

Why Children's Ministry?

Session One

Why does your church offer ministries to children? The answer to this question often varies with each congregation, but it also reveals what lies at the foundation of your ministry. For your ministry to be effective it must be based on the truth of God's Word about your children. Together we will see what God says about our children and those who serve them, discover ways of establishing your ministry on the right foundation, and explore the basics of leading children in spiritual experiences.

1.) Intro // Two Questions

"Why does your church do ministry to children?"

"Why do I do ministry to children?"

Our ultimate goal as children's ministers must be to **"create an environment where children can thrive NOW and lead in the FUTURE as we respond to God's call."**

VIDEO: Too Young to Be Saved?

2.) Thriving Children...KNOW God

A.) Can Children Be Saved?

- Jesus' Teaching in Matthew 18
- Show Video: "Matthew 18"

- **Matthew 18:1-2**
 - Jesus uses children as the example of faith.
 - The word for "little child" in the Greek is **paidión** which means a little or young child under **seven** years of age.

- **Matthew 18:3** - Requirement for salvation
 - The word for converted in the Greek is *strephe*, which means to **turn**; it's **active** or **voluntary**.
 - A young child is capable of having saving faith. Why would Jesus tell us to become like them if they could not, it would have been a wasted object lesson.
 - An adult who has childlike faith can be converted and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - "The door to Heaven is three feet tall." - Unknown

- **Matthew 18:4** - Jesus answers the disciples' initial question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

- **Matthew 18:5** - How do you get in the Kingdom of Heaven?
 - The Greek word for receives means to **accept deliberately** and **readily**

- Adults who demonstrate childlike faith and are converted can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven
 - Little children already have childlike faith and they, too, can be converted and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - To minister to a **child** is to **serve Christ**. This is a **holy calling**.
 - Jesus affirms young children as believers.
- **Matthew 18:6**
 - This passage is talking about little ones who believe in Him.
 - The word for believe in the Greek is *pisteuo* which means to have faith in or upon and is the same word used in John 3:16 and Acts 16:31
 - Jesus asserts that little children can savingly believe.
- **Matthew 18:10**
 - Jesus tells His disciples to not look down on one of these little ones.
 - Little ones must be treated with respect.
- **Matthew 18:11-13**
 - Jesus tells parable of lost sheep.
 - Jesus teaches the urgency of reaching one lost child.
 - The implication is that even a child is **lost** and **worthy of seeking**.
 - Children are of great value to the good Shepherd.
- **Matthew 18: 14**
 - The word for perish in the Greek is *apollomi* which means to destroy fully and is the same Greek word translated as lost and destroyed
 - God's **will** must be the **will** of God's people.

B.) Summary of Jesus' Teaching

- Affirmed young children as believers and taught the seriousness of causing children who believe in Him to sin or stumble.
- Told the disciples to not look down on little children.
- Taught the urgency of reaching the lost child, using himself as a model.
- Declared God's will that not one of these little ones be lost.
- "If you doubt the child's ability to communicate with God, don't doubt God's ability to communicate with the child." – Unknown

C.) Personal Witnesses from Christians Saved as Children

- Corrie Ten Boom, Holocaust survivor—age 5
- Dr. Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer—age 9
- Henrietta Mears, Founder of Gospel Light—age 5
- Charles Spurgeon, well-known preacher—age 12
- Dr. James Dobson, Founder of Focus on the Family—age 3
- Matthew Henry, writer of commentaries—age 11
- Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna in the 2nd century—age 9 and martyred at age 86
- Jonathan Edwards, the well-known preacher of the 18th century—age 7

- John Haggai, Haggai Institute—age 4½, called to preach at age 6 and as a missionary at age 10
- Dr. Martha Wright, vice-president of education for Child Evangelism Fellowship—age 7

D.) Perspectives from Theologians and Christian Leaders

“A child of five, if properly instructed, can savingly believe as well as an adult. My conviction is that our converts from among children are among the best we have. I should judge them to have been more numerously genuine than in any other class, more constant, and in the long run, more solid.” – Charles Spurgeon

“You do not know how much infidelity there is in the church today with regard to child conversion. There are but a few who believe that children can become Christians; but thank God there is a bright day coming.” - D. L. Moody

“ The greatest reason for my belief that young children can really understand the vital truth of the Gospel is that I believe in the Holy Spirit’s ministry to communicate the message of salvation and sanctification to them. There is no adult, however intelligent, who can understand the Gospel without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.” - Francis Schaeffer

E.) Research Studies

- 85% of Christians received Christ as Savior between the ages of 4-14
- More than 2/3 of all adult Christians claim to have accepted Christ before turning 18
- There is a 32% probability that a person will be saved between the ages of 5-12; a 4% probability for those 13-18; and a 6% probability for those 19 and older, the 4/14 window
- Barna confirms that if people do not receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior before they reach their teenage years, the chance of their ever doing so is slim.

Children are the most fruitful mission field in the world today.

Our conclusion: The Gospel should be presented to children so that as the Holy Spirit works they will come to know Jesus as their personal Savior.

F.) Spiritual Experiences

- Salvation
 - Guiding children to take those first steps toward faith can be the most rewarding opportunity of life. As a child grows and matures, his knowledge of Jesus will grow. By laying foundations for spiritual conversion, we partner with the Holy Spirit as He prepares and calls a child to accept Jesus as Savior.
 - Jesus as "Friend" and Jesus as "Savior"

- There is no separate gospel for children. The child must understand and be convicted of his broken relationship with God. We must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work. Where there is no conviction, there can be no real change and spiritual conversion.

Video: Tear Sheet Gospel

Video: Women Living Well Shares Gospel

- Baptism
 - Before being baptized, a child should be old enough to understand the gospel of Christ. A candidate for baptism should have repented of his sin and placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.
 - Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14)
- Prayer Requests

3.) Thriving Children...GROW as Disciples

Activity: What Does the Bible Say about Children?

Form small groups. Assign each group one of the following verses. They are to discuss what God's Word says about children in that particular verse and how it applies to the children in their ministries.

Psalm 128:3	Children are a gift from the Lord.
Psalm 139:15, 16; Jeremiah 1:5	God has ordered our children's days and has determined the purposes for their lives.
Deuteronomy 6:6, 7	Children are to be taught His commands
Matthew 18:1-4	Children are an example of those who will enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 18:5	Children are to be welcomed.
Matthew 18:6	There is severe punishment for anyone who offends a child or causes him to stumble.
Matthew 18:10	Their angels have access to the heavenly Father.
Matthew 18:12-14	God is not willing that one child perish.
Matthew 19:13-15	Jesus welcomed and blessed children. He rebuked those who attempted to hinder them from coming to Him.
Romans 3:23	Children are born as sinners.

- Luke 2:52: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."
- Ephesians 4:11-13: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of

God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

God intends for children to experience mental, physical, spiritual, and social growth just as Jesus did. The Christian family is responsible to bring children to spiritual maturity. However, the local church also must fulfill its role. Ephesians 4:11–13 tells us that the ministry gifts are to be used to prepare God’s people for works of service. Children are God’s people if they know Jesus as Savior. They too must be prepared to do the works of service God has planned for them to do (Ephesians 2:10).

Children’s ministries must not only provide evangelistic programs and events that introduce children to Jesus as Savior, they must also be strategic in helping children grow as His disciples.

4.) Thriving Children...SERVE God and Others

- Mark 10:45: “For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- 1 Samuel 2:18: “But Samuel was ministering before the Lord—a boy wearing a linen ephod.”
- 1 Samuel 3:15: “Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord.”

If, for 17 years, we teach children that their function in the body of Christ is to be only an audience for curriculum, we should not be stunned when they turn 18 and have no interest in being involved at church. They’re simply doing what we have trained them to do. NOW is the time to involve our children in service to God and others. Children’s ministry should help each child realize that he has been chosen and gifted to serve and also provide opportunities for him to productively serve in the local congregation, in his community, and globally.

5.) Conclusion

A.) Calling and Ministry Gifts

We create that environment when we serve in the ministry gifts God has called us to. (Ephesians 4:11)

My Specific Ministry Gift: Teacher

I am not a children’s workers or volunteer....I am a God called minister of Jesus Christ and I will fan into flame those ministry gifts for the sake of children.

We must understand God’s value of children and their place in the kingdom of God.

Children hold value regardless of the circumstances. Children are the smallest, weakest, and most vulnerable. They are exploited, abused, silenced, and degraded. All over the world children are considered the “least of these.” Even in the church we have allowed the culture to dictate our view of children. We have allowed traditions to narrow our understanding of children in the Kingdom of God.

We must understand why and have a firm grip on why we do what we do. Our understanding of the value of children cannot come from the culture, tradition, the church...it must come from the word of God. If we understand the value of children in the kingdom of God. Our view of children cannot be contaminated by culture. It cannot be influence by narrow, traditional view in the church. IT must come from the Word of God. Why I do what I do is the value of children in the kingdom of God. When we value children our children will thrive and be prepared to lead in the future.

Activity

Invite the participants to discuss the following questions:

- Why did your local congregation develop a ministry to children?
- Which of God’s purposes for children does your ministry seek to accomplish? Through what programs and events?
- Which purpose(s) does your ministry to children fail to address?

We know that anything built on God’s Word and His purposes will stand. If our ministries to children focus on helping them KNOW Jesus as Savior, GROW as disciples, and SERVE God and others, we have laid a sure foundation for effective ministry.

Developing A Ministry Structure

Session Two

What have you done to insure that your ministry is healthy, effective, and prepared for growth? In this workshop we'll discuss proven techniques and skills that will help your ministry operate more effectively in the areas of classroom management, discipleship, discipline, and more. We will also discuss ways to engage kids in your faith community.

1.) Intro // Where Everybody Know Your Name

2.) What is the responsibility of the local church?

- Ask two individuals to read Mark 16:15 and Ephesians 4:11–14 to discover each of the responsibilities of the local church.
- To preach the Gospel to the lost: Mark 16:1
- To bring believers to maturity: Ephesians 4:11–14

How will we fulfill these responsibilities in the lives of children?

A.) Provide programs that focus on accomplishing God's purposes in the lives of children.

Ask each local church ministry team to work together to complete this activity. Provide each team with at least nine index cards. Ask each team to write out what programs they offer that help to accomplish each of God's purposes for children. For example, the local church may teach a series of lessons on how to be saved. They would write that on one card. Or, the local church may assign each child a mentor who disciples him. They would write that on another card. Make three columns on a wall or chalkboard. Label the columns: Evangelism, Discipleship, and Service. As you discuss each purpose, have one member of each ministry team come and place the cards related to that purpose in the correct column.

Evangelism

What is being done to reach unchurched children? What is being done to bring our church children to a salvation experience?

Discipleship

Do we have a consistent plan for spiritual growth? How are we assessing the spiritual development of our children?

Service

How are children being prepared to serve? What ministry opportunities are available to them?

2.) Support the family's ministry to the child.

What is the family's responsibility? (Have individuals read Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 and Ephesians 6:4, then discuss.) The family has been given the primary responsibility of teaching their children in the ways of the Lord. The local children's ministry exists to support and assist parents in this role. What can the local church do to help parents fulfill their biblical role?

Communication

Discuss: What are ways children's ministry leaders can effectively communicate to parents what is being done to evangelize, disciple, and equip children to serve?

Communicate your desire to work with parents to provide spiritual nurture to their children. Communicate your goals for the discipleship of their children. Communicate what is being taught and ways the biblical truths can be reinforced everyday in their homes.

Training

Discuss: How can you provide training to the families of children in your ministry? Why do some parents not attend a parenting training course? Are there ways that might be more effective than have a parenting training course?

Many parents want to provide spiritual nurture to their children but don't feel capable. They need training. The local church is to equip people for works of service and the most important work that parents will ever do is to teach their children to love and serve God. Parenting courses are a good way to begin equipping parents to fulfill their role of spiritual nurturers. But you can also provide training in small doses by providing resources such as easy-to-read books or articles on Christian parenting. You can ask parents who have successfully raised their children to know and serve the Lord to partner with parents of young children, providing encouragement, wise counsel, and prayer.

Involvement

Discuss: How can parents and families serve in local ministry? How does involvement in children's ministry help parents fulfill their role of spiritual nurture?

Involving parents in ministry to children is a good way to encourage parents in their roles as spiritual nurturers. Provide parent/child Sunday school classes and give homework that allows the parents and children to obey God's Word together. Involve parents in ministry to their children through intercession, serving together, giving as a family to someone in need. Let parents take the lead in their children's dedication, salvation, water baptism, and receiving Communion.

3.) Develop trained, anointed leaders in children's ministry.

- Share your vision.
 - What is vision? Vision is a statement of what could and should be.
- Vision is characterized by:
 - *Alignment.* A vision is aligned with God's Word and with the overall vision of your church or organization. "Your vision should be one small but vital part of what God is up to in history" (Visioneering, Stanley).

- *Magnitude.* A vision is never something within the reach of your own abilities. A vision is God-sized—something that can only be accomplished as God works in you and through you.
- *Direction.* A vision plays a key role in designing the future. It persuasively defines what your ministry wants to make happen.
- *Change.* A vision is not static, unchanging. A vision will become greater and clearer as you pursue accomplishing it.
- Why is vision important in the development of leaders?
 - Sharing vision inspires others to come alongside you and work with you to see the vision accomplished. Vision also inspires commitment. Individuals who are called to vision are usually more committed to its fulfillment than individuals who are asked to fulfill a task or accept a responsibility.
- How can I develop a ministry vision?
 - *Pray.* Ask the Lord to help you know what God desires for the children of your local church and community. Ask Him to make you aware of what purposes your local ministry is to fulfill in the lives of children.
 - *Develop a vision statement.* A vision statement should tell who you are targeting and what you hope to accomplish. Here is a sample vision statement: “Our children will know the Lord, grow as His disciples, and commit to a lifetime of Christian service.” Who does this vision target? Yes, children. What does this vision seek to accomplish? Children will know the Lord, grow as His disciples, and commit to a lifetime of Christian service.
 - *A vision needs to be easily understood.* Keep your vision statement to one simple sentence so that it can be easily spoken, memorized and internalized.
 - *Share your vision and passion for the ministry with your pastor.* Meet with him regularly to keep him updated on what is happening in the ministry, i.e. programs, volunteers, children, families. Ask for opportunities to share your vision with the congregation so that more individuals can serve alongside you in fulfillment of this vision.
 - *Give ministry teams an opportunity to create a vision statement based on the guidelines given. Let each team share their vision statement. Remind the ministry teams that this exercise is just the beginning in the development of vision. Vision must continue being evaluated and refined.*
- Recognize and respond to relationships He has given you for the purpose of accomplishing vision.
 - Jesus prayed to the Father, “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word” (John 17:6). Jesus recognized each of the twelve that God had given Him and responded appropriately. He did not ignore those God had given Him. He did not regard His encounters with them as chance. He called them to Him. He invested in them through time spent together, helping them understand their personal missions, involving them in ministry, and more.

- How do you view relationships within your ministry? Because of the vision and mission God has given you, you can be sure that some of these relationships are not accidental or circumstantial. They are ordered by God. As you become spiritually alert to recognize the God-ordered relationships in your life, you can respond as Jesus did—building intentional relationships that God will use to accomplish mission.
- Consider the children and adults serving with you in children’s ministry, in your local congregation. Do you consider these relationships significant in accomplishing the mission God has given you? How can you respond appropriately to these individuals so that mission is accomplished?

Give participants an opportunity to think about those God has given to serve alongside them. Remind them to remember children and teens, as well. Encourage them to respond to these individuals as Jesus did by building intentional relationships with them.

- Affirm those who serve with you.
- Help them grow. Volunteers want to serve with those who are committed to helping them develop. Provide ways for ministry volunteers to grow relationally, spiritually, and in ministry and leadership skills.
- Provide support. What do your volunteers need to do the job well? Do your best to provide the training, resources, and assistance that they need. If you are not able to provide all that is needed, communicate your awareness of their needs and your regret at not being able to provide.
- Celebrate. Remember the celebration days that are important to your volunteers and celebrate with them—birthdays, anniversaries, birth of child, marriage of child, etc.
- Say Thanks! Be sure to express your gratitude for volunteers’ service. Notes, small gifts, service, public recognition are all ways to say “thank you”.

If time permits, allow children’s ministers to share ways their ministry provides programs to children, supports families, and develop leaders.

4.) Classroom Management and Discipline

A.) Schedule

Notes:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| • Make your plan | name |
| • Review it the week prior | • Greet each parent and ask about bathroom break |
| • Arrive early | • Review expectations |
| • Be prepared | • Remember attention span |
| • Have an “Order of Service” | |
| • Greet each child and call by | |

Sample Sunday School Schedule:

9:30 Staff Ready
9:45 Playtime
9:55 Clean-up Time
10:00 Welcome, Lesson Intro, and Review Expectations
10:05 Prayer
10:10 Bible Story/Truth
10:20 Scripture Introduction Activity
10:25 Craft/Coloring
10:30 Snack
10:40 Transition Time

Sample Worship Schedule:

10:45 Transition Time Continues
10:55 Bathroom Break
11:00 Welcome, Lesson Intro, Expectations Review
11:05 Opening Game
11:10 Worship
11:20 Prayer
11:25 Scripture Verse Intro
11:30 Bible Lesson
11:40 Centers
 Snack
 Craft
 Lesson/Scripture Review
12:15 Closing Prayer

B.) Presenting Your Lesson

- Needs of Your Students
- Evaluation
 - Where the children attentive and eager to participate?
 - Did the children understand the basics of the story?
 - Could the children name basic elements of the story?

C.) Discipline

Set Reasonable Expectations:

- Be a Good Friend.
- Be Safe.
- Be A Good Listener.

Procedures

- **LOOK.** Make eye contact with the child, put your finger over your mouth to signal quiet, smile and look away.
- **TOUCH.** Put your hand on the child's shoulder. Touch the hand of the child. Put your arm around the child. Many times a touch can be reassuring and can return the child to the proper behavior.

- **MOVE.** First, move yourself to the most disruptive child. Second, move the child to another seat close to you or simply separate the children that are bothering each other.
- **FINALLY,** if the bad behavior continues, the child should be escorted to the back of the room and further discipline will be administered at the close of the service by the Children’s Pastor.

Establish Consequences:

- 1st Warning - Move their pin
- 2nd Warning - Time out with a helper
- 3rd Warning - Call their parent/guardian

Don’t forget to have good help, make eye contact, touch, and then speak.

D.) Classroom Set-up

Furniture

Learning Centers

Colors and Decor

E.) Volunteers

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Preschool or Nursery Duty” • Recruitment • Teenagers • Invite Parents and Family • Maternity Leave • New People • Personal Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Job Openings • Build a Rotation Where Possible • Be Aware • Show Appreciation Genuinely and Frequently • Meet Regularly |
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F.) Safety

- Prayer
- Application and Screening
- Job Descriptions
- Discipline
- Two-Adult Rule and Potty Policy
- Classroom Presence
- Registration
- Secured Hallways
- Snacks
- Toy Checks
- CPR and First Aid Training

G.) Connecting With Parents

Social Media

Direct Contact

Special Events

Family Fusion

5.) Engaging Children in the Faith Community

A.) Include them...

What makes your feel like you belong?

...as fellow believers in the faith community

...by creating a place to belong

- Include them in planning
- Recognize diverse interest
- Remember names
- Personal invitations
- Show approval
- Listen respectfully
- Build them spiritually

Key Questions:

- What are we doing to help each child feel included, loved, and accepted by our church?
- Do children feel like they belong?

B.) Involve them...

...in prayer

The Biblical foundation for children being included in the church's prayer activity is found in the level of involvement that children exercised in partnership with adults in the history of God's people.

1. Children were involved in entering into the covenant with God. Deuteronomy 29:10-13
2. Children were involved in being taught to live according to God's ways. Deuteronomy 31:9-13
3. Children were involved in celebrations of God's blessings. Deuteronomy 16:10-14
4. Children were involved in hearing God's message. Joshua 8:35
5. Children were involved in weeping because of the sins of God's people. Ezra 10:1
6. Children were involved in understanding God's Word. Nehemiah 8:1-8
7. Children were involved in agreeing what God's people were going to do. Nehemiah 10:28-29
8. Children were involved in rejoicing and praising God. Nehemiah 12:27-43
9. Children were involved in crying out to the Lord for help. 2 Chronicles 20:5-13

10. Children were involved in praying for revival. Joel 2:12-32

- Ask children to pray in your worship service.
- Provide time for students to give praise reports of answered prayers.
- Keep a record of prayer requests and answers.
- Challenge your class to memorize key verses of Scripture on prayer and have them share during church.
- Use a globe or world map when praying for missionaries to increase an awareness of worldwide missions and compassion for people in other parts of the world. Have a child hold the globe as you pray.
- Provide prayer partners/mentors.

...In Worship

- Play instruments or sing before or during the service.
- Lead motions to a song in the services and invite people in the service to join them. Motions and children can be a great tool in teaching adults to be free in worship.
- Sing a song with the choir or worship band.
- Sing or play a special piece of music.
- Draw/paint/color images to fit the sermon for the day then post them in the lobby and/or use them for the bulletin cover.
- Act out a drama sketch or production.

...in Service

- Helper's Hints — On slips of paper, have kids write or draw a picture of a way to serve each family member. Then place the slips in a decorated shoebox. For example, kids might write, "Make Mom's bed," "Give a hug," or "Do the dishes." Each morning kids can choose a slip of paper and use the "hint" to serve someone that day. Periodically have kids come up with new ideas to add to their boxes at home.
- Love Language — Discuss with kids how service is doing what someone else needs, not simply doing what we like to do for others. Physical touch, words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, acts of service. Then ask kids to identify meaningful ways they can show love to their families. Have kids create a service plan for the following week and keep a short journal of people's reactions to their acts of service. Share reports the following week.
- Service Celebration — Challenge kids to complete one act of kindness for each family member during the week. In your classroom, have kids share ways they served their families so other kids get new ideas. Then serve the kids snacks as a celebration of their service.
- Be a good neighbor. Older kids can help neighbors by weeding, mowing, painting, house-sitting, or pet-sitting. Preschoolers enjoy leaving flowers or handmade cards on doorsteps.
- Give something special. Encourage families to clean closets by giving gently used clothing and toys directly to less fortunate families or organizations supporting families in need.

...In Missions

Global Missions

- "Mission's Minute
- Missionary Connections
- Giving
- Special Campaigns

Local Missions

- Adopt-a-Grandparent
- Nursing Home Visitation.
- Day of Caring

...In Identifying Spiritual Gifts

- Provide teaching about spiritual gifts and God's design for the church. Help young people to understand God's purposes for the church and for their lives which include serving in His church. Help them realize that they have a part to do right now, not just when they are older.
- Provide opportunities for children to serve. Children need to develop a base of experience in ministry so they can begin to identify how they may be gifted. Encourage them to get involved in a variety of ways. Involve them, as you can, in the various aspects of total church life where they can work side by side with adults. Suggest that families serve together as teams. God will use these opportunities to grow passions within their hearts and to surface and develop their spiritual gifts.
 - Allow children and youth to plan and lead their own programs, under supervision, of course.
 - Take them on ministry field trips to nursing homes, children's hospitals, and the like, and soon you will see those with the gift of mercy blossom.
 - Get them involved in workdays around the church and soon you will see children with the gift of service looking for work.
 - Make them a part of your short-term mission trips and soon you will hear some answer the call to be a missionary or evangelist.
 - Seek volunteers among them to be nursery workers and soon you will see children with the gift of helps offering their services on their own.
 - Be careful, in the process, that you do not use coercion or a reward system to get them involved. They need to learn to serve out of love and obedience. They need to understand that serving is a worthy enough calling in itself that they do not need to be bribed in order to do it.
- Provide children with affirmation and feedback. When Jesus sent out his disciples to minister, He took the time to discuss how it went with them. Why would we do any less with the children and youth whom we deploy into ministry of any kind?
 - First, they should be included in training opportunities.
 - Second, they should be affirmed in what they are doing. If there seems to be an area in which they do particularly well, tell them.
 - Third, provide feedback afterward. Evaluate with them what happened, both the positive and the negative. Offer suggestions on how they might improve. Or, if they just don't seem to be suited for a particular type of ministry, help them find something that may be a better fit.
- Provide these young believers with role models. Adults ought to be setting a good example for the kids. So many adults, however, do not do their part. This

can send a strong message to them contradicting all your verbal teaching about why they should get involved. If you expect young people to get it, you better work at making sure the adults get it.

- Provide prayer support.
 - Develop a prayer base for the children and youth of your church that goes beyond praying for only the troubled ones. Pray also for those who seem to be doing well and who want to be a part. They need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in whatever they do for Him just as much as an adult does. The last thing we want to do is grow kids who are self-sufficient and self-reliant in their Christian walks. We do not want them to start their life of service learning to do it in the flesh. Both their motivations and means of serving need to be an outgrowth of abiding in Christ who said "apart from Me you can do nothing." Following are some suggested prayer topics which can be personalized:

Key Questions:

- Is our ministry to children producing spectators or participators?
- Are we encouraging them to discover how to express their worship through their words, music, giving, and lifestyle? Do we give them opportunities to do so?
- Are those who work with children in our church sensitized to be on the watch for giftedness in children and prepared to affirm and encourage its development?
- Are we encouraging them to be involved in missions?
- Are they learning to pray effectively?
- Are opportunities provided at every level to begin involving children in ministry?

C.) Invest them....

...In Mentoring

- Mentors are not extra parents or just supportive friends; they are God-appointed guides that lead children through tough times. Like Paul and Timothy or Elijah and Elisha, mentors teach, instruct and impart to their students, often just one at a time.
 - Get permission from parents
 - Find the right mentors
 - Screen the mentors
 - Match the write partner
 - Make a commitment
 - Identify dates and times
 - Build Relationship
 - Designate an end

...through training

Key Questions:

- What are we doing to produce a sense of divine purpose in the lives of children?

- Are we helping children who have become Christians know how to share their faith with others?
- What are we doing to help children begin to hear and respond to the call of God?

D.) Inspire them.

...To Reach Spiritual Milestones and Celebrate

Scripture shows us the significance of celebrating the spiritual steps. God's people set aside time and energy to highlight the spiritual passages in their lives. Jesus' first introduction to the public and His first miracle occurred during a family event which held spiritual value.

Let me begin by asking you "what events stand out as milestones or turning points in your spiritual walk?"

These are many spiritual milestones that are significant in the a person's life. Think about these:

- Child Dedication
- Decision to Trust Jesus
- Attending church for first time
- Celebrating Christmas & Easter
- Receiving first Bible
- Learning to give a testimony
- Memorizing Important Scriptures, the Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments
- Serving in a church service (singing, speaking, receiving the offering)
- Baptism
- Communion

Scripture shows us the significance of celebrating milestones:

- Jesus first miracle was at a Wedding
- God designated celebrations & festivals to commemorate spiritual milestones.
- Passover, a child's recognition into adulthood.

"You have been taught the Holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15

Parents are the primary spiritual guides for children and it's important that we don't take that responsibility away. But churches can help by developing meaningful milestones at specific stages of life for children.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and

when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”
Deuteronomy 6:6

Dedication/Presenting the baby

1 John 4:8, 11-12

This is a critical time of influence. Love attachment between parent & child forms foundation for the child’s psychological and spiritual development.

Churches should guide parents to:

- Pray for their child
- Model the love of God
- Develop a strong parent/child relationship
- Care for physical needs of children
- Formally dedicate child in church
- Introduce child to Sunday school
- Read Bible Stories

Communion & Baptism

2 Corinthians 5:17

The primary purpose of parenting is to disciple their children to grow into new creations in Christ. Churches should help parents to:

- Provide tools to allow parents to lead their children to Christ.
- Encourage parents and ministry workers to initiate conversations about salvation, communion & baptism.
- Teach children how to write a testimony, prepare for baptism, and take communion.
- Provide opportunities for children to be a part of hearing testimonies, communion & baptism services.

Preparing for Adolescence

Colossians 2:6-8

Ages 7-15 is a time of impression when they have the greatest receptivity to values and beliefs. During this time children seek out their own spiritual identity.

Churches should assist parents to:

- Help children build a positive self concept & establish their identity as children of God
- Assist children to identify unique talents & gifts
- Affirm their individual personality
- Talk about their faith
- Provide opportunities to serve in the church & community
- Value their heart's desires
- Encourage Christian friendships
- Develop adult mentors (other than parent)

Being Intentional

Be intentional in planning opportunities for families to celebrate these important milestones.

