

A Brief Explanation of the PrayGround

Introduction

The PrayGround originated from a Kim Clement word given in the early 2000's at Life Center in Harrisburg, PA. Kim, a traveling prophet who has since gone home to be with the Lord, has over the years provided many accurate words encouraging the Body of Christ. I received this idea, of a PrayGround, as one of them.

Kim presented the idea of a PrayGround as a place for prayer for children, where they would be joyful. A place where children could walk on their knees, so to speak. Little did we know at the time how precious this idea would become.

Fast forward to today, now some 15 years of practice and refinement later, and we give thanks and are glad to share the understanding the Lord and experience has provided over the years. This wisdom and provision have come at great cost at times, but the Lord has always been faithful to provide and guide through tribulations. Our prayer is that the PrayGround becomes for you, like us, a place of intimacy with God where children are free to connect with God in a manner more accessible for them.

Biblical Foundation

We believe that God inhabits the praise of His people, whether the believer was Israel of old or Christians since the time Christ walked the earth. Psalms 22:3 "But you are holy, you who inhabit the praises of Israel." When we gather in worship and adoration of the Lord God is in our midst. This truth is further confirmed by Matthew 18:20 which states, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

To provide a place for children to grow and engage, in an atmosphere such as described above, is of extreme value because it creates a space where children can more readily open their hearts and commune with God and the glory of His goodness. The significance placed on such an opportunity is no less than eternal in importance. It is our honor and responsibility to provide such a blessing for children who cannot provide such an opportunity for themselves so easily.

God's intent to give joy in His house of prayer. Isaiah 56:7 states, "these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer." This is God's general disposition towards

those He loves and who love and serve Him. This gives way to the first Kingdom question, “What brings joy to children and can be incorporated in a house of prayer and worship in a manner that honors God?” The answer: what brings more joy to children than play.

A Dr. Maria Montessori quote is “Play is the work of the child.” If we help children to play in agreement and appreciation with the Presence of God then the hope is, one day, that they will learn to work in agreement and appreciation with the Presence of God. Being creative in the Presence of God resonates with the Imago Dei, image of God, that resides within each of us. Nothing can be more natural, and supernatural, than to allow children to be creative and playful in the Presence of God. For in this effort, there will be a great reward says the Lord.

The Physical Arrangement

The PrayGround, one part prayer room, one part playground, is set up in some manners like a playground. Just as a playground has stations set up throughout the space, such as a sliding board, seesaw, and merry-go-round, so too does the PrayGround. However, for the PrayGround, the stations are more of a creative nature, Creation Stations.

Creation Stations include such activities as building blocks, adult scripture coloring books, play dough, or journaling, to name a few. The Creation Stations are spread out, throughout the space, where children can move from station to station, with plenty of space for creativity. Some activities need accommodations, such as a padded sheet underneath a logo creation station to reduce noise that could interfere with worship music. Creation stations may also need to be limited to the number of people at a station at a time, such as playground equipment, to avoid conflict. A rotational schedule may need to be developed to ensure equitable opportunities.

Those in attendance are encouraged to open their hearts to the Lord and to worship along as they are being creative with their hands. Some will create with their hands objects of worship such as picture, sculpture, or writing. Others will create items that are more playful in nature, such as a spaceship or a building.

At the center of the physical PrayGround are those who are leading worship. Worship leaders are the ones who go before us and invite us to follow them as they worship the Lord. Worship leaders help to facilitate an atmosphere of worship unto the Lord that blesses all those in

attendance. Students leading worship is a wonderful option when available. Teachers and parent volunteers also are helpful in leading worship.

Flowing with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the leader of the PrayGround. It becomes necessary to have a leader on site who can discern where the Spirit is leading during this time of corporate prayer and worship. As worship music fills the space and children are being creative and hopefully worshipful as well, leadership will punctuate the worship time asking if anyone has a scripture or prayer to share. Leadership may also feel led to lead in a prayer, perhaps a responsive prayer, with those present.

Students may also be asked to share their creative items, especially when worshipful by design. This sometimes may lead to many people wanting to share at which time we remember, 1 Corinthians 14:40 (KJV), "Let all things be done decently and in order." Also in effect is 1 Corinthians 14:29 which states, "Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what is said."

The Results

No one knows when a child, a person, will open their hearts to the Lord, that is the Lord's responsibility. Our responsibility is to provide as many opportunities as the Lord permits available for the students to make such a decision. I think of it terms of an analogy. When a child decides to join in onto the Lord's Highway is a choice between him and the Lord. Our responsibility is to provide as many onramps for the child as possible, with God's help.

The blessing and value created in such a lifestyle, as made possible through the PrayGround, is immeasurable. Numerous quotes are made regarding how great compound changes are made through small, incremental investments. For example, "a mountain is moved one stone at a time." Furthermore, when the work, play for children, is agreeable and pleasurable, excellence is developed. Aristotle stated, "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work."

To some degree, life is also a measure of sowing and reaping. If a child experiences the PrayGround in school for half an hour a day from K to 12th grade (assuming 180 school day year), they will have had the honor of spending 1,170 hours in a worshipful, God's Presence inhabited environment. This is time where students are engaging in activity with opportunity to focus on the Lord and to be a part of the worship service. This, my friend, is of great value.