

Short-Term Missions Impact At-Risk Youth

Could short-term missions be an answer to stemming the tide of lost youth? A new Barna Research study offers good news about the ministry model.

Barna took a look at Scripture Union's SuperKids program. SuperKids offers one- and two-week outreach missions programs that aim to make an impact on youth at a time when many are leaving the church as soon as they get old enough to drive.

The idea is that you don't have to travel far to spread the good news about Jesus. In the program, children are equipped to work in their own community to share the love of Christ. Youth groups and mission teams take the SuperKids program and curriculum to church yards, back yards, city parks and public beaches.

According to an October 2010 Barna survey of mostly at-risk children who participated in a short-term mission last summer, 85 percent felt more loved by God and more than 80 percent said they learned new things about God and Jesus.

What's more, 77 percent of the children learned more about the Bible and nearly 80 percent said they discovered that they want to follow Jesus. Three-quarters reported that they learned right from wrong and how to stay out of trouble.

What's the most effective ministry model you've seen to impact youth?