

Function-based Children's Ministry Leadership Organization

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Traditionally, the children's ministry (CM) has been organized in such a way that the CM director/pastor makes decisions for the entire ministry. As the ministry grows, these decisions may be carried out by age group coordinators. This centralized structure provides unity because only one person is making decisions. This traditional structure has two significant negative side-effects. It places all of the leadership pressure on the CM director/pastor; and it limits creativity.



Another approach to the CM leadership structure is to create "function-based" coordinators who become specialists for specific areas. These function-based coordinators provide ideas and oversight to the age-group coordinators. The CM director/pastor continues to be ultimately responsible over the entire CM, but he/she doesn't need to diversify his/her attention across the entire ministry. The CM director/pastor can be free to focus on the vision or the "big picture" of the ministry. A function-based CM leadership team lets leaders exercise their specific interest or talent across the entire ministry.

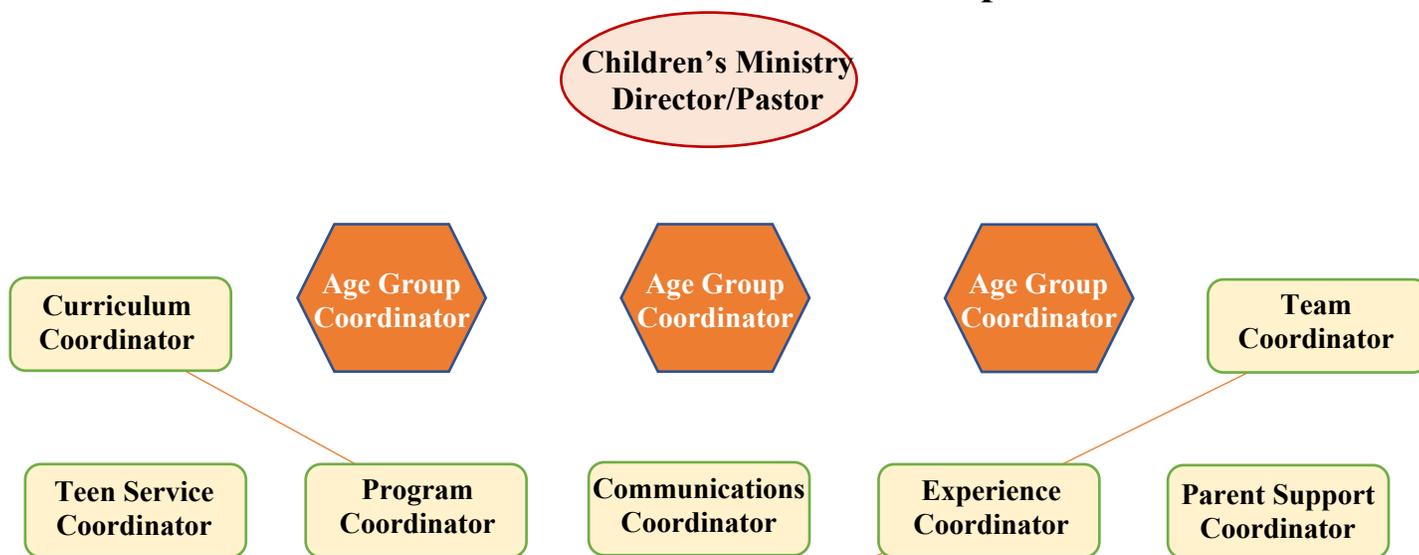


A function-based CM leadership structure requires more specific meetings with the leadership team. It also demands more coordination between all the function-based coordinators and the age-group coordinators.

Traditional CM Leadership



Function-based CM Leadership



Specific function coordinators provide oversight and information related to their specific area to **ALL** age group coordinators.

The age-group coordinators do not have to do “everything” for their specific area or team; they simply carry out, and personalize, the ideas from the function-based coordinators.

An Example of How A “Function-based” Leadership Might Work

The creation of a summer CM program

1. The entire CM leadership team meets to discuss the theme, purpose, age range, location, and length of the program.
2. The various function-based coordinators are given specific challenges, with deadlines, to prepare for the program. Each function-based coordinator focuses on his/her area of expertise. The curriculum coordinator searches for a new curriculum or plans ways to adapt an existing curriculum. The experience coordinator plans experiences that will accomplish the vision and goals of the program for the age groups that will be involved. The parent support coordinator designs ways to support the parents and works with the communications coordinator to carry out these plans. The same practice is carried out by each of the function-based coordinators.
3. Progressive development meetings are held during which each function-based coordinator shares the plans and progress toward the launch date. Each CM leadership team member can ask questions and suggest adjustments.
4. The program launch date is announced, and the team of volunteers are recruited and trained.
5. After the program is over, a debrief meeting is held with the entire CM leadership team to discuss ways to improve the program next time. Each of the function-based coordinators makes specific plans to improve their own part of the program.