- Offer classes to guide parents and children prior to child dedication & baptism.
- Encourage parent to meet together to pray for their children.
- Encourage parent to meet together to with their children.
- Promote milestone opportunities
- Follow Christ' Example: Faith of a child; Put child in the midst
- Provide opportunities for children to do ministry
- Allow Kids to experience church by sharing God's love with others (going to visit elderly, mission trips, service projects)

Key Questions:

- What does faith development look like in our community from birth to adulthood?
- Are we helping children desire to authentically worship God in spirit and truth?

- Are they provided opportunities to worship together with other children as well as with their parents and the rest of the church in corporate worship?

Reaching Kids Through Creative Ministry

Session Three

Jesus didn't teach like the traditional teachers of the law. No, his approach was very different....and they were very effective. You can also be an effective teacher by using a variety of creative methods. In this workshop, I'll showcase some favorite teaching methods that you can take home to your church and immediately put into practice.

1.) Introduction

Passages:

Matthew 6:25–27 (asking questions)

Matthew 5:14–16 (visualizing)

Mark 6:35–38 (involving the learners)

Jesus didn't teach like the traditional teachers of the law. He asked questions that caused people to think about why they believed. He visualized Bible truths using everyday objects and common life experiences. He involved his students in the learning process. His teaching methods were effective!

You too can be a more effective teacher or minister by using a variety of creative teaching methods.

A.) Ask Good Questions

Perhaps you've never thought of asking questions as an effective teaching method but Jesus often asked questions. He asked his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" (Mark 8:27). He asked the religious leaders, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? (Matthew 12:11). Why do you think Jesus asked questions? I believe he wanted his listeners to look at things in a different way. He asked questions so that his listeners could not give the pat religious answers of the day. His questions required his listeners to think.

Every children's minister asks kids questions, but why are we asking questions? Are we asking questions to see how much kids know or are we asking questions to see how much kids understand? Questions that check for knowledge which has been retained are good questions. We want to know what kids have put into their memory banks. But when we ask kids questions, we also want to ask questions that cause kids to think—to look at things in a different way because of what they have learned.

What is a good question?

- A good question is an open-ended question. It encourages children to think rather than simply reciting facts. Open-ended questions begin with words such as why, what if, how, what would you do if, etc.
- A good question involves all children because there is more than just a single correct answer.
- A good question requires children to use the content they have learned

Asking good questions doesn't come naturally. It is a skill that has to be sharpened. When preparing your lesson plan for each teaching session takes time to develop several open-ended questions related to the lesson. The more you use open-ended questions the more it will become a natural part of your teaching style.

B.) Visualize Bible Truth

A pearl, a coin, a lost sheep, a mustard seed, a buried treasure. Jesus used these everyday objects and more to visualize Bible truth for His listeners. Educational statistics bear out that children retain 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, and 70 percent of what they see, hear and are able to talk about. So visualization is essential! Almost everything you do in ministering to children should contain a visual element, whether it is audio-visual, special effects, props, or setting and stage design.

C.) Object Lessons

Object lessons are lessons taught using common objects and everyday life experiences to illustrate spiritual truth.

- Focus on scriptural content of the message before developing an object lesson. Consider physical properties, attributes, or characteristics of common everyday objects and how they might be used to illustrate the Bible truth you want the children to remember.
- Use objects as "attention-getters". For instance, show an object at the beginning of your service/class and call it "The Curious Thing." Tell the children that you picked the object up on the way to church this morning because it reminded you of today's lesson. However, don't reveal the correlation between the object and the lesson until the very end of the service/class. This will engage and hold the children's interest because they will be looking throughout the service for how "The Curious Thing" ties in to what you are teaching. An example of "The Curious Thing" object would be a map when talking about Paul's missionary travels, or a jar of honey when talking about John the Baptist.
- When using an object lesson find ways to involve the children rather than having them just observe. For example, after presenting the Bible truth and lesson you might let the children form groups, give each group an object, and let them discuss ways the object illustrates the spiritual truth.

Object lessons to do with the participants:

Don't Blow Up!

Bible truth: When I am angry I will wait to speak or act. Bible verse: James 1:19

Materials needed: two cans of soft drink

Toss two cans of soft drink around the circle the children have formed. Each child will shake the can and tell one thing that makes him angry. A volunteer will then point one of the cans away from everyone and open it. Wait to open the second can.

Discuss: What happened when the first can was opened? What happens when you're angry and don't think before you act?

Open the second can of soft drink after counting to ten with the children.

Discuss: What happened when you opened the second can? How is this like waiting to speak or act when you are angry?

Learning Activity: Form groups of three or four. Give each group an object. Ask them to determine what Bible truth that object might illustrate. Objects you might use: pencil, key, soap, mirror, yo-yo, shoe, bandage, ear plugs, empty cup. For a more complex activity, ask each group to find a Bible verse and Bible story or passage that would best illustrate the Bible truth they have selected.

Seek the Lord First

Bible truth: I will put God first in my life. Bible verse: Matthew 6:33

Materials needed: tennis ball can with three tennis balls; rice

In preparing for this lesson, pre-measure the amount of rice needed by putting the balls into the can and adding enough rice to fill it. Be sure to shake the rice down until it is really full. Then pour it into a container with lid so rice will not spill.

During the demonstration, talk about the many things that fill our days such as school, homework, sports, doing chores, etc. As you are talking, begin to spoon or pour rice (which represents all these activities) into the can. After the can is nearly filled with rice, try to stuff the balls (which represent prayer, reading God's Word, thinking about God) into the can. They obviously don't fit after the rice has been added. Remind the children that sometimes we fill our days with so many things and then there is no time to be with God. Ask, "What might happen if we put God first?"

Empty the container. "If we make time for the Lord first, we find that everything else fits perfectly." Demonstrate this by inserting the balls first and then pouring in and shaking down the rice until the can is filled and you can put the lid on.

D.) Gospel Illusions

An illusion is defined as "anything that seems to be something that it is not." Illusions are misapprehended by most people; they represent a difference between what is perceived and what is reality.

- Let the children know that the illusions you do are merely puzzles for the eyes. There is no such thing as "magic" and there is nothing "supernatural" about the illusions you are performing.
- Do not let the illusion overshadow the message. An illusion is used to get children's attention, introduce a Bible truth, or illustrate a Bible truth. The illusion itself is a method. It is not the message.

- Present the illusion skillfully. For an illusion to be effective it must effectively trick the eyes of the children. Usually this requires practice. Practice before a mirror or an audience at home so that you can present the illusion easily to the children.

Illusions to do with the participants:

The Secret Square

Materials needed: A large rectangular sheet of paper torn into nine small rectangles. Bible truth: God knows everything about me.

Bible verse: Psalm 139:4, "Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord."

Choose 9 volunteers. As the children are watching, tear the large rectangular sheet of paper into nine small rectangles. Give each one a piece of paper and a pencil. (Remember which child you gave the piece of paper that had all rough edges.) Instruct the children to each write a favorite word on their paper, fold it and then drop it in a container.

