

Vision And The Children's Ministry Job Description

Steve Alley

In a "perfect world," your job description would perfectly reflect your ministry vision. Everything you are expected to do on the job, and the basis for evaluating your "success," would be related directly to your vision. That would be nice, but you don't serve God in a "perfect world." Your job description may be as broad as, "Do everything related to children," or as complex as a multiple page government document. Even your area of ministry may not truly reflect your passion. Your church may define "children" as being anyone under the age of 21. The challenge of receiving, clarifying, and writing your ministry vision seems to be just the beginning. Then next challenge is to make your ministry vision "fit into" your job description.

If you've been given a job description, that's good. If you serve at a church that doesn't use job descriptions, you may need to craft one for yourself. There is a clear division of opinions about job descriptions among those in ministry. Some believe job descriptions limit the work of the Lord. Some believe job descriptions protect the work of the Lord. I believe they can do both. I believe job descriptions can be compared to the lines on a highway. The lines mark the "safe zones" in which to drive, but they don't prevent you from driving wherever you want. The careful driver stays within the lanes. A job description needs to be "loose" enough to permit the Lord to move and adjust things according to His will; but "tight" enough to protect the vision from being diluted into areas that don't relate to your calling or vision.



A job description is a strange thing. It sounds so legal and binding, and yet when reality strikes, it becomes one of the most flexible pieces of paper you'll come across administratively. A job description becomes prey to personnel differences, corporate policies, unspoken standards of behavior, and a fine collection of other legitimate reasons for adjustment. In spite of this apparent inconsistency, it is vital that there be some attempt at clarifying just what it is you do with all your time and talent.

It may be easier to first describe what the job of children's minister **isn't** before we talk about what it **is**. Doesn't that seem to be the way things go anyway? You find yourself in a new position, and the most important things you try to learn are what **not to do** rather than what **to do**. So, here is a list of things that a children's minister isn't:

A CHILDREN'S MINISTER **ISN'T** :

- The sole person responsible for the spiritual growth of the children.
- The person who "keeps the teachers in line."
- The person who does it all for it to be done right.
- The person who gets the glory for the things that are done.
- The person who **tells** the senior pastor what should be done for the children.



There, now that we've had this little meeting in the back room, you are ready to find out what the children's minister **is**. To make things as easy as possible, let's try to stuff all the natural essence of this complex position into one palatable statement.

A CHILDREN'S MINISTER IS:

The person, called and equipped by the Lord, to serve as an overseer, under the authority of the senior pastor, of all the functions and responