

# Building Blocks

Preparation from the Ground Floor by Linda Schilbe



At first it seemed like a simple request from Vicar Dan Flynn of Living Water Church, the North Campus of St. Luke, Ann Arbor. “Can you be in charge of Children’s Ministry?” Living Water’s ministry started in 2004 and I found myself stepping forward to start a brand new children’s ministry program. With some experience, a theme, a committee, volunteers, and materials ordered, the *job* seemed like a manageable one.

*The Voyage* (a.k.a. Sunday School) began one Sunday with teachers bringing their children, an opening and Bible account, and breaking into two groups for a craft or workbook. According to schedule we ended with a simple snack.

It was not long before the first Sunday arrived when kids were absent and we had four staff volunteers and one student. We held to the same schedule.

As time went on changes occurred, we moved to a single curriculum to make preparation easier. We went with the flow but were prepared and have

found that we have built a relational ministry. The attendance changes and by the grace of God it will continue to increase.

This past summer, decision was made to hold a Vacation Bible School (VBS) and 100 children from the community attended. This is ten times the number we normally see on a Sunday at *The Voyage*. We were prepared and shared the Gospel. VBS did not increase attendance. It did, however, serve to build a stronger relationship among the volunteers.

Somewhere during all of this, God took my *job* and turned it into my passion. And that *passion* was contagious. The Children’s Ministry team has *passion*, so each week we prepare and now we have a Nursery, *The Voyage*, and Children’s Church.

In the children’s ministries at Living Water, God’s Word is always forefront. Children are building a relationship with Jesus and are nurtured through the care takers in the Nursery, the teachers of *The Voyage*, and presenters of Children’s Church.

In children’s ministry, it is important to prepare avenues that children connect with God. It is important to never be discouraged by low numbers but rejoice for every child who has the opportunity to come into a saving relationship with Jesus and grows to know Him more.

Living Water Church is now gearing up for a growth campaign. When the children come, we will be prepared.

*Linda Schilbe is Director of Children’s Ministry at Living Water, Whitmore Lake.*