Say, "I'm going to read each word aloud and tell you which word (say the name of the child who was given the piece of paper with all rough edges) wrote." Pull out every word and read it. Then say, "No, this isn't your word." Save the one with rough edges until last. Ask the child, "This is your word, isn't it?" then share the Bible truth that God knows every word on our tongues even before we speak them because He knows us completely.

Sin Separates

Materials needed: Two long, narrow strips of paper or two strips of adding machine tape; clear tape.

Bible truth: My sin separates me from God.

Bible verse: Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you,"

Bible lesson: Genesis 3

(As you tell the first portion of the story, tape a strip of paper into a circle. Cut down the middle line of the circle to separate the circle into two circles.) Long ago in the Garden of Eden Satan came to Adam and Eve and tempted them to disobey God. Adam and Eve gave in to Satan's temptation and ate of the fruit of the tree that God has said, "Do not eat."

When Adam and Eve disobeyed, they were separated from God. (Show two separate circles.) The Bible tells us in Isaiah 59:2 that our sins separate us from God just as Adam and Eve's sins separated them from God.

But God does not want to be separated from us. He loves us and wants to have a loving relationship with us.

(Form another circle from a strip of paper. This time make a half twist and tape ends together. As you are sharing the remainder of the story sermon, insert scissors into the paper circle. Cut 1/3 way in from the edge, continuing around twice until you come to the starting place.)

Because God did not want to be separated from us He found a way. He sent His son Jesus to live here on earth. Jesus was tempted just like we are and just like Adam and Eve were but he did not give in. He did not sin. He chose to die on the cross for our sins. When we admit that we have sinned (disobeyed God) and believe that Jesus loves us and took the punishment for our sins, we are then reconnected to God.

(Open out the cut strip representing a big circle representing God and a connected smaller circle, representing us.)

E.) Characters

Liven up your teaching or worship session by developing several live, human characters who can visit from time---to---time. These characters can be used to:

Solve a Problem. A character can set up or introduce the lesson by entering with a problem that will be addressed in the Bible lesson.

Provide a Solution. A character can provide a solution by sharing a Biblical principle or Bible verse that relates to the Bible lesson.

Clarify Truth. A character can be confused or misinformed about the Bible truth being taught. As he seeks clarification by asking questions, he will be providing the children an opportunity to review the Bible truth.

Provide an Example of Life Application. A character can help the children understand how to apply Bible truth by applying it to a situation relevant to his life experience. Some tips for using Characters in your Children's Ministry:

- Develop a character that fits your ministry theme and/or environment.

For example, when using a construction theme your character could be a construction worker. If your theme is a jungle theme you will want to develop a jungle man or jungle animal character.

- Involve members of your congregation as characters. Characters provide an opportunity for people to serve in children's ministry who are not children's ministers.
- Don't use the same character for so long that he is no longer mysterious and entertaining to the children. Vary characters based upon the lesson, theme, creative environment, or event.

F.) Involve Children in Learning

When his disciples came with the problem of no food to feed a hungry crowd, Jesus said, "Give them something to eat." When Peter asked if Jesus paid taxes, Jesus sent him fishing. Jesus' disciples were often actively involved in the learning process.

Think for a moment about the last lesson you taught to children. How much time did you spend talking while the children were expected to sit quietly and listen? Did you know that children retain only five to ten percent of any spoken or written communication? Yet, they retain 80–90 percent of teaching that includes direct, personal experience. The more students are involved in the learning process the more they will learn and retain.

G.) Science Experiments

Children are fascinated by science experiments; they love to be surprised by explosions, things bubbling over, and those unexpected twists that often come into play with science experiments. Kids will listen to your lesson and remember what you are saying because they have really experienced something unusual and unique as part of the learning process.

- Science experiments allow children to see and experience the wonders of God’s creation and explore the nature and laws of science.
- Science experiments allow children to understand spiritual truth through concrete experiences. While object lessons can sometimes be abstract if they are not directly related to a child’s experience, science experiments are touchable, doable, and experienced in daily life.
- Science experiments provide great opportunities for children to be actively involved. Rather than observing the science experiment they can often form small groups and do the science experiment you have done during your Bible lesson or message.
- Again, be sure the science experiment accurately illustrates Bible truth. Also be sure to practice before presenting it to the children or having them do it.

Science experiments to do with the participants:

Brand New!

Bible truth: Christ makes me brand new.

Bible verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Bible story: Zacchaeus Becomes a New Person, Luke 19:1–8

Materials needed: copper coins, lemon juice, cups

Before sharing the story of Zacchaeus give each child a few dirty, old copper coins. Talk with the children about how these coins might have gotten so dirty. Then let them put the coins in a cup of lemon juice to soak.

Tell the story of Zacchaeus emphasizing his sinfulness and how Jesus’ love and forgiveness made him a different person.

Let the children remove their coins from the lemon juice. Discuss what happened to the coins. The lemon juice made the coins look like new.

That is what Jesus did for Zacchaeus and what He will do for you!

Protected from Harm!

Bible truth: God protects me. Bible verse: Psalm 18:1, 2

Bible story: Daniel in the Lion's Den, Daniel 6

Materials needed: Bucket of water, glass, piece of paper, pencil

Tell the story of Daniel being put in the lion's den because he prayed to God three times a day. Talk with the children about circumstances in their lives where they need God's help just as Daniel did. Remind them that just as God protected Daniel, he will protect them.

Write names of children on sheet of paper. Wad and place at the bottom of glass. Dip glass quickly straight into a bucket of water. Bring glass straight up. Paper will be dry.

H.) Acting Out

Acting out in children's ministry is not about having children perform in a rehearsed play. It is about involving children in reliving the Bible story. Acting out in children's ministry can be as simple as having children demonstrate the actions of a Bible character as you tell the story.

Ways you can help children "act out" as you share the Bible story.

- Echo Pantomime: Assign sounds, phrases or actions to words and characters in a Bible story.

As you tell the story, kids listen for the specific words and echo the appropriate response.

For example, you tell the children to make water sounds every time they hear the word "water." When you say "Peter," they are to say, "I'm going fishing." When you say, "Jesus," they are to make the sign language sign for Jesus. As you tell the story, the children listen for the specific words and echo the appropriate response.

- Interviews: Invite a Bible character to come to class and tell the story from his perspective.

For example: the story of Jesus' birth could be told from the innkeeper's perspective.

The story of Peter and Silas being in prison could be told from the jailer's perspective. The story of David and Goliath could be told from the perspective of the giant. Prior to the character's visit let the children prepare questions to ask. Or, if the children are younger let them ask impromptu questions.

- Situation Drama: Help students understand the situation of the characters in a Bible story through situation drama. Examples: Give each child a nonsensical phrase to say to other children to understand the dilemma of the Tower of Babel. Turn out the lights and ask the students to find something or complete a task in the darkness to understand the plague of darkness or the blindness of a beggar.

Situation Drama to do with participants:

Place chairs in a line. Have children come up and choose a chair to sit in. "Everyone wants to be first, don't we? No one wants to be last. But Jesus said, 'The first will be last and the last first.' In other words, those who put others before themselves please Him." Then ask the children to turn the chairs around so that the first chair is last. Give a small reward to the person who was last but became first.

- Props: Encourage the students to be a part of the Bible story by providing props. Examples: Palm branches and pieces of cloth so the children can participate in Jesus' triumphal entry; create the Red Sea with two blue ribbons or a large blue plastic tablecloth and have children try to jump across; a bag with five loaves and two fish so children can share it with Jesus.

