

Children, What They Can Provide?

Here are a couple of stories that help us think about the leadership children can give. On the adultssavingkids.org website is a video of Bill Rash. Bill was not a Christian. He and his partner sold \$25 million dollars of adult videos or pornography a year. The family had a great deal of money to spend. One summer, Bill's teenage daughter went to a camp. When she came home she told her father, "I fell in love." He said, "You are too young for that." She said, "Oh Dad, you don't understand, I fell in love with Jesus." This took Bill aback. He and his wife saw she was serious, and she invited her parents to attend the church she was now going to. They did, and they became Christians. Not only did her dad become a Christian, but he gave up his partnership in the pornography business. His partner took over and Bill was left without any money. He became financially poor but spiritually rich. He even started going around to men's sexual addiction support groups, helping men see how they had been misled and harmed by the very things he had been doing. All of this came about because his daughter, without realizing it perhaps, still lived out her ministry to her parents. We do not want to overlook the leadership children can give.

One congregation started an afternoon program for kids coming from school. Many grandparents got involved in going to the church and teaching these kids how to bake, sew, and make things. Suddenly, many of the older members found joy and a way to contribute because of the interest of these children. One boy, riding on a bus going to the church opened the window and yelled to some friends, "Come on, come with us to the church. We are having lots of fun." Here again, something special was happening in the congregation because of the children's part in making it happen.

Some of the best youth group experiences take place when the older youth don't just go to their youth group to be entertained. Rather, they take on projects and grow in their leadership to make something special happen. We don't want to underestimate what youth can provide, not just what we adults can provide for them.

Many Bible stories don't tell us specifically the age of the person the story is about. Yet we know many of them start with a teenager. We do know that Joseph, son of Jacob, was 17 when he was sold into slavery in Egypt (Genesis 37:2). Before David fought with Goliath, King Saul said in I Samuel 17:33, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." In the New Testament, Mary, a teenager, became the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-56). Before the feeding of the 5,000, Andrew discovered a boy who had five barley loaves and two fish. He gave those to Jesus. Jesus then multiplied them enough to feed 5,000 people (see John 6:1-14, especially verse 9). The nephew of Paul saved his uncle's life by his courageous and proactive actions told of in Acts 23:12-22. These would be good stories and passages to share with one's children or grandchildren.