

Our Mission

What's our target?

Ridge Kids mission is winning kids to Christ and growing them spiritually.

Our Vision

What do we look like as we hit that target?

Vision:

Ridge Kids exists to bring the great news of Jesus' redemptive love to children and their families. Through Christ-following adult leaders, Ridge Kids will provide a spiritual training ground where children will learn to passionately love God, obediently serve Him and whole-heartedly pursue a lifelong, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ridge Kids will continually strive to partner with parents in transforming children into spiritual champions. ¹

Experiential worship and learning happens each weekend. Children are led to interact physically, emotionally and spiritually with God through worship and the Bible stories that are presented. Learning continues beyond the weekend as families are empowered to lead their children to Christ and to submit to His authority in the daily living out of their lives.

The understanding that concept, language, experiences and relationships are age/stage appropriate and relevant to the culture of our times guides all our interaction – leaders design learning and relational goals that are centered around age-based development, recognizing young children are both unique and impressionable and matter greatly to God. Creative use of drama, interactive “play” and teaching, role playing, video and music promotes a high level of engagement with Bible stories and the ability to transfer application to everyday life. We constantly seek new ways to insert the activities and attitudes of Jesus into all we do, challenging children into a REAL relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Holy Bible is the foundational guide for all we do. The Bible is introduced as the holy, inspired Word of God, its timeliness is appreciated, providing guidance on every aspect of life. Bible stories are taught, emphasizing value and perspectives that develop Christ-like character and ultimately a biblical world view. Discussions target moral choices, central beliefs and the transfer of those beliefs to appropriate life choices. Bible memorization is encouraged to steepen ones connection to God.

Nurturing and loving relationships are a mark of our learning environment. Small group leaders understand and model the value of loving relationships. Children learn together, care deeply for one another, serve each other, appreciate each others unique qualities recognizing that each person is a special gift from God. We build one another up as we create a safe community for friendship development, conflict resolution, truth telling, individuality and acceptance.

Intentional outreach marks all we do. As individuals, a leadership team and a faith community, we pursue family-friendly, fun opportunities to attract families and children who are far from God and

¹ Barna, George. Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions. Regal Books- Gospel Light, 2003.

journey with them toward a fuller and fuller spiritual life. We will creatively proclaim the good news of Christ's love collectively and individually, verbally and actively.

Partnering with parents and families in the spiritual development of children- understanding their primary responsibility for the spiritual nurturing of their children– is our role. We embrace God's plan for parents to provide the primary spiritual training of their children. To that end, we will serve parents and families by providing emotional, spiritual and material support as they invest in the faith of their children. While we do not assume primary leadership in this dimension, we will equip and reinforce what is being taught at home, school, neighborhoods, para-church organizations and other Christ-centered relationships.

The vision and passion of Ridge Kids has remained constant since its beginning – *to aggressively intersect culture, being victorious in winning the relentless spiritual battle for the hearts, minds and souls of our young children*²- partnering with and equipping parents and families to lead their children to their spiritual potential in Christ. We passionately do all we can, as fast as we can, as best as we can, as hard as we can, and as often as we must, to win the young children of Western Michigan and our world for Jesus.

Our Values

What are the guidelines that drive our mission and vision and serve as a grid through which we make decisions and plans?

- 1. Evangelism** - We believe that children matter to God and therefore matter to the church – motivating us to passionately pursue and disciple all children toward spiritual maturity. (*Ps. 127:3; Deut. 7:13; Matthew 18:14; Mark 9: 37; 10:14*).
- 2. Teaching/Discipleship** - We believe that children need to be taught how to think and act in relation to God and His ways - motivating us to instill in our children a passion to understand, enjoy, love, obey³ and serve God in the world around them. (*Ps. 78:4-6; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1; Col 3:20*)
- 3. Relevance** - We believe that Ridge Kids should be fun, age appropriate, culturally relevant and Biblically based- motivating us to capture in our children a celebrative, joy-filled spirit of worship, a feeling of wonder for the world they live in and a sense of holiness for the written Word. (*Ps. 37:4, Deut. 6:5; Is.40: 30-31; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim 3:15-17*)
- 4. Loving Relationships** - We believe that loving relationships should permeate Ridge Kids – motivating us to teach and model Christ-like relationships with the children and the families they represent. (*1 Corinthians 13; John 13:34-35*)
- 5. Safety** - We believe that children are so valuable to God that He commands us to protect them – motivating us to ensure the physical and emotional security of their environment. (*Ezra 8:21; Ps. 16:1*)

² Barna, George. Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions, Pg. 137.

³ Barna, George. Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions, Pg. 83. .

6. Leadership- We believe that children should be shepherded by adults with leadership gifts – motivating us toward empowerment, servant leadership, strategic focus, and intentionality (Romans 12:8; Acts 6:2-5).

7. Parental Responsibilities- We believe that God intends parents to be the primary spiritual leaders for their children– motivating us toward empowerment, strategic focus and intentionality in pursuing their role.
(Deut. 1:31; 6:4-9; 11:18-21; 21: 18-19; Ps 78:5-8; Luke 8:39)

8. Spiritual Transformation- We believe that spiritual transformation is a life-long process- motivating us toward gentle, persistent shaping, intentional pursuit of continuous growth and consistent strategic focus toward full life in Jesus.
(Deut. 6:7; 11:19; Prov. 22:6)