I.) Games

J.) Conclusion

As a children's minister, it is important for you to use creative teaching methods to teach Bible truth in a way that is easy for children to understand and apply to their life situations.

Practice asking good questions that encourage knowing and understanding Bible truth. Visualize your lessons using object lessons, Gospel illusions and characters that will focus their attention on the truth you are presenting. Finally, involve children in learning through learning activities such as science experiments and drama activities.

The Growing Leader

Session Four

What was God thinking when He placed you in ministry to children? I believe that if you are called to this ministry, you are called to lead. And if you are called to lead, you are called to grow in your leadership. In this workshop we'll talk about some essentials for every children's ministry leader and how you can more effectively lead your children and ministry team.

Refer to Slideshow for opening slides.

1.) You HAVE TO Get These Right

a.) Delegation – We don't delegate because we don't trust God with the results. We don't delegate because our default mode is to do it ourselves: "If I do this, my pastor will be pleased with me. If I do that, God will be pleased with me."

We don't delegate because we have a half-hearted view of what eternal rewards are. What ultimate beauty is. C.S. Lewis addresses our self-focused small-mindedness in his book *The Weight of Glory*:

"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

We often don't delegate because we are building our own kingdom. We are far too concerned with who gets the credit rather than who gets the glory.

What I think is interesting about Gen. 2 when God creates Adam is:

1. He gives him meaningful work.
2. He gives him clear parameters for that work to take place.
3. He gives him something that forces him to reflect his Creator.

God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.

B.) Leading under Authority – We lead under authority when we understand ultimate authority. When you come on staff at a church, you have to submit yourself to the pastor you serve. This can only be done to the degree you have submitted your life completely to Christ.

What does submission to authority look like?

- It's walking and leading in humility
- It's trusting Jesus more than your circumstance
- It's not checking your dreams at the door of the church

- It's not blindly following your pastor off a cliff
- Submission to authority starts with you submitting your life to Christ ultimately. As a result, you walk in humility. You speak when you need to and be quiet when you need to. Paul talks about our submission to Christ and uses marriage as an example for us:

EPHESIANS 5:22-25

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

The power to submit to the authorities God has placed in our life comes from our ability to fully trust Christ above all else.

“But there must be a real giving up of the self. You must throw it away ‘blindly,’ so to speak. Christ will indeed give you a real personality: but you must not go to Him for the sake of that. As long as your own personality is what you are bothering about, you are not going to Him at all. The very first step is to try to forget about the self altogether. Your real, new self (which is Christ's and also yours, and yours just because it is His) will not come as long as you are looking for it. It will come when you are looking for Him. Does that sound strange? The same principle holds, you know, for more everyday matters. Even in social life, you will never make a good impression on other people until you stop thinking about what sort of impression you are making. Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.

The principle runs through all life from top to bottom.

Give up your self, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it.

Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.”

C.S. Lewis

C.) Connecting with Families – We have to move from atmosphere of co-dependence to an environment of interdependence.

There has been a huge push for family ministry the past decade, and rightly so. Leading into the future, we have to value families not as a stated value but as an actual value. The church and families alike need to admit this co-dependent relationship is broken and doesn't honor God. We need to move to a model that creates interdependence,

where families and church are dependent on each other and where they are both fully dependent on Christ alone.

When talking about connecting parents, sometimes our creative ideas and the connecting itself become an end in itself. We start with the wrong question. We ask how we can connect parents. We need to ask that, but we first need to ask, what are we connecting them to? Do the parents we are partnering with value the same things?

D.) Measurement – We measure the wrong things. Measurement is a good thing, but what we measure reveals a lot about us. The thing that is so dangerous about measurement is it can very quickly become the thing in our life that informs every decision we make. We can find our identity in something other than Christ.

Our tendency is to move off of the things we can't see and start to measure things we can see. We often find our worth in kids' ministry by how many kids come, by what curriculum we use, by what check-in we have or by how well our spaces are themed. A lot of the dissatisfaction we have in ministry comes from us measuring the wrong things.

We spend our time and energy on the things we measure. What you measure, you get more of. What scares me is getting more of something that isn't Jesus.

E.) Priorities – Our priorities are informed by our loves. We make time for the things we love. Where we spend our time shows what is most valuable to us.

Our priorities are determined by our loves. We spend our time, our money and our energy on the things that matter most.

As a leader, you will be pulled on by everyone around you if you don't put guardrails in your life. What drives us? Our desire to please everyone. We want to make everyone happy. This is a pipe dream and comes from our desire to have others think well of us rather than God.

What is crazy is we can so easily use Jesus to get what we want. One of the scariest things about ministry is we can so easily make the things of ministry the ultimate desire of our lives.

Revelation 21:5, 6

: And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

F.) NEVER Stop Learning

2.) Take Time to Rejuvenate Your Soul

How does a soul find rejuvenation? That is the question LEADERSHIP journal asked dozens of church leaders. Here are 10 things they have done to benefit their souls:

- Take a walk. Regularly taking a long walk can quiet your soul and help you draw near to God. Many pastors report using walks to internalize their sermons and prepare their souls to preach.
- Pray the daily offices. In the early centuries, Christians gathered at designated times during the day for prayer. These prayer times, known as “offices,” are still practiced by believers today. With the aid of a prayer book, you can pray alone knowing that others across the globe are sharing in your prayers at the same time.
- Say no. People are always clamoring for our time and energy. Learning to say no, even to good ministries and opportunities, will give the soul room to breathe and find rejuvenation.
- Fast from media, even ministry books. The amount of information available today is never-ending, including literature available to church leaders about ministry. While some of it is clearly beneficial, sometimes we need to rest from filling our heads with new insights and the pressure to implement them.
- Exercise. Many pastors told us regular exercise is critical to the health of the soul as well as the body. And research has shown that a healthy body positively impacts a person’s emotional and mental capacities.
- Laugh. One leader says, “After a difficult Sunday at church I like to come home and watch my DVD collection of Tom and Jerry cartoons. The slapstick humor helps me fight the temptation to take ministry, or myself, too seriously.”
- Find a spiritual director. Not exactly therapy, not quite coaching, a spiritual director offers something else: a God’s-eye view of your soul. Dieter Zander, pastor of spiritual formation at Bay Marin Community Church in Novato, California, visits his director, Father Tom, once a month. “Just the discipline of going to him and submitting to his insights has been a rich experience for me,” Zander says.
- Meditate on the Lord’s Prayer. The Eastern Church has a tradition known as hesychasm. This is the practice of repeating a short prayer, such as the Lord’s Prayer, over and over. Try sitting in silence for five minutes, and then say the Lord’s Prayer reflectively aloud. Afterward, center your thoughts on one word or phrase and allow it to inspire your own prayers to God.
- Begin a hobby. When we asked pastors and church leaders how they refresh their souls, many said they rely on a hobby unrelated to ministry. Some hobbies were highly physical, like surfing or rock climbing. Others were more contemplative and creative, like model-building or painting or writing poetry.
- Write an encouraging letter. Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up.” The proverb does not specify whether the benefit is for the heart that receives the good word or the heart that gives it. Take time to reflect on a person who has blessed your life and ministry. After thanking God for him or her, write the person a letter of gratitude and encouragement. The exercise might bring cheer to both of your hearts.

