

Sunday Is Coming: Is your Children's Ministry Ready?

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Ecclesiastes 6:10

There is nothing new under the sun.

2 Factors that go into Sunday?

- I. Volunteers
- II. Kids

I. Volunteers

A. Recruiting Volunteers

- Call people to a vision, not a need (Matthew 4:19)
- Take care of current volunteers: recognize birthdays, have coffee, send thank you notes - one of greatest resources in recruiting new volunteers is your current volunteers
- Let parents know how serving in cm will equip them & connect them to what their children are learning
- Be ready to address concerns w/ parents who are hesitant to volunteer b/c their kids would be at church multiple services - they don't want their own kids burned out - have a plan for kids while parents volunteer - give them different toys, give refreshments, pull them out to a new room or a separate space in the room

B. What's next once they're ready to volunteer?

- Fill out & turn in a volunteer application (includes background check)
- Look at the health of your volunteers (Proverbs 23:27)
- Narrow the gate on the front end - bring in prospective volunteers for a face to face interview - ask uncomfortable & important questions (trust discernment)
 - How did you come to know Jesus?
 - What are your gifts & talents?
 - How do you keep yourself pure in your dating relationship?
 - What do your text messages look like? Is there anything you wouldn't want us to see?
- Lay out expectations during interview process (time commitment, reading e-mails, being prepared, etc.)
- It's not just about who you are on Sundays - you're representing Jesus no matter where you are
- Dig in & get to know your volunteers
- After laying out expectation, figure out where they would like to serve

C. Observe

- Come in Sunday & take picture for ID lanyard
- Give them observer lanyard (must have ID to be in kid rooms)
- Tour entire KidSpring (see all environments to see thread weaving through all areas)
- Handed off to leader of ministry they're interested in
- That leader fleshes out the core values for that specific area
- Go over basic safety issues
- Go into a room to observe
- Follow up with them after Sunday - How'd you like it?
- Rely on God's prompting for them to take next step, but it's on us to follow up & help them find the right spot

D. Put on schedule

- Now officially a volunteer & on the Sunday schedule
- Volunteer the following Sunday
- Notify room leader of the new volunteer
- Go over policies/procedures & have them sign off on them (expectations, what we'll hold accountable to (1 page document - simple)

E. 4 week follow up

- After 4 Sundays - talk again: What do you love about serving? What challenges are you having? What was your experience like getting plugged in? What can we do to improve the plug-in process?

F. Continue to know the spiritual temperature of your volunteers

- Important to know who you're putting in front of you
- Prune & new growth will appear
- Matthew 19:14 - Do not hinder the children. Ask yourself, "What are we doing that's hindering the children from coming to Jesus?"
- Matthew 18 - Jesus instructs on the value of children - do not allow anything/ anyone to hinder them
- We found the biggest thing that is hindering children is people - volunteers living in sin
- Ask the tough questions - press into volunteers & know the conditions of the flocks
- Important for volunteers to know our values

G. Communicate with Volunteers

- Best communication is face to face
- Every Sunday VIP meeting 45 minutes before the service starts for all CM volunteers (each area volunteers meet together - elementary, preschool, production, etc.)
 - V - Vision: stories, life change, what's happening
 - I - Information: anything new
 - P - Prayer
- Simplify communication - don't send multiple twitters & e-mails - if you send too many messages, the volunteers won't read any - keep e-mails short & to the point
- Tools: google sites & google docs, calendar in the room for volunteers to record their upcoming absences, planning center online
- Don't talk only about administrative things - want to build relationships & real life

H. Evaluation

- Constantly evaluate how you lead: volunteers, ministry, etc.
- Sunday debrief: What are the wins? (we want to praise people of these) What are the opportunities? (we want to coach people through these)
- Create simple tools to help evaluate: Do volunteers have a way to give us feedback? - Don't make it long or time consuming or they won't do it - make it simple & make it sporadic

I. Build Community

- Volunteers need community
- If volunteers don't have community, they don't know how to build it w/ kids
- Temperature of kids is relative to spiritual/relational temperature of volunteers
- Create events & ways to encourage volunteers
 - i. Mid week volunteer team - people want to help with routine weekday tasks - if you're not asking, they're not coming. Once a month these volunteers bring breakfast (budget saver), hang out, share w/ one another - What can you get others to do so you can focus on other

things - Lots of volunteers are stretched thin for time, so mid week team is helpful for those looking more for community; Mid week team is an avenue for grace - someone who may be struggling w/ something & don't want them shepherding kids but want to keep in touch & able to keep accountable

- ii. Social networking: twitter, facebook, etc. - volunteers have a way of telling all about their lives on social networking sites - opens an avenue of knowing who volunteers really are by keeping up w/ them on these sites
- iii. Send birthday cards, take volunteers to lunch, take volunteers to coffee - spend time with them & get to know them!!!
- iv. Give volunteers some form of face-time: hang out with them, pay for it! (this is money well-invested), no event or volunteer appreciation will mean as much to them as face-time
- v. Send 3-5 notes to volunteers a week
- vi. Costume dance party - everyone in costumes, dj, volunteers brought food, staff brought drinks (non-alcoholic ☒) - great hang out time for volunteers (and inexpensive)

II. Kids

A. Vision & Values nailed down

- Relationships - w/ Jesus, w/ each other, w/ volunteers
 - Have prayer cards in nursery (those babies become your small group)
 - Keep small groups consistent: same kids w/ same leader
- Age appropriateness
 - Environments/lessons are age-appropriate (including names)
 - Spiritual stages of kids (LifeWay has a resource)
 - Each age looks different
 - Each campus looks same (K-1st graders go to ImagiNation no matter what campus they're on)
- Safety - huge value for parents!!
 - Clean!!
 - Wear booties in nursery to keep floors germ-free
 - Wipe down every single toy w/ disinfectant cleaner
 - Always match kid & parent tags at pick-up
- Creative Bible teaching
 - Live productions (Elementary & Preschool)
 - Possible in portable
 - Bible should be the most fun book ever!
- Fun
 - Don't want church to be like school!

B. When kids leave we ask 2 questions

- Did you have fun?
- What'd you learn?

Q&A

In a church experiencing rapid growth, how do you adjust children's ministry for the quick pace?

Change as fast as you can. Keep it safe. Think ahead - when we hit ____ number of kids, what will we do? Already have a plan. Takes creativity. Shift kids. Get

dividers. Stretch volunteers - they don't realize you need more volunteers until they feel stretched.

How can you convince a volunteer to be an unpaid secretary?

Pray. Ask God for the specific person. Ask people if they have that calling. Think through how that role might be split into 2 or 3 volunteers.

Is KidSpring solely focused on a Sunday program? Are kids in their own service while adults are in service or do you have Sunday school between services?

Kids are in KidSpring while parents are in adult service. We offer the same experience every service. We plan for 1 ½ hr of ministry on Sundays. We don't have anything but Sundays. We do 1 service multiple times during the day.

Do kids come to multiple services?

Kids usually come to 1 service only. Perry preaches the same thing all services. If kids are here 2 services, it's b/c their parents are volunteers. Volunteers' kids go to Clubhouse (Preschool) or Base Camp (Elementary School) for that 2nd service so they aren't in the room for 2 services. In Clubhouse, preschoolers play in a new room & have snack. In Base Camp, the vision is to train up volunteers. We have the opportunity to recognize who is walking w/ Jesus & need to take their next step. Elementary school kids go into Base Camp & get a snack. Those who are not ready to volunteer will stay in the room & have fun. Those who are ready to volunteer are pulled out to serve. They have a VIP meeting to shift gears to serving, wear a picture ID lanyard and assist preschool/young elementary groups & activities.

How influential has Perry been with the vision of children's ministry?

Perry's vision to not allow kids in service gave us fuel to make it fun where kids get to go. We want kids to have fun & learn something. He's not involved much in CM but knows what we do. We hosted a conference called "ONE" that required senior pastors to attend with their children and student leaders. He spoke to senior pastors of the importance of supporting children and student ministries.

How do you minister to church kids who get bored & non-church kids with mature life situations at the same time?

Isaiah 55:11 - God's word will not return void. Believe new truths for your lesson. Bible story may be the same but application is there. Ex: Noah - we all know the story, but we don't always obey - how do you apply that to your own life? We don't want kids to consume the word & not apply it. The key is application.

How do you follow up with salvation & baptism decisions?

We have struggled w/ this b/c even adults have questioned their salvation. We have made mistake of hindering kids & saying they weren't "ready" to be baptized. Team-wide we came to decision & made sure Perry was on board: believe & be baptized.

Baptism process

1. Parent expresses interest for his/her child to be baptized
2. Interview child & parent - staff or lead volunteer asks these questions:
 - a. PreK-3rd grade: Do you love Jesus? Do you want to follow Jesus?
 - b. 4th-5th grade: Tell me about when you decided to follow Jesus.
3. Parent's responsibility to nurture the faith of their children. Not us. When we tell them no, we just took that responsibility. We give them a card on salvation/baptism to use as a tool.