

Grace on the Ashley Children's Ministry Philosophy

The Children's Ministry of Grace on the Ashley Baptist Church exists to glorify God through the teaching and memorization of God's Word. Therefore, we strive to support parents in their God-given roles and evangelize children by proclaiming the Gospel both in word and deed.

1. Glorify God

"Sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! ... All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name." Psalm 66:2-4 ESV

We live to glorify God in all we do. We understand that we do not have control over the conversion of the children we love, parent, and teach. We pray and yearn for their conversion, which is a work of God. Therefore, we seek to glorify God in how we teach and raise our children. We can strive to please God as we declare the greatness of His name to our children. We can strive to please God as we do all He calls us to do, including raising our children. "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This makes teaching and parenting yet another venue for glorifying God.

2. Teaching and Memorization of God's Word

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." Psalm 119: 9-16 ESV

We want to teach God's Word to our children because we understand that it is the Scriptures that make our children wise unto salvation (1 Timothy 3:15). Scripture is how we know God and how God reveals Himself to us (Romans 1:20, 1 Samuel 3:21). What we are taught as children becomes the basis for our doctrines, worldview, ethics, convictions, and behaviors as adults. "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds" (Psalm 71:17). Therefore, as we hide God's word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11), we leave less and less room for worldly influences and we are reminded of His promises.

3. Supporting Parents in Their God-given Roles

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4 ESV

We believe that God has chosen the family to be the primary context and means for the Christian nurture of children. God has given to parents the rights and responsibilities of teaching, protecting, guiding and loving their children according to the Scriptures. Our role as a church is to assist, not replace, parents in the process of teaching and training children. Parents are commanded by God to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21). Therefore, we know that parents are to be the primary

disciplers of their children. We hope to equip, edify, and encourage parents in this role by providing resources, training, and personal shepherding. Further, we recognize that some parents are not concerned with spiritual matters and so we commit to greater involvement in spiritual care to these families.

4. Evangelizing Children by Proclaiming the Gospel in Both Word and Deed

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28: 18-20 ESV

The church has been commanded to take the gospel into all the world and to share the good news of Christ with every person. Therefore the motivation for Children’s Ministry must begin with God’s command to evangelize the lost, which includes our children (Acts 2:39). We understand that a child’s greatest need is regeneration because children are dead in their sin and without hope of salvation (Romans 3:23). We hope to cultivate the soil of children’s hearts through sowing the seed of the gospel. Furthermore, since salvation is of the Lord, we encourage the fruit of genuine repentance as demonstrated through a life of submission to Christ’s lordship.