Discuss

1. Have you had a positive experience with one of these activities?
2. Which activity would you most like to make a regular part of your week?
3. What would you have to do in order to regularly participate in the activities listed above?

17 Just For Fun Games

STICKY GUY: Place children on two teams and have each team choose a player to be their sticky guy. The team then wraps a roll of duct tape around the sticky guy (sticky side out). Teams have 5 minutes to blow up and stick as many balloons as they can to the tape on their sticky guys. At the end of the five minutes, the leader pops the balloons one at a time with a pin as the teams count to see which team has the most!

BALL/CHIN RELAY: Place balls on the floor and have a relay race to see which team can retrieve all the balls by picking them up with their chins and placing them in a bowl or bucket. First team done wins. This is really fun if you use wet sponges, too!

SCHOOL OF FISH: Each child gets a paper fish hanging by yarn that is safety-pinned to the back of his shirt. Children try to step on the other children's fish. If a fish comes loose, the child sits down. At the end of a given time, the team with the most fish still intact wins!

BALLOON/PLUNGER RELAY: Divide into two teams and give each child a clean toilet plunger (or each team two plungers). The object of the game is to pass water balloons down the line using only the plungers (upside down). Team that moves the most balloons down their line in a given time wins!

PLAYDOH or SIDEWALK CHALK Pictionary: Make up cards that have Bible characters or stories written on them. Children then use playdoh or sidewalk chalk to create or draw the stories while their teams guess which story they are representing!

2 LITER GUARD: Make circles out of masking tape or chalk and give each child a 2 liter of soda to place inside their circle. One child is it and tries to take each child's soda. The children guarding the bottles must keep one foot only inside their circle at all times. If they tag the bottle snatcher, they switch places!

NOWHERE TO HIDE: Play just like Hide & Seek except the person who is it is armed with a spray bottle full of water and gets to spray each child he finds!

HANGER TENNIS: Take a coat hanger and pull the bottom so it makes a diamond shape. Cover it with a knee high stocking. Wrap masking tape around the top rounded part. Roll up paper into balls and use the hanger rackets to hit the balls

BLOOMER BASKETBALL: you make two pairs of very large waisted (hula hoop waist band) pants. You have two teams: a thrower, a catcher (wears the pants), a ball getter (that gets the missed balls and brings them back), For the ball, use the cheap beach balls that are about half as big as a basket ball. The throwers try to throw as many balls into the big pants as they can in 30 seconds from 10 feet away. This would be great fun if the kids threw wet sponges!

PLUNGER FRISBEE: Two teams. Each team has: a thrower, a catcher, a miss getter. The thrower throws the kind of frisbee with a large hole in the middle (or rings from a ring toss game). The catcher holds a small toilet plunger on top of their head with the handle pointing up. The idea is to throw the most frisbees onto the plunger handle in the shortest amount of time.

MUSCLE BEACH: Make teams of four. Have each team choose a boy representative and ask them to put on the sweatshirt. The object is to make a muscle man by blowing up, tying and stuffing as many balloons into the shirt of the guy until he is as muscular as possible. Give them 2 minutes. Determine the winner by a panel of judges. The first guy to break all his balloons by himself is also declared a winner.

MUSICAL CHAIRS(another version): Don't take out any players- just chairs- until there's only one chair left with all the kids!

FOOT TO FOOT: Players form a circle, feet touching. It tries to kick a ball out of the circle. The others must stop it with their hands.

BALLOON RACES: Place a drinking straw on a sturdy string by threading the string through the straw; then attach the string to two points (like 2 chairs). Tape a blown up balloon to the straw and let it go. (To tape the balloon to the straw, fold up a piece of masking tape and place it on the side of the blown up balloon, being careful not to let the air out of the balloon until ready.)The air pressure will make the balloon travel up the string. Let teams race their balloons.

A MIGHTY RUSHING WIND: 2-4 kids stand back to back in the center of a duck tape circle. They are each given a balloon to blow up and release. They move to where their balloon is and blow it up and release it again. Object is to be the first to get outside the circle.

KEEP IT UP: Have kids stand inside a circle of chairs or cones. (If you use chairs, make sure the seats are facing the outside of the circle to avoid injury.) Make sure the circle is large enough for all the kids to lie down in it at the same time. Begin the game by having children stand inside the circle, then toss a balloon into the air. Kids must work together to keep the balloon in the air, inside the circle. If the balloon goes outside the circle or touches the ground, the kids must all kneel on their knees and play the next round from there. Each time the balloon touches the ground or goes outside the circle, kids must assume a new position. The positions, in order, are: Standing, Kneeling on Knees, Sitting, Lying Down. Our children and youth of all ages enjoy this game, and it teaches teamwork and unity.

HULA HOOP RELAY: Each team joins hands to form a line. Team lines pass the hula hoop over themselves without letting go of hands.

10 Fun Bible-Memory Games for Kids in Groups

1. Spin the Bottle

Mark an arrow on an empty plastic bottle. Kids sit in a circle with the bottle in the middle. Spin the bottle. Whoever the bottle lands on says the first word of verse. Spin again, that person says first and second words. Continue until the entire verse is said.

2. Hide a Word

Use this activity with a large group. Write one word per piece of paper. Give out one piece of paper per child. The children chosen line up in front of the room (not in correct verse order). The rest of the group works together to unscramble the words by telling the kids to move places. Everyone says the verse together once it is in correct order. One child from the audience chooses someone to turn around so the verse cannot be seen. Say the verse. Continue with 1–3 people being chosen to turn around each time.

3. Spider Web Verse

One child holds the end of a ball of yarn and throws the ball to someone in a circle. They say the next word in the verse and throw the ball to someone else. This continues until the verse is complete and a spider web has been formed.

4. Who Is ... Game

Call out different scenarios: Who is wearing tennis shoes? Who has a birthday this month? Who is wearing red? Each time a scenario is called, those who fit that scenario stand and say the verse together.

5. Miniature Bible Verse

Write the Bible verse as small as possible. Make copies of the verse and hide around the room. Give the kids magnifying glasses. They must search for the verse and then use the magnifying glass to read the verse.

6. Bible Verse Art

Write the words randomly on a piece of paper with a dot next to each word. Make a copy for each person. Have the kids connect the words starting with the first word in the verse. When completed, color the design made.

7. Hot Potato

Sit in a circle. Pass a “hot potato” around the circle. This can be a bean bag, a potato or any small object. Play music. When the music stops, the person holding the hot potato must say the first word of the verse. Play continues. The next person holding the potato when the music stops must say the first two words. Play continues until the verse is completed.

8. Memory Verse Mural

Cover the table with a large sheet of paper (butcher paper, bulletin board paper). Write the words to the verse around the table. Have the kids draw symbols and pictures to illustrate the verse.

9. Bible Verse Slideshow

Have each child write one word from the verse on a piece of paper. Have them hold their paper up and take a picture of them making a silly face. Make a slideshow with the pictures in order having the kids practice the verse while they look at the slideshow.

10. Balloon Verse Hunt

Blow up helium balloons, attaching a long string to each. Write the verse on index cards, one word per card. Attach a card to each balloon. Let the balloons go in the room. Have the kids work together to put the verse in order.