

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



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Junior Church – A Midget Maker

-- By Phil L. Young, May 1984

Occasionally we are asked why the Pleasant Ridge Church does not have Junior or Youth Church service conducted at the same time as the regular Lord's Day Worship hour. We are aware of the fact that we are out of step with the progressive congregations and with sophisticated modern methodology. But we choose to be.

Wee Worship, Children's Church, Junior Church; by whatever name it is called, is a relatively recent phenomenon. It all began a couple of decades ago when some wiseacre somewhere decided that Christian worship must be chopped up into smaller bites for children – that the solemn, stately, or inspiring gospel hymns and songs must give way (all the time) to shallower and hand clapping choruses – that preaching must be watered down to storytelling, films, and skits.

A sadder and more objectionable conclusion could hardly have been arrived at, even by an enemy of the faith. (We have exaggerated the case to get your attention – are your ears up???)

We do agree that children deserve to hear the Gospel in a form and at a level which they can understand and appreciate. THEREFORE, we have Bible School classes every Lord's Day that are graduated and classified with different ages in mind. Of course we do, and it's great!

In addition, we have graded youth programs in the evening hour from 6:00 until 7:00 pm **every** Sunday. Of course we do, and it's great!

And once a year, in the summer, we arrange a Daily Vacation Bible School with all ages and levels of childish appreciation in mind. Of course we do, and it's great!

And, at Flora and at Washington, we support Christian Service Camp programs all summer long with specialized Gospel teaching at all levels. Of course we do, and it's great!



SOOOO, is there never to be a time when children and youth are exposed to the full force of the Gospel message in its fullness and power? We think so, for the following reasons:

1 – Every child should be permitted to see the thrilling victories that take place in Worship Services.

They **MUST** be permitted to observe grown men coming with tears in their eyes to accept Christ.

They **MUST** see families coming as a group to yield obedience to the Gospel terms of forgiveness and watch the whole church receive them.

They **MUST** hear the preacher when he is at his best, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, anointed from on high, thrilled by the reception of an audience listening with bated breath to something greater than oratory and more important than rhetoric.

2 – Every child should have the privilege of watching his father or his grandfather pray at the Lord's Table, or sing in the choir, or belt out the bass in the male quartet.

Every child should see her mother bowed in prayer and listening in reverence to the teaching and preaching.

What sweet memories are denied that child who never worships with the family as a group! What discipline that child never learns who is never taught to be quiet and respectful in the full worship hour of Christ's Church.

Youthful eyes and ears and minds and spirits must be challenged to reach upward to holier things and higher levels. To **always** bring the eternal truths of Jehovah God **down** to their juvenile level is to do them a grave disservice and to actually harm their development and growth. Such stunted development creates midgets!

3 – While there are exceptions we are sure, nevertheless, in the main youth-oriented special services have tended to downgrade traditional and Scriptural items and acts of worship, and to initiate innovative or even radical new formularies.

While we are not opposed to any useful new method of presenting the old gospel truths, yet our experience has been that many youth leaders or youth ministers have too often been too eager to discard the tested, tried, and true, for the untested, and sometimes even untrue new theories.

We cannot believe that puppetry, cartoon skits, and cinnamon suckers can take the place of the “apostle’s doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers”. The former diet begets dwarfs, the latter begets giants. Or so we think, and so we see!

SEE – The Restoration Herald’s January 2015 edition for great insights on this subject – “*When Culture Wins*”.