



## Who's in charge here?

*Kid CEO* is first and foremost a book for parents and would-be parents. There are many challenges laid out in this book but the overall theme is a challenge for parents to take the God-given leadership role in their homes. The author, Ed Young Jr., states that, in many cases, as children enter the family arena, they slowly become the center of the family universe. They become Kid CEOs of the family. He encourages parents to take back the leadership role God has given and put God back on the throne and the parents back in the driver's seat of the family bus. He does not suggest that the parents forget about their children's needs, but rather that the parents understand their children's needs better than they do. "I could see this book very easily being used as a teaching series or parenting class for new or experienced parents in your church," says Kidology CP Team member Spencer Click. So this is a great parenting book. What does it have to do with children's ministry?

## A resource for searching parents

Have you ever been asked a question on parenting? Have parents ever wanted to sit down with you and talk about a problem with one of their children? I know this is a common occurrence in our ministry and I am sure it is in yours as well! When I meet with hurting or searching parents or when I teach a child dedication class, I like to have resources (books, tapes, websites, etc.) to pass on to these parents. In fact, when doing "family counseling" I often make it a requirement to read a book before we meet again. I also get inquiries from adult classes and small groups looking for a good book or video series that I could recommend for them. This book will be on the top of my list. Now beware of any parent book. No matter what it is, when people hear advice about parenting, it can cause heartburn for some folks! *Kid CEO* does not shy away from being direct and perhaps at times controversial. Here are just a few of the themes explored in *Kid CEO*.

### **Child centered**

How could a children's minister think that children should not be the center of the family? Well, for me it comes from the Bible. God is the center of the family and the next concentric circle has to be the marriage. Want to raise healthy well-adjusted kids? Have a healthy well-adjusted relationship with God and your spouse! Part of being a leader is to put these relationships back in context.

### **Under the influence**

There is so much out there that is grabbing our kid's attention and trying to influence them, many times for the negative. As parent CEOs it is our job to take charge of what comes into our home, to watch over what is influencing our kids, and most of all to be the primary influencer in our home.

### **Making church a priority**

The great news for children's pastors and directors is that the author strongly encourages family to make church a high priority. The author says, "You cannot pass on the baton of faith if you aren't actively involved in a church where your kids receive age-appropriate teaching."

## What will they think?

### **Serving for an audience of one**

Ed Young Jr. encourages parents to stop trying to impress others with our children. The tendency can be to over-commit our kids today with the subtle idea of bragging on them to our friends and family. What about us as children's pastors? Can the subtle motive of having a great children's ministry in order to look good to others (or for a resume) creep into our hearts without us noticing? I believe it is worth doing an honest heart inventory once in awhile to make sure we are in this for an audience of One and for the love of the families, kids and volunteers God has put in our lives.

## Taking the role God has for you

*Kid CEO* puts a heavy stress on parent leadership. God ordained the father and mother to be the leaders of the family. Of course this does not mean the children get no say or that their opinions count for nothing. However, it does mean that parents should not abdicate the leadership role to the kids. I believe people of every generation are looking for strong leadership marked by integrity. This is true in our families and our churches.

### **The senior pastor**

We would all be served well to remind ourselves that God has put our senior/lead pastor in leadership at our church. He or she is the one with the God-given vision for the church and the one with the greatest burden to carry. He or she is the Moses while we are more than likely the Joshuas.

### **In your position**

"While standing on the banks of the Buffalo River in Moran, Wyoming, I was awestruck by the order and organization evident in creation," writes Young. This statement rings true for the family and the church. As much as God has given a vision to the senior pastor for the church, He has given you a vision for the children's ministry. You are called to lead up (sharing this vision with those in authority), lead sideways (sharing the vision with your peers), and lead from above (sharing the vision with those under your care). Are you confident enough in who God called you to be to take on this mantle of leadership?

### **Dealing with conflict**

Parenting takes effective leadership during times of conflict. If you minister to children, youth, parents, volunteers and other staff members you will learn quickly that sometimes it feels like a great big family full of real and potential conflict. Leaders know that conflict is a chance to rise to occasion, clarify vision, see teachable moments, get fresh perspectives and discover passions and callings. Leaders may not love conflict, but they cannot shrink away from it.

## Busy doesn't always mean better

The Busyleys are a fictional family Young creates to illustrate too many families today. "The Busyleys are a family on the go. It's difficult even to have a long and meaningful conversation with them because they move too fast," he writes. Many of us can identify with this. Andy Stanley echoes these thoughts in his parenting series *Parental Guidance Required*. He says good parents today are trading relationship with their kids for experiences for their kids.

So do we add to the lives of the busy families with more events, programs, and things to do? Are we adding to the problem as Children's Pastors? On the other side of the coin how do we effectively minister to kids who are there at church less and less? How do we recruit volunteers when people are living lives with razor thin margins in their time commitments? Is a midweek service able to be truly effective with so much to compete with? These are all questions we who work with children have to grapple with. We want to help families and we want them to see the importance of making

church a central a part of their lives. In my opinion there are no pat answers to these questions, but they are questions we all must struggle with in our situations.

## What are we trying to do here anyway?

At the end of the book Young emphasizes that the final goal of parenting is to raise healthy, well-adjusted adults who leave home and serve God. "And when your kids do finally leave home, you will be rejoicing, not because you're glad to see them go, but because you have done what God wanted you to do," writes Young. Of course he states that there are no guarantees because each child has a will of their own. I believe we who work with children also need to hear this reminder once in awhile. It is not our job to keep them kids forever.

### Student Ministries

Yes they will leave us for the youth group. They may be chomping at the bit. They may also be scared to death. How do we work with them and student ministries leaders to help this bridge become successful? Isn't part of our job to help equip and prepare them for the trials that await in adolescence? They aren't really saying goodbye because you'll still see them! I get goose bumps seeing the middle school and high school students passionately serving God who were once in my children's ministry.

### The real world

In a different way we are preparing them every week to leave the "nest" of the church and go into a world that is away from the safety of church. For some of your kids even home is a hostile place.

### All grown up

If you do this children's ministry thing long enough you'll get high school and college graduation notices, wedding invitations and news of little babies being born. Rejoice you have been a part in God's plan and this is the fruit of your labor. The best you'll see this side of heaven.

## Making first thing first

Through the entire book, Young encourages the reader to make their marriage the center of the family. Children and Children's ministry can cause us to lose sight of our first love. With our spouse and even to a "whole nutha level" with our Savior we need to keep the fires of our love burning bright. Don't let children's ministry stop you from romancing your spouse or falling in deeper love with Jesus.

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Kidology is a non-profit organization dedicated to equipping and encouraging those who minister to children. Through our website, conferences, and resources we are here to serve you. Join our online community and find the help and encouragement you need!