



Face the Issue:

This past Sunday, Matt shared with us why it is so important that we see and accept our responsibility to reach the younger generation.

Attitudes about church are often formed during our childhood and youth. If church was exciting, fun, and where we felt loved and accepted, we are more likely to feel positively about church when we become adults. If church seemed to be boring, or where we were often in trouble for “improper behavior,” we are more likely to want to avoid it as adults. Such negative attitudes can dampen a young person’s desire to have a personal relationship with Christ and strong, intimate fellowship with other Christians.

If you went to church as a child, how did you feel about it? What influenced your thoughts, emotions, and attitudes toward church? Did this impact how you felt about the church once you were an adult?

Do you have a relationship with the youth and children in our church? If yes, how did you foster that relationship?

Do you agree that it is important for young people to love going to church? Why or why not?

Into the Word:

Read Proverbs 20:11 and reread the verse Matt used 1 Timothy 4:12.

God had a purpose for Timothy, and Paul did not want Timothy to let others discourage him in his ministry because of his youth. God has a purpose and a plan for the children and youth in our church. They do not have to wait until they are adults to be effective members of God’s kingdom.

Throughout Scripture children and youth were used to fulfill God’s purposes. Jesus used the generosity of a young boy to feed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish (John 6:9–13). God used the courage and faith of a young Israelite girl held captive by the country of Aram to heal the captain of Aram’s army from leprosy and lead him to faith in God (2 Kings 5). As a youth, David had more courage and faith than the soldiers of Israel when he stood up to Goliath (1 Samuel 17). Samuel began ministering to the Lord as a prophet when he was a mere boy (1 Samuel 3). Jesus himself was only 12 years old when he amazed the people in the temple with his understanding of Scripture (Luke 2:40–52). Children who love God impact their world by their words and behavior. The Book of Proverbs tells us that even a child is known by his ways.

Children and youth can serve in the church in many different ways if we will let them. Young people who learn to serve God and others are more likely to live a life of service. Serving Jesus together with other believers gives children and youth a sense of purpose and of belonging. It allows them to grow by imitating and observing those they are serving with and opens up their hearts to the life of service that God is calling them to live.

In what ways might a church inadvertently look down on the youth in their fellowship? How might this attitude be acted out? What is a likely outcome of this attitude?

How can children and youth participate in the worship service?

Paul encouraged Timothy to be an example to those who believe. How might children and youth be encouraged to be an example others in the church?

Apply The Word

What new ideas might you recommend implementing to help children and youth fall in love with being a part of church?

How are children and youth encouraged to serve God and others in our church? What areas of service might be expanded to include children and youth?

How might you be more purposeful in helping children and youth to feel part of Meadowdale?