The Now Generation

Greta Leite de Abreu, Jenny Stephen 6 November 2023



“Walk on the water,” He said, “and create moments for My young ones to encounter My Spirit. “

The Lord spoke and asked us to introduce the children to the Person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit as our theme for the KidZone at the 2023 Four12 Conference in South Africa. We know that the same Spirit in us is also available to the kids – there is no baby Holy Spirit! The understanding and expression might be different, but that does not minimise the validity of the experience.

As we started planning and listening for what He wanted to do, it became clear that this was going to be beyond our skills and abilities – it would have to be the Spirit who revealed Himself to the children. And reveal Himself He did!

> **We know that the same Spirit in us is also available to the kids – there is no baby Holy Spirit!**

“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received…brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit

himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." (Romans 8:14-16)

Our children have returned to their congregations with an understanding that God wants to speak to them and use them. They have been equipped to hear Him for themselves, and a deep desire for His Spirit and gifts has been awakened in them.

The question now is, "How do we foster and grow this desire within our kids?"
Firstly, we need to ask the Spirit to show us His heart for children and to impart faith to us, so that we can lead them into all that He has for them. Then, secondly, we need to receive well what they share with us.

> **…children generally hear the Spirit in clear, simple and often uncluttered ways**

When we recognise that children generally hear the Spirit in clear, simple and often uncluttered ways, we can benefit from the priesthood of all believers, including the young ones in the family, and allow for a richer experience of Him. It just requires creating time and space, even in our communities and services, for kids to share what it is that they feel the Lord is saying, and to include them in our worship times.

Children learn and engage with the world in a different way to adults, often needing a tactile, sensory experience to unlock an understanding of spiritual concepts. When children are present, we may need to simplify the language we use around the things of God, so that it comes across in a way with which they are able to engage. This often also helps some of the adults in the room!

TESTIMONIES

Here are some stories from kids, parents and leaders to stir your faith to hear God like a child again:

"In the rain and mud, eager and excited kids appeared. Volunteers waited to see what the Holy Spirit would ask the leaders to share – then came the activation: "Ask the Lord for a word of encouragement, a Bible character, or even a picture for your friend."
Sho! And the Holy Spirit spoke! Every time. Excitement and joy broke out over the kids, and no amount of rain could steal it! They shared with one another and then with us – each time stirring more and more assurance that He was speaking to them and through them for the stranger, now fast becoming a friend.

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes." (Luke 10:21, NKJV)
– Simone Taylor

We felt from the Lord months before the Conference that the Lord wanted our whole family there. And our oldest, Caid, had the privilege of going to the KidZone tent. We could tangibly see the deposit in him. So much so that (as much as we also received at the Conference) we decided that Caid received the biggest deposit of anyone in our family. He was quite literally a different kid afterwards. Full of even more joy and life and love. He has been talking about the Holy Spirit as a person, as his personal friend. He's been even more activated in worship. He's telling all his friends at school about Jesus every day.
– Rebekah Senn

"Harper, my 7-year-old, told me that one of the guy leaders gave her a word that when she grows up he feels she will have wisdom. I wanted to say thank you to that leader, because that word encouraged me as a parent and is something I have asked God for multiple times for my daughters; a deep desire of my heart. It was also so special for her and is spot on with other prophetic words that she has received in the past. So thank you for that."
– Jessica Delport

"I had a very good time at the Conference. There was a prophetic word that there is a boy who is raging in his heart and has been hurting his brother a lot. So I thought, yes, that is me, and I went to the front for prayer. Later, I also put up my hand to receive the gift of tongues."
– Jesse Moffat (age 7)

"At the Conference, the leaders were talking about the Holy Spirit and we were praying for some kids, and then this guy was praying and he said that God gave him a picture of an older boy in the KidZone, he thought his name was Nathaniel, and then a boy stood up and said his name is Nathaniel. Then when we were all praying for other kids, I had this warm feeling go down my body, from head to toe, and I started crying. And it felt like they were tears of happiness and joy. It felt like the Holy Spirit was touching me. And now I feel like I want to get baptised.
– Malakai Judah Watson (age 12)

"Lucy made a new friend, Cleo, who saw the colour yellow for her and said she is a ray of sunshine. Lucy means light and we've felt God use that so often in her life!"
– Nicola Sayer

"One of our Grades children received a picture from another 9-year-old at the Conference, which the mom said resonated with other words they had already received. It's wonderful to see God working through young children!"
– Michelle Owen

“We had a few girls in our group hearing from God in the prophetic session, which was so fun! God gave us a picture that we shared with the kids of Him walking around them, whispering a word, and all the girls clenched their eyes shut with a determination to hear Him – and then quite a few of them got a picture!”
– Anita Jonker

“During the big group time, a boy gave his heart to God but was too shy to go to the front, so I stood by him, praying with him, and then he teared up, so you could just see how the Holy Spirit touched him. Then a little after that, he came to give me a hug and said thank you for praying with me, and he also gave me a word of encouragement that he felt, saying that no matter what, I must remember that God is there to help me through everything and I don’t have to go through things alone – that He is my Father who will not leave me or abandon me, no matter what. That just hit me, because that’s exactly how I’ve been feeling lately, so it was just amazing.”
– Ethan Pretorius (KidZone Volunteer)

“My teenage daughter, while serving, received a beautiful prophecy (out of the blue) at the play dough section from the eldest Barnard daughter about being like a bracelet God is weaving, strand by strand, into the Kingdom through community. It was spot on. Such a bold girl, exercising her gifting, trusting the Holy Spirit.”
– Sonja du Plessis

I thought the free play would not mean much in terms of the children’s learning, but I was wrong, because the boys showed so much character by helping each other up after a tackle, taking turns and being gracious in defeat. But what struck me was when, in a teaching session, I got taught by a little girl and the Holy Spirit. We were meant to draw the word ‘sin’ in the sand and shake it away, but she refused. She drew an ugly face and a happy face, and when I said, “No, no, not like that”, she replied: “Uncle, it will always be there again (sin), but let’s draw a line in the sand once and for all”, then she dragged her finger in a little line across the sand and walked away, chuffed. God has set us free for freedom, and now we are taking a stand and living in that grace and power.
– Reuben Opperman

“On the first day as an activity leader, when I asked the kids to settle down, some responded and some did not. So I just started the activity and then Jenny came and brought order. There are many things going on in my life at the moment, and I felt God saying to me, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) and that when our lives have too much noise and too many things going on, we won’t hear Him well and obey Him when He speaks.

I thank God for speaking to me about how to overcome what I face through serving in the KidZone at the Conference. He used the children to speak into my situation.”
– Patience Mugurasave (Activity Leader)

“Parents and kids came back saying how it had blessed them! Marko Kersten, one of our kids workers, said that his time with the kids was the highlight of the Conference for him!”
– Lynn Loubscher

I served on the children’s team for a session and it was so incredible to see how the children worshipped and encountered the Holy Spirit in a very real way.

The prophetic words that were spoken over some of them, the Lord setting them apart for His purposes – you could feel the presence of the Lord with the children the whole time. Their understanding of who the Holy Spirit is was very evident as we chatted during the activity time.

During the worship, the Lord kept reminding me that I am His little girl and so loved by Him. What a blessing and privilege to serve in the KidZone.
– Claire Leadbetter

CONCLUSION

Never underestimate the impact that these Conferences, times of equipping and Sunday meetings can have on our children. They are the Now Generation and God wants to use them as well as adults, so don’t leave them at home – bring them to everything – they need just as much exposure to the Word and Spirit as we do. After all, they will be the ones taking the church forward and advancing God’s Kingdom on earth one day.