



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES 2022

by Cassandra Unger
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Looking around congregations paints a pretty bleak view of children in Community of Christ in Australia. Few congregations run regular children's activities, a small handful might have a family or two with young children that attend periodically. Most congregations don't include anything for children in their worship planning, because "there aren't going to be any children anyway."

Even in my role as children's minister sometimes this can get me down. However, I also get to see a much larger picture of children and Community of Christ and I wanted to share that with you. I get parents contacting me to let me know how much a child appreciates receiving the Kids' Herald, or recognition of their birthday, or life events like starting school. I get pictures of the joy of children opening a book that has been posted to them or seeing that same book stuck together with a whole roll of tape after so much rereading. I experience a child's excited greeting on seeing me after having cried the previous two times I tried to talk directly to them.

I also like numbers, while they can't really tell you qualitative information or the impact on a life it is an easy way to see information.

I keep a database of Community of Christ connected children around Australia. I assure you, this is not all of them, but these are those that have crossed my path. (I will willingly add others if you know of them).

- There are 118 children on my list as of the 15th of November. The eldest is 12 and in year 6, the youngest 6 days.
- These kids represent 60 different families.
- This year 12 kids moved from the children's program into the youth.

- Each month I send out 44 Junior Kids' Heralds (2-Kindy/Preschool) and 53 Kids' Heralds (Grades 1-6)
- I sent out 111 books each with a personal message. This included 10 different books to cater for developmental ages, family arrangements and interests.
- Family camp in Victoria, WPH Easter retreat, Kids Camp and the coming Reunion all had/will have a kids focus.
- Of the 118 children (in 2022)
 - I have visited or participated in activities with 55. There is a further 14 that I anticipate seeing before the end of the year.
 - 51 children (that I am aware of) have engaged back with Community of Christ. For example, they have attended a camp or program, or congregational Sunday worship, they have been featured in our Kids' Herald interview. There is a further 18 if you include those that engaged back in 2021.

Recorded here are only the programs and numbers I am aware of. I am sure there are many more children out there who have encountered the Community of Christ through each of you and the ministry you provide. I just wanted you to know the picture isn't bleak, however, we do need to think of ways, outside of traditional congregational models, to continue to engage children.

*Please note: None of these numbers include the casual community children we have contact with through programs like Tunes4tot.