

Ideas For “Refreshing” The Children’s Ministry

Taken from the examples of Disney

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After a children’s ministry (CM) has been successfully operating for a few years, it is always a good idea to seek the Lord about policies, procedures, programs or perspectives that may need to be “refreshed.” The Word of the Lord never needs to be “refreshed,” but how we present it in the CM may need to be adjusted as the society and world around us changes.

What can be done to “refresh” the CM that doesn’t involve significant curriculum or ministry format changes? In this document, the example of Walt Disney and Disneyland will be applied to the CM areas. Obviously, none of these things would lead a child or parent to Jesus; but, it might make them want to return regularly so that we can impact their lives more fully!

The Example of Walt Disney

It is often referred to as “magic”; that feeling adults and children feel when they step into Disneyland.

From “**The Real Magic of Disneyland**” by Annie Pfost

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/the-real-magic-disneyland>



“Walt Disney created Disneyland with a specific idea in mind; he wanted there to be a place for the whole family to spend time together. He wanted every member of the family, regardless of age, to feel happy and warm when they entered the park. This vision is so apparent from the moment you enter the park. Walt did not create this park for himself-- he created it for us.

Every single detail of Disneyland is hand-crafted to create joy. Not just a single moment of happiness, but an everlasting feeling of joy. The sounds, sights and even smells of the park are all formulated to support this joy.

There is never a silent moment in the parks, every corner is filled with the most joyful playlist of all time. The soundtrack to this park is a soundtrack of happy endings.”

Here is a short list of what goes into making a visit to Disneyland “magic”:

- **Inspirational Music** – Instrumental music that thrills the soul dispensed through hidden speakers.
- **Interesting Visuals** – Provocative signs, banners, building fronts, landscaping, cast costumes, etc.
- **Attractive Smells** – Warm churros, popcorn, waffle cones, and fried chicken beckon you to taste.
- **Entertaining Surprises** – The appearance of Disney characters, parades, or performers thrill you.
- **Imagination Stimulation** – Rides, “walk-throughs,” and “lands” stir the “child” in us all.
- **Clean Environment** – A clean place to relax and feel safe.



Ways To Adopt Disney's Style Into The CM Areas

1. Music

- a. Inspirational music played in the open patio areas.
- b. Inspirational music played in the CM area around the kiosks during check-in.

2. Visuals

- a. Provocative CM vision signs and banners around the outside the CM areas.
- b. "Gobo" projections on walls inside the CM hallways.
- c. Exciting lighting on CM buildings, landscaping, and structures during evening services.
- d. CM team member shirts, etc.
- e. "Professional" sidewalk chalk drawing on patio floor.
- f. "Walk Through The Bible" experience with narration in headsets.

3. Smells

- a. Diffusers used inside CM areas (pleasant smells like orange, etc.).
- b. Churro stand in the patio area (periodic, not every week).
- c. Popcorn stand in the patio area (periodic, not every week).
- d. Waffle cones and ice cream in the patio area (periodic, not every week).
- e. Kettle corn (periodic, not every week).

4. Entertaining Surprises

- a. "Flash mob" performances in the patio area.
- b. Statue performer (a Bible character).
- c. Strolling Bible characters (with giveaways).
- d. Strolling performers (adults or kids singing or playing) – walking or stopping periodically.
- e. Jugglers on raised stage in patio area.
- f. Animals (moving petting zoo) in patio area.
- g. "Snow" in winter (Sunday or midweek evenings with lights).
- h. Refreshment stands (shave ice, churros, etc.).

5. Imagination Stimulation

- a. "Try This" experiences (booths, tables with challenges for children).
- b. Lego tables in patio area.
- c. Photo booths (green screens / Bible characters or settings).
- d. Virtual Reality headsets with Bible stories.
- e. Family activities outside on patio.
- f. Sidewalk chalk drawing (for kids).

Whatever you do, be careful to not lose sight of the CM vision! All of these "refreshing" ideas shouldn't become the major focus of your time with the CM team, the children, or the parents! The real "magic" of the CM is in the personal interaction between the CM team and the children as they lead them to a more intimate, personal relationship with Jesus!

