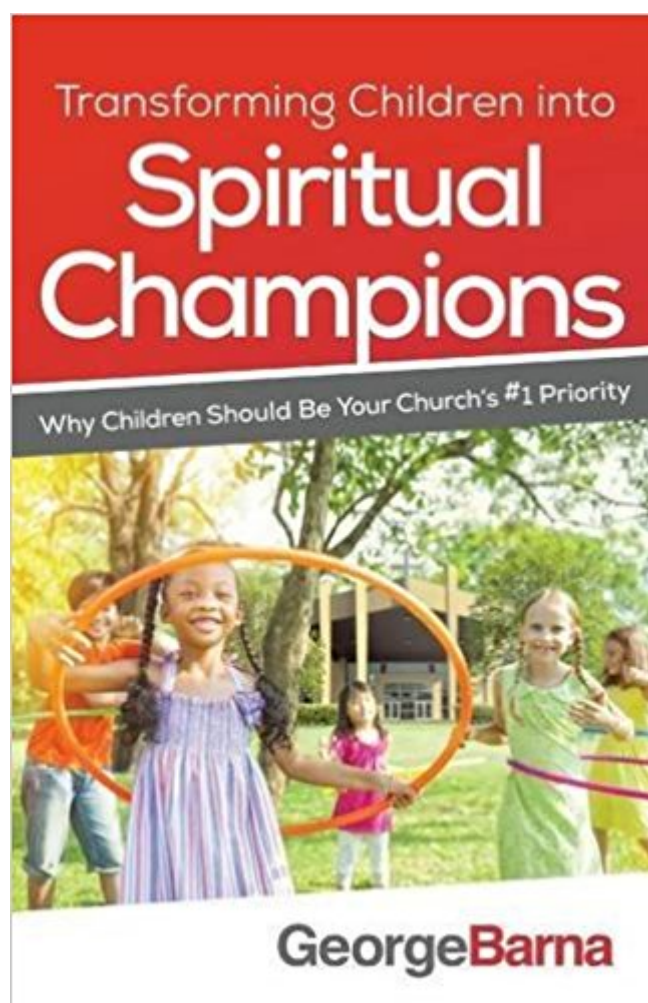


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# Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority



## Synopsis

No one can deny our culture is opposed to Christian values, and the influences bombarding our children's moral development are difficult to contend with. But few parents and church leaders realize that a child's moral development is set by the age of nine. It is therefore critical to start developing a child's biblical worldview from the very earliest years of life. The problem is complex: parents who themselves did not receive early spiritual training leave their children's training to the church. Yet the church often focuses on older children. The answer is for churches to come alongside parents to provide them biblical worldview training, parenting information, and counseling that will equip them to help their children become the spiritually mature church of tomorrow. This helpful and hopeful book unpacks just how to develop this kind of dynamic church/parent relationship and includes profiles of churches that are effectively ministering to children and winning the war for their hearts and minds.

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## Customer Reviews

Faith that withstands a hostile culture is no accident. A child's moral compass is set by the age of nine. Whether that compass points toward faith in God or is drawn toward the things of this world is, in large part, up to those influencing the lives of our children from the very earliest years. Parents tend to leave that spiritual training up to the church, yet churches often focus on older children. There's a better way, and *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* blazes the trail. Award-winning and bestselling author George Barna shows how churches can come alongside

parents to provide them biblical worldview training, parenting information, and counseling that will equip them to help their children become the spiritually mature church of tomorrow. This helpful and hopeful book unpacks just how to develop this kind of dynamic church/parent relationship and includes profiles of churches that are effectively ministering to children and winning the war for their hearts and minds. The next generation of Christians is counting on us. Where will we lead them? George Barna is the award-winning author of many books, including bestsellers such as *Revolution*, *The Power of Vision*, *The Frog in the Kettle*, and *The Seven Faith Tribes*. He is also founder of The Barna Group, a leading research firm that specializes in faith-related surveys. George has led several churches and lives with his family in Southern California.

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This is a great book. The author certainly gets his point across that children should be the highest priority within the church. The statistics given are alarming to say the least. This book, though presented as *Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority*, does spend a good deal of time focusing on the importance of the parent, pointing out that it is the parent's ultimate responsibility to oversee the spiritual development of their children. However, the author presents this information in order to encourage churches to work alongside parents, providing them with resources to better lead their children to spiritual maturity. The author's intent is to help parents and church workers (staff and volunteers) see the influences upon our children, identify the spiritual needs of our children, and find ways we can begin to adjust our methods of training children in order to better aid them in their spiritual development. He begins by giving statistics that reveal the current beliefs of adults and children. Using these statistics, he makes a strong case for why children's ministry and proactive parental involvement matter; calling parents and church workers to help children find vision, purpose, and passion, while developing perseverance and a biblical worldview. Though the book relies heavily upon statistics, it in no way neglects Scripture, but provides biblical references throughout. On the downside, while the author gives some great ideas on how to better organize our children's ministries (such as adding additional workers and creating our own curriculum) he fails to list additional resources to help accomplish

these tasks. The section on evaluating children is good and does provide a list of outcomes to look for based off of the Ten Commandments, the fruits of the Spirit, and the Sermon on the Mount, and provides a short list of ideas to use in developing an evaluation process, but again fails to give adequate information on how to directly go about developing an evaluation and does not provide a resource list to help. This is a great book, but in need of a resource list.

George Barna is truly getting to the real details of the state of Christianity in the United States. Through his research organization, the Barna Group, he has been able to become one of the leading analysts on the culture of the American church. Writing several books and authoring several journals, he is one of the most trusted writers on Church leadership. In his book, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, Barna gives us a glimpse into several aspects of Children's Ministry in America. The book breaks down the importance of Children in the church, the value of Children's ministry, and the practical, biblical ways that a Children's minister or worker can better impact the children they work with. The basic breakdown of each chapter comes into an introductory topic, statistics on the topic or detailed information, and then a breakdown of why these statistics or data are important and how they can be interpreted to benefit the Children in today's church. One example that truly shows the value in this book is the breakdown of what students believe once they get out Children's ministry in Chapter 2. This is by far the most valuable part of the statistical data that he gives. He first builds a case for a child's spiritual health being the most important, then he outlines the why he believes that children can make legitimate spiritual decisions. Understanding what a student comprehends after leaving a children's ministry shows how effective the ministry was in helping students live out their faith. Through the process of interviewing 13-year-olds, he gets to the bottom of what it really faith really means to someone who has been through the children's ministry gauntlet. A few chapters later, Barna gives us the practical side of how to implement certain ideas that coincide with the data that he has provided. The one way I feel that this portion could have improved is by giving more specific examples of implementation strategies in programming. As a Student minister, I truly have grown immensely in my perspective of how important it is to build a faith foundation in every child as early as possible. Through reading the data and research that Barna presents, Children's ministry is by far the most important ministry within the local church. Through his strong rhetoric and accurate fact portrayal, Barna leaves no excuse for ministers and volunteers to not have a better understanding of how to better minister to Children. It will always have a place on my shelf.

Fantastic book with hard statistics proving the value of children's ministry and reminding us all that children, even at young ages, are way more capable to walk in the things of the Lord than we often give them credit for.

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