



# KIDS MINISTRY NEW ENGLAND

## **On-Line Kid's Ministry Gathering — May 11, 2020 NOTES and Upcoming Meeting**

### **Helping Kids and their Families Cope with Stress (Crisis)**

Traci Johnson, Occupational Therapist and active member of Nashua Baptist Church, Nashua, NH

### **Signs of Stress**

#### **Physical Symptoms**

- ◆ Decreased appetite
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Upset stomach or vague stomach pain
- ◆ Other physical symptoms with no physical pain
- ◆ Hyperactivity
- ◆ Sleeping Disturbances

#### **Emotional Symptoms**

- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Inability to focus
- ◆ Emotional extremes (anger, crying, aggression, stubbornness, over-reaction)
- ◆ Regressing to younger behaviors
- ◆ Withdrawal from group

### **Current Stress: Covid-19**

- ◆ New routines for living, schooling, interacting and recreating, etc
- ◆ New social norms: 6 feet apart, no hugging, no touching
- ◆ Extra layers of social challenge: masks (minimizing facial expressions, muffled verbal expression); marks on floors and plexiglass in new places; washing hands and no touching faces
- ◆ Changing rules (as the state closes up and then restarts)
- ◆ Understanding which rules apply and what rules don't apply

Practical Strategies that can help

1. Provide a consistent routine and structure (Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 12:7)
2. Be aware of environmental stressors (Proverbs 11:14)
3. Less is more (Matthew 7:24-25)
4. Be a healthy role model — normalize stress (Joshua 1:9, Psalm 55:22)
5. Listen without judgment or criticism (2 Corinthians 1:3)
6. Don't try to solve the problem (Matthew 6:33)
7. Discuss healthy ways of dealing with stress (Philippians 4:6)
8. Get support for your self — take care of your soul; engage spiritual friends and mentors

### **Resources:**

- ◆ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/199601/stress-its-worse-you-think>
- ◆ <https://www.verywellmind.com/all-about-catecholamines-3145098>
- ◆ <https://www.mindful.org/what-awe-looks-like-in-the-brain/>
- ◆ <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/types-of-listening-skills-with-examples-2063759>
- ◆ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acement/index.html>
- ◆ <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
- ◆ <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>

### **What Have We Learned from Covid-19**

- ◆ Better to have fewer things on the calendar
- ◆ We do miss that physical interaction with our kids
- ◆ We are way too busy
- ◆ Learning to engage socially is very tiring
- ◆ Parents need support
- ◆ When planning on-line experiences for kids — less (shorter) is better
- ◆ Engaging and having relationships with kids is very important

### **Other Lessons Learned**

- ◆ Rest is important — as leaders we need soul care and Sabbath
- ◆ Equipping is more important than teaching — As kids ministry leaders, we must balance the teaching of our kids and the equipping we need to give to parent and to our volunteers
- ◆ Connection is absolutely essential (not just physically) but helping to connect parents to parents and families to families
- ◆ Internet can be redeemed for God's goodness
- ◆ Simplicity is king!
- ◆ People need spiritual and physical (community) interaction

### **In Preparation for Regathering — Some things to Consider**

1. **Keep the right perspective:** It is probably not going to happen overnight!
2. Make sure that you already have some **strong ministry happening to your kids and their families!**  
It's NOT TOO LATE TO START NOW!  
What might this ministry look like?
  - ◆ Plan at least one Bible lesson each week for your kids and their families to enjoy together and send that along to parents. This will give them a simple option to use if they want to engage their kids in some spiritual learning. This should include a Bible story, an activity, an activity sheet, and a service project. Utilize trusted curriculum that has the components you want to help your kids grow in their relationship with Jesus.
  - ◆ If you have not started some type of on-line experience for kids, you might want to consider that now especially if your church is not planning to have kid's ministry meet in person. Utilize the Bible lesson you are sending the kids and their families as the anchor for the on-line experience. Make the experience a review of the story, a review game and some music. You might even include others from church to be special guests, to play music or play a game.
3. **Tap into your kid's ministry volunteers!**  
How?
  - ◆ Provide them with contact information about the kids and their families and encourage making phone calls, sending emails or texts, writing cards, or doing porch visits. The key here is to follow up and provide them with everything they need to succeed.
  - ◆ Help put together the weekly Family Connection Page — give them the curriculum with instructions to pull together the Bible story, an activity and a game with simple instructions.
  - ◆ Praying for kids and their families — give volunteers information about kids and families so that they can pray for families — provide note cards so they send notes that they were prayed for
  - ◆ Engage them in putting together or participating in the on-line kid's experience — perhaps they can tell the story, lead a game or engage the kids in a song!
  - ◆ Ask your volunteers how they would like to plug in!
4. Plan to start strong and **communicate..communicate and communicate!** Utilize every communication source you have to let your church and community know how you are supporting them and be open to suggestions to make adjustments. Communicate through your website, facebook page, virtual small group meetings, virtual church meetings, letters, etc.