

Children and Families

The Children and Families core ministry area is as straight forwards as it sounds.

- Kids Church (Years 0-4 and 1-6)
- L.I.F.E. (Intermediate (plus) level)
- Family Support

Kid's Church – is lead by Kera Berryman and a great team who support this growing ministry. Kera is developing a 4-Year revolving curriculum for this ministry (nearing the end of Year 3). This is shaping up to be an excellent resource that will serve the Church well in this area; it is a strongly bible based, fun-activity, intentional teaching program that aims to provide sound foundational Christian learning at a suitable level for all ages. If children remain with the program, they re-enter the format every 4 years at an age-related level.

Kid's Church aims to be church for kids. They incorporate sung music, bible teaching/learning, character building and fun activities. It's not just an entertainment space, but like adult church, it has a deliberate discipleship focus with an age-appropriate approach. Hopefully, the future challenge will remain in being how to resource and support this fast-growing ministry.

L.I.F.E. (Leaning Into Father Emmanuel) - is very ably lead by Haley Grant, with support from other parents. Haley has a great rapport with the children in this area and brings strong Christian-thought into their developing minds. Like the Kid's Church program, and as the group name suggests, L.I.F.E is very intentional about discipleship – bringing and growing these young people in their faith.

There is a strong focus of building relationships through friendships that go beyond a once-a-week meeting. There are opportunities arising in music and worship and this group is probably ready to begin leading a service or two – which would be great to see. Here is another example of the direction that our Church should be looking to in considering the character and style of our future as a believing community together

Challenges for this program will be how we might transition the older children into a youth space that continues the great ground-work that is going in now. At present the age-range is more fluid than just the intermediate years, so the immediate interface with the older youth space will probably take a bit more time to properly consider. This will be explored in conjunction with SHFT who run a Friday night program (Youth East Taieri). At the other end of the program, there will be a number of Year 6 members from Kid's Church who will be ready to transition into the L.I.F.E. program and this will mean that how Kid's Church and L.I.F.E. are structured in the longer term will also need to be considered.

Families – while Jessie Wilson is doing an excellent job of supporting families who are connected with our Kid's Church program, supporting families more widely in the Church is an area that has probably slipped under the radar to some degree.

It has been a long-established fact, that communities with strong family units have stronger community in general – a factor where we are probably not the only leadership group to have dropped the ball. A community that provides a solid foundation for families to stand upon is a community that is likely to flourish.

In all honesty, this is an area where we need to get out thinking-caps on and consider what is wanted / needed in this ministry area, and how we might go about building proper resourcing. While we are beginning to focus well on their children, it is potentially the whole family that are the core of tomorrow's congregation and wider Church life, so we need to target this opportunity well.

Please pray for...

- Continued growth, development and support of the excellent Kid's Church program/
- The ongoing growth and adaptation of the L.I.F.E. program
- For vibrant ideas and initiatives to build a genuine families ministry

Pastor Gareth (interim CMT Leader)