

INTRODUCTION

Many of us believe that children are our future. Children are the Church's future. Therefore, the Church, parents, and teachers have the responsibility to train them to become strong future members and leaders. However, are we merely waiting for the future? What about the present? Should we not begin our training now instead of pressing the *Pause* button on children?

In fact, research shows the urgency of investing our time, effort, and money in children right now rather than at some future time. The recent research by George Barna¹ reports that 32 percent of those who made a decision to accept Jesus do so between the ages of 5 and 12; 4 percent for those in the 13-18 age range; and 6 percent for people 19 or older. In other words, if people do not accept Jesus as their Savior before they reach their teenage years, the chance of accepting Him later is very slim.

The importance of engaging children in this process of decision-making in their formative years is crucial to building a strong church today. We believe that building tomorrow's church begins with today's children!

Thus, it begins with children in the local churches. It begins with every church having a Children's Ministries coordinator who will oversee the programs that will help children grow in their relationship with Jesus.

In addition, the pastor and elders of the church are key individuals who can help, support and motivate children's leaders to maximize their gifts and time to develop the faith of the children within the church. Therefore, this manual serves as a guide for pastors and elders in understanding the ministry and responsibility of the Children's Ministries coordinator in their local church. It contains ideas, suggestions, and resources that could be used in implementing programs and activities for children.

1 Barna, George. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2003.