



## WHAT TO DO WITH THE KIDS?

### GROUPWORDS

*Whoever welcomes one of these little children  
in my name welcomes me.*

— Mark 9:37 —

When forming a group or considering joining a group, one of the most asked questions is, “What will be best for the kids?” This is a difficult question because it is a moving target. Families and children are constantly changing and clearly one size does not fit everyone. The challenge is to provide a deep, interpersonal Bible study for the adults in the group while at the same time guiding the hearts of the children.

As your group discusses how to address these issues, consider the following:

- Consider the role your group will play in the spiritual development of the children.
- Don't view the children as a problem to be solved. They are a gift from God.
- Decisions regarding the children should be made as a group.
- The interests of both the children and the adults should be considered.

*Children have never been very good  
at listening to their elders,  
but they have never failed to imitate them.*

— James Baldwin —

While there is not one answer, the following nine suggestions can be beginning points for you as an individual family or your group.

- 1. The Children Are Fully Integrated** – Adults and kids stay together for the entire time and the small group lesson is planned with the kids in mind.  
**pros** - Families learn together.
  - There are no childcare issues.
  - The kids are included by plan, so they are not seen as interruptions.
  - The gathering requires only one large meeting room.**cons** - The adults are not able to go as deep or “open up” as they might like.
  - It is more difficult to hold the interest of both the kids and the adults.
  - It can be frustrating for those without kids.
- 2. The Children Are Partially Integrated** – The adults and kids meet together at the beginning of the small group for a “child friendly” devotional time. The children then leave with their caregivers.  
**pros** - The children feel a part of the group and get to hear other adults share.
  - The adults can have their own discussion
  - The kids are given time to learn on their level.**cons** - There is a little disruption as the kids leave and resettle in their next location.
  - The kid's lesson will need to be written.
  - The gathering will require two rooms.
  - The experience may be a burden on the host family.



3. **The Children Are Segregated In The Same Home** – The adults and kids have separate activities and separate experiences.
  - pros** - The adults can have a good discussion.
    - The parents are “nearby” if needed.
    - It is easier for newcomers to join the group because childcare is not an issue.
    - The kids have more time to learn on their level.
    - The kids enjoy playing with other kids.
  - cons** - The adults will be interrupted from time to time.
    - The gathering requires two rooms.
    - The kids miss what other adults say about faith.
    - Kids lessons will need to be written.
    - The experience can be a burden on the host family.
    - Will the group pay for childcare or will the adults take turns missing the group?
4. **The Children Are Segregated In A Different Home** – This should be a nearby home, perhaps of another family in the same small group.
  - pros** - The adults experience are no interruptions or distractions.
    - The adults can relax and move their discussion even deeper.
    - The gathering is less of a burden on the host family.
  - cons** - There is the added time and complication of dropping off and picking up.
    - The kids don’t see the faith community being built.
    - Will the group pay for childcare or will the adults take turns missing the group?
    - Some parents may be uncomfortable unless their kids are in the same building.
5. **The Group As A “Date Night”** - Treat the small group as a night out with your spouse or friends and get individual childcare.
  - pros** - Tuesday or Thursday groups could hire some from our youth group who meet on Wednesday.
    - The adults can have a good discussion.
    - A couple can enjoy dinner alone or with group members prior to the meeting.
  - cons** - The regular cost of childcare.
    - It may be difficult to find a “regular” babysitter.
6. **The Couple Attends Alternate Weeks** - One week she attends the group while he attends to the children. The next week they reverse.
  - pros** - The family saves on childcare money.
    - The adults at least have group contact every other week.
  - cons** - The couple does not attend the group together.
    - The adults miss out on the “every week” advantage.
    - The kids miss out on being with other kids.
7. **Mix 5 & 6** – One week she attends, the next week he attends, the third week they get child care and both attend.
  - pros** - The adults are able to attend two out of every three week.
    - The couple can attend together once every three weeks.
    - The family saves on childcare money.



- cons** - The kids miss out on being with others kids.
- The couple misses the “every week” advantage.

8. **Boys Club / Girls Club** – One week all the men take care of the children while the women meet for group discussion. The next week they reverse. This can take place at the same site or at two different sites. An option is to follow two weeks of taking turns with one week of everyone being together, men, women and children.

- pros** - The kids have an opportunity for focused learning.
- The kids and the adults are able to connect in mentoring relationships.
- Adults build friendships as they work together to care for the kids.
- Adults have time every other week or every third week for deeper discussion.

- cons** - The gathering requires two sites.
- The adults miss the deeper conversation at least every other week.
- Someone must prepare activities for the children.

9. **The Group Meets At The Church Building** - Some groups meet at the church building on Wednesday evening where childcare is provided.

- pros** - Childcare is provided and is often free.
- The surroundings are familiar for everyone and there is ample parking.
- There is no limit to the number of groups that can be accommodated.

- cons** - The group time is limited by the childcare schedule.
- The group location (classroom) has an institutional atmosphere.
- Some may have to travel a long distance to attend.