

MINISTRY TO CHILDREN

Part 4

Welcome to our 5 minute leadership blog!

We're currently looking at leading in the area of children's ministry, and this week we're onto part 4 of the mini series looking at the key components that will get your children's ministry really cracking!

We looked at the personnel that you pick to run children's ministry, the philosophy of specialising rather than making everybody do everything, putting people in their area of gifting, paying attention to parents, and then in addition to all that, another key component is the small group dynamic.

Small Groups

Entertaining children from a stage and ministering to them in a big group setting will only go so far. It will get a whole lot of questions going; it might get their interests peaked, but for them to grow they need to digest, speak and be heard knowing that they are wanted. That's where small groups come in to effect.

We have found that 1:8 is a great ratio. One leader, eight children is a great ratio for a small group. We would also recommend this: don't rotate your leaders week in, week out. Get some sort of continuity going so that the child knows who his leader is the coming week. What a child told his or her leader they were going to be doing that coming week at school, can actually be followed up on and they can report back and say 'this is what happened'.

For that to work you've got to really invest in your small group leaders. Either give them a copy of the sermon that they missed or roster them such that they're on two weeks, off one week, on two off one etc but to have a random allocation of small group leaders is not going to help much, because children need to build a level of trust with their leaders - they need that to get deep in their faith.

Small groups are utterly critical. When a kid knows and anticipates that he will be missed when he's not there, and someone really is engaging and listening to him, he is going to grow.

When you looking at recruiting small group leaders or recruiting anybody for that matter to be involved in children's ministry, this is one of the biggest headaches that children's ministry leaders, around the world have. People don't want to get involved or volunteer. It's like they want to hang with the big people.

Privilege

Firstly, the way not to do it, is to get your pastor to stand up and say *we need help*. Why does nobody help the children's ministry, come on we're going to have a sign up day or even worse - people looked after you don't you think you should do it now, payback? You don't want to get up and complain and whine and moan and beg people to be involved in children's ministry.

It's a massive opportunity, it's a huge privilege! If you ever say anything from the pulpit you're creating an opportunity for more people to get involved, to exercise their ministry, to be a blessing.

Investment

The best way to get recruits into children's ministry is to get the current leaders to invite friends to come and shadow them and be with them. For them to invite their friends is the way to do it. You want to invest in your leaders, you want to treat them pastorally and give them donuts and coffee beforehand. Phone them during the week, show an interest in their personal world. Really invest in them pastorally and then they themselves will invite their friends.

Another component, which is critical to have is to keep children's ministry in the forefront of people's minds so that volunteers get involved and people invite their friends - because that's how children's ministry grows.

Celebrate

Moms and dads talk to their friends about what their children are enjoying and say *come on, come join us*. You need to keep in the public domain. Maybe once a month tell the whole church what the children are doing, show them little video clips every now and again, bring them into meetings if you have them out for most meetings, so that they are seen and are heard.

What you celebrate you will replicate and what you celebrate you will enforce as a key value in the church.

Celebrate you children.