

# Connect Belong Grow : Engaging Families with Preschoolers



*There are families in every church,  
and everyone belongs to a family,  
but this does not mean that  
Churches have an effective families  
ministry*



What might God's heart be for families with pre-schoolers in your community?



What's your motivation/your "Why"  
for ministry with families?

eg. Scripture verses, your own story



# In this session

- The shape of families around us
- Jesus example and command
- **Connecting** with families
- Helping families have a sense of **Belonging**
- Journeying with families as they **Grow**
- Some more practical tips for you



# The SHAPE of families



# How are you doing in your messaging to young families ?

- ✓ We strive to make families welcome
- ✓ We try to remember parents and children's names
- ✓ Children's noise does not cause reactions
- ✓ We plan to ensure families are spoken to before and after events



- ✓ We follow up new families or those with illness or are absent
- ✓ We inform families about things happening at the church and invite them along
- ✓ We are sensitive and careful about giving out jobs
- ✓ We are open to change and variety





- ✓ We enjoy families helping in various roles around the church
- ✓ We provide a variety of suitable resources for children
- ✓ We are careful with terms and language to help all understand



# Jesus' example and command

Matthew 9 :35 – 38

*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.*

*When he saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples ' the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into his harvest field'*



***‘ Buildings are one thing, but connecting with people and building relationships is the real purpose of the church ‘***

*Judith Wigley – Pretty Much Everything You need to Know about Working with Under 5’s Scripture Union 2005*



# CONNECTING WITH FAMILIES

- Team understands the WHY of the ministry ie your PURPOSE
- Intentional about getting to know families , particularly new families and making them feel welcome
- Collect relevant information about the family & child that is needed to best care for them
- Send regular communication about community events
- Establish a simple routine



# CONNECTING WITH FAMILIES

Welcoming ideas

- Nametags for kids and adults
- Photos of leaders / team on wall with names
- Information available about other things the church provides
- Simple programming



# SENSE OF BELONGING

Celebrate special events such as  
- birthdays of adults and children & new babies

Sensitively journey with families through difficult seasons such as loss of a child, illness, grief, divorce, etc



Create opportunities for families and kids to give ideas and feedback

# SENSE OF BELONGING

Community events outside of the program where all are invited

Pastoral care

Multi generational team members



# AS THEY GROW

Opportunities and pathways

- Faith groups such as Alpha
- Marriage & Parenting courses
- Life / Connect groups
- Community events to get to know others eg at Easter & Christmas and Mothers & Father's Day





# Some final practical tips for you

**Ensure your physical environment is child friendly and safe**

## **Your team with preschoolers**

- ✓ familiar carers and team members
- ✓ Suggested ratios
- ✓ Training opportunities



## **Understanding the ages and stages of preschoolers**

- ✓ areas of interest
- ✓ Set up BEFORE the families / children arrive
- ✓ Open ended activities
- ✓ Process not product
- ✓ Familiar routine and repetition
- ✓ Choice of activities



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Find out more about the **Christian Playgroup Network** [www.cpn.org.au](http://www.cpn.org.au)

