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Specialized Training for
Pastors, Church Leaders and Coaches

Is Little League Killing the Church?

I was clicking around my LinkedIn account, minding my own business, when I ran into [church consultant Barbara Stechert](#). She had started a juicy discussion by writing that organized children's sports is either the new religion or is killing the old church. People were very emotional in their responses – she obviously struck a chord.

For me, the chord that was struck as I was eavesdropping on the conversation was the same one I wrote about in my article, [Change Your Questions, Change Your Church](#) – the power in changing the questions we're asking. In this case, instead of asking if Little League is killing the church, how about asking these two questions?

1. How do WE tap into the level of commitment that's showing up in children's sports?

Instead of competing with Little League by asking if they're killing the church, let's look instead at what sports has to offer. How can we borrow from or build on that? Church and sports are not on opposing teams, we're on the same team with the same goals – building strong families and helping kids grow up right.

It's not about blaming sports for our dwindling numbers. It's about tapping into people's strengths and what they care most about and letting them bring that into their church life. It's about going where the people are and focusing on their needs and passions.

There are a number of churches that are doing a wonderful job with this type of creative ministry outreach. For example, [Wasatch Ministries](#) offered outreach at a ski resort. [Sports Serve](#) incorporates athletes, churches, schools, local business and government to fulfill its mission to transform communities around the world. [Reach Forth Sports Ministry](#) combines co-ed sports with a 5-10 minute devotional message at every game.

2. If the Church is dying, what's going on with that?

If our faith is about death and resurrection, what's God up to with this apparent [death of the Church](#)? What is God preparing us to become? What is God recreating in the place of what we've always thought of us as the church? What is God's invitation to us/you? (That is one of my favorite questions!)



And what is our role in this resurrection process? Hint: it's not to do the resurrecting. No, we get to experience it, accept it, acknowledge it and be part of it. We get to kick back and say, "Wow, this is great! Let's see what God's got planned for us here." We don't have to control or figure everything out.

If 90% of ministry is showing up – and I hear so many pastors say that it is – then our role is to show up and be fully part of what God is doing. It's about response-ability – the ability to choose your response. Because we do get to choose how we're going to respond to the changing tides of today's society. So what are WE doing to develop our children and give them structured activities?

There's one church that kids actually beg to attend. [The Harvest's 378 Campus](#) children's worship facility, Heirport, offers "high-energy" worship experiences including music, puppets and games. Seriously, this makes Chuck E. Cheese look boring! This is another example of creative ministry outreach – a church leadership who responded to the needs of their community and asked themselves, "How can we incorporate the things that are competing for children's attention?" Now that was a powerful question!



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