray that God will give you the keys to unlock the hearts of the children and that they will never forget the creative lessons that will come through you.

## To infinity and beyond

Earlier you read about Abraham who sent his servant to go find a wife for Isaac. As he arrives he realizes the huge task of finding this wife and turns to God in prayer. He asks God that the person who comes to him and offers to not only give him water but to water all his camel will be one for Isaac.

The servant was looking for a heart that would over exceed the expectations of what was asked. As soon as he had finished praying, God answered. Rebecca arrived and gave him and all his animals water, continuing until every animal was full.

When it's your time to serve, over exceed the expectations of the children that you won't simply do what is asked in the lessons, but you will do so much more, taking it to infinity and beyond.

## Discipline in class

One of the biggest challenges with children is discipline, how to control the class when you might not have had any experience in teaching. Hours of preparation can be ruined if your class discipline is not in order.

I have learned the hard way by failing to discipline, when I do not follow through with what I said I would do. Be firm in love and don't feel sorry when you have to follow through with disciplining a child.

Every time a new teacher comes to teach his or her class, the teacher needs to set boundaries. You might not be the same as the previous teacher who could have been more

lenient than you. You need to train them up to know what you expect of them and soon they will know not to cross the boundary with you.

The one experience which comes to mind was when we had a global gathering at the AGS church. I had prepared for at least two weeks on my lesson. It had slides, games and a really cool ending where children were going to participate in seeing their weakness shredded and burned. It was going to be such an awesome night and I knew exactly what I was going to say and how I was going to run the meeting.

As any gathering, I was expecting lots of children through the doors and I planned for there to be enough helpers to assist in the classes. When I went up on stage I immediately started with my teaching. Half way through I was distracted by a baby crying, then it was a child playing with his phone, then some boys felt like going skateboarding on the ramp across the room and all the other boys followed. Things were getting out of hand and I was losing the crowd. I would address one child then the next, and then I tried getting the leaders to help me. Finally it got to a point where children were all over the place - I had been defeated.

It was a night I will never forget, needless to say, I could not finish the lesson that was so well prepared. Afterwards, as I recovered from my wounds ;-), I realized that the children had not received the boundaries for the evening in their new environment. My biggest mistake was to not set down the ground rules before I started. I learned that whenever I lead a meeting or teach in a class I will remind the children of my rules and the consequence of them breaking it. The second mistake was not to inform the teachers of the rules, they were no help to me until I had asked them. If they knew what was unacceptable then they would have acted more swiftly and been able to put out the flames before they became forest fires. So when you are with your helper or you are the helper, know what the boundaries are and act swiftly to control the class.

The 3 rules that I remind the children are the following.

- **You do not speak to your friends while I am talking.**
- **If you have a question put up your hand – do not shout out.**
- **You do not walk around unless you have received permission.**

These are pretty simple rules but if they are not applied you will have a rowdy, disruptive class on your hands, it will not flow as you would like and you will always have to address children who are on their own mission.

It's important that if you set rules that you keep to them. I give 3 chances 'then you are out'. The first chance is a warning, the second will be a 'time out' for 5 minutes separate from the class and I remind them that they are now on their last warning and the consequence if they continue with their bad behavior. If the child is still uncooperative and rebellious in class, the final result for them is to be sent back to their parents for the remainder of the service. It may happen that you will need to meet up with the parent/s afterwards explaining why the child was sent out of class. Be brave and don't back down when this happens. You will gain the respect of the children and their parents.

As a teacher there is no need to be get frustrated and angry in class, sometimes you might just feel like yelling and screaming at the children, letting your frustration out. There will be times where the children will be exceptionally unruly and you will feel like nothing you say is getting through to them; however, as you apply the above principle you will not have to get to that place of defeat. You have the power, don't lose it, but use it. Always keep cool and simply use your authority when needed and you will see your class go the way you planned. Never get to a place where a child is smacked in class, this responsibility is left for the parents to do, not us.

### Children's worship

Have you ever noticed when taking children to get a DVD they will go straight to the children section and choose a movie? They will never go to the drama or thriller section and choose something that you like. They do this because the movies they choose meet them at their level, the same is for worship. The children will often not respond to what the adults are singing, however they will go ballistic for worship that is geared for them.

Children's worship is vital for awakening their passion for Jesus.

At the same time, as parents would often sit with their child through their movie enjoying the family time, it also adds value to have children with their parents during some part of adult worship if possible. Remember that the children will always have their own worship afterwards and parents are more than welcome to join in with them at this time - if they are brave enough.

Children connect with God on a whole new level and we often use DVD's with actions and words screened through a projector. Some congregations might end up having a CD player with sing-along worship songs or worship along with a guitar in different venues. If your venue doesn't have a projector, encourage the children to come to the gatherings where they will experience off the chart worship with other children across the city.

## having fun with the children

### Reaching the children

#### The Large Group and The Small Group

In each congregation there will be different environments that will either provide a large group or a small group setting, some will have both. Both are effective and add value to a meeting.

The Large Group allows for a great time for all the children meeting together in one main venue, having a similar setting as the main meeting. There will be announcements, birthdays, offering, worship and an environment (which is key) to welcoming the presence of Jesus. The Large Group also sets a platform for the children on what is going to be the focus of the day.

Following the Large Group the children will then split into smaller more intimate groups where the teacher and the assistant will present the lesson, connect with them and pray for any prayer requests.

#### Teaching children in a smaller group setting

God showed me that just teaching children God's Word is simply not enough, that building Godly character in them is vitally important in raising the next generation this is where a small group setting works well.

I spent one evening with the children and noticed one boy who knew all the answers to the Bible story being taught. He was knowledgeable in God's Word and impressed us all with what he knew of the Bible.

Later that night something happened where this boy became very difficult to handle. He would not listen to the teachers and rebelled against all the rules that were there to protect him. It came to a point where I had to speak to the parents about his behavior. By the end of the evening I could not believe things ended this way for him.

God showed me that Nextgen needed to build Godly character in children. I learned that God is more concerned at our character than our understanding of His Word. This is why the lessons are there to help them grow in Godly character together with knowledge of His word. So when you are preparing for the children on Sunday's, always keep in mind that it is not only about presenting them a great story, but that you are there to build in them Godly character through small group settings.

#### Teaching techniques

When you bring your lesson to the children there are many ways in which you can make it exciting, fun and impactful that the children will never forget. There are a few keys which will play a huge part in you lesson. Below are 3 main methods that have helped me never have a boring class.

- **Slipping into character**

When teaching in classes with all eyes are on you, how you present yourself to the children is going to make or break your time spent with them. You first tool to reaching your class is your body. I have seen teachers present the lesson sitting on a chair and the children on the floor. This old school style of teaching limits your effectiveness with the children.

To approach children in a fun creative way you will need to use your body as a tool so that the children will listen with

their eyes on every word you say. A great way to do this is to move, as you slip into different characters when you teach it will help bring the story to life. For example, if you are teaching a story of David and Goliath and you come to the part where David is cutting off Goliath's head: stand with your hand raised in the air with the imaginary sword of Goliath (use both hand up as the sword was heavy), then swing it down to the ground where our Goliath is lying with a disgusting look on your face as the blood squirts everywhere.

Children have a great imagination, so when you do this they will start to see you as David without you even having to say it. In this way you have brought them into the story and they are seeing this event unfold.

I always approach my teaching with this in mind, "How can I make my Sunday, a Sunday the children will never forget".

I will spend time with God trying to get creative ideas to express the lesson using my body, often acting it out, behind closed doors and curtains.

- **Tips of the tongue**

Our voices are the most powerful forms of expressing emotions and bringing children into the story through emotions in our voice. Your voice is what will carry emotion and excitement in the class, so when I do a lesson I make sure that I am excited when there is something to be excited about. Where there is a serious moment, my voice leads the children into this moment, guiding them to feel the emotion with me.

When we look at the story of Jesus walking on water, the disciples were freaking out because they thought they were seeing a ghost. When I tell this story I put on the most scared face and voice that will best represent this moment to the children. I also speed up my voice or slow it down depending on the mood of the story. I often see it when children get noisy during a teaching, the teachers automatic response is to raise their voice louder, I go the other way. When this happens, without fail, I would captivate their attention by

lowering and slowing my voice into a whisper to catch their attention, it works every time. They think that you are telling them something so important that they going miss out on this key moment of the lesson.

- **Using children in your teaching**

Children love being part of the story and most of the time, when you ask for a volunteer all hands will go up. They love it when they are involved in the story and for their friends to see, plus the audience is thrilled to see their friend acting out the story of Joseph getting a beating by his brothers.

This tool of teaching is one that needs to be well controlled as the children can overpower you with their enthusiasm to make their friends laugh by being silly. When you bring a child up, don't try getting the child to talk, use him as a prop and speak on his behalf. So if you have John the Baptist baptizing people and is speaking to the crowd, wanting him to say something;

- rather stand behind him,
- look at the other children,
- change your voice and
- speak for the child what you want the other children to hear.

Often if you try get a child to speak they get nervous and take away momentum of the story. Props are also key to presenting a story well, you don't have to use a sword if you don't have one, you can use something else and children find it funny when wired props are used.

- **Repetition**

Have you noticed how young children love to watch the same video over and over? This is how they learn. An effective way to impart a message is to repeat the core concept many times during the whole lesson, getting the kids to repeat it with you. This will embed that truth in the memory.





## Blameless and Holy before God

---

### Verse

*Ephesians 1:4. "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."*

### Preparation

Clear white plate, finely ground pepper, permanent marker, water and washing up liquid.

### Blameless and Holy

To show how God sees us before and after we accept Jesus, we must see someone through God's eyes.

Draw a picture of a stick man on the plate. Fill the plate with water. Tell your class that this person does not know Jesus and as we are going to see what happens to his sin when he accepts Jesus into his life.

Say that you have sin in your hand and sprinkle some very fine pepper onto the water, just enough to cover the surface of the plate. Explain that as we are seeing this man's sin it's now hard to see him. This is how God sees someone who has not yet accepted Him, all He can see is sin.

Explain, "This man tries to get rid of his sin by himself but he can't." Use your finger to try move the sin – it is impossible.

*Ephesians 2:8 - 9. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Not by works - so no man can boast.*

Now this person meets you (point to a child) who is a Christian and he goes to church. This person accepts Jesus and God hears his prayer of repentance and accepts Jesus. As he does this, touch your finger in some washing liquid and gently touch the middle of the water and watch how the sin is immediately removed and we are able to see the man again.

## Forgiveness

---

### Verse

*Ps 103:12. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."*

### Preparation

Tea bag with string, scissors, plate, matches, black marker.

### Lesson

The Bible teaches us that as far as the east is from the west, God forgets our sins. Jesus was the sacrifice and punishment for your sins. To show how God forgives us of our sins we will show what forgiveness looks like.

Take the teabag and cut it just below the string. Pour out the tea into a plate and use the tea leaves as a launch pad. Write the word "sin" at the top of the teabag and balance it onto the tea leaves. Take a match and light the teabag at both sides of the top of the bag.

Say that as this sin has been taken away through Jesus (the Light of the World). As the flame gets to the bottom bring your hand down towards the flame and say that God has taken your sin and placed it on Jesus. Watch as the teabag launches into the air (could go 1 to 4 meters high). Say that the punishment for our sins was taken away and placed on Jesus. As the flame ends and the dust starts to come down, say that God says; "as far as the east is from the west he will remember our sins no more", and smack the dust cloud as it descends and it will break into millions of fragments. "This is why we love, serve and worship such an amazing King because He has forgiven us of our sins and remembers them no more".

## Sacrifice

---

### Verse

*Eph 5 v 2. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God."*

### Preparation

Candle, matches, plate, red food-colouring, water, permanent black marker.

### Lesson

In the above scripture we see that Jesus was offered up as a sacrifice for our sins. He was crucified and punished for our sins. Why? Why was this the only way that we could be forgiven? Let's see why Jesus had to die for us.

A sacrifice had to be made so we can be forgiven. Throughout the Old Testament animals were sacrificed for sins people committed. Jesus was the final sacrifice for the world's sins. His life had to end so we can be forgiven.

Draw small stick men around the bottom of the plate; add the water to cover the surface of the plate. Add in the red food coloring. The candle represents the life of Jesus, so place it in the middle of the plate. The red food coloring represents a 'world of sin'.

Explain the world is full of sin and everyone needs to accept Jesus as their Savior in order for their sins to be forgiven and Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice. His life was given up and the sins of the world were placed upon Him when died for you and me.

Place glass over the candle and watch the candle fade away. The red water will now be moved away from around the plate into the cup that has covered the candle. Explain that in order for the water to move into the cup the candle had to go out for it to happen, it draws away the red water to itself. This is the same for Jesus. His life had to end so that all our sins will be taken away.

## Protection

### Verse

*Luke 2:40. "And the child grew and became strong; He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him."*

### Preparation

Candle, matches, water, balloons

### Lesson

Wisdom is given to us by God. We can't learn wisdom but we can receive it if we ask for it.

In 2 Chronicles 1 v 7 it reads; "God appeared to King Solomon and said to him, 'Ask for whatever you want me

to give you.'" King Solomon knew what was important to lead a nation, therefore he asked for wisdom. He chose 'wisdom', God gave him so much that he is remembered today as the wisest King that ever lived.

There is a difference between being clever and having wisdom. We can be clever, but make wrong choices and do bad things. Wisdom helps us make right choices.

The Bible explains that wisdom will protect us. To show the children how wisdom protects have 2 balloons blown up of which the one balloon must be half-filled with water. Draw a face on each the balloons and give them names.

Tell a story of both balloons that are faced with a decision and the result of their decision will show if they have wisdom or not. The balloon without the water is the balloon with no wisdom and he fails to make the right choice. Bring the balloon over the lit candle and watch it pop.

Do the same story with the other balloon and watch what happens when placed over the flame. The balloon won't pop because the water protects the balloon from the heat. In this story the water represents a 'life full of wisdom'

In conclusion, as Christians we need wisdom to make the right choices in life. At the end of Moses' life he laid hands on Joseph before he went into the Promised Land and asked God to impart the spirit of wisdom into his life.



## Final thoughts

As we start this new year with passion and excitement, remember that God loves his lambs and have chosen you to lead them. He has entrusted you with their souls and my prayer is that as we begin 2012, like Andrew Selley, our Joshgen Lead Elder would say, "Go flat out for Jesus!"

May God always guide you in everything you do and when you feel weak, He will give you the strength to carry on. Invest your time in His presence so that you set children on their path with Jesus and that you will shine like a city on a hill for the children.

May God show you the keys to unlocking hearts for His Kingdom and use you mightily to impact the children you serve. I look forward to an exciting year along side you as we continue fulfill the Great Commission for our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Love Niki, Kellie and Jonah Breinstampf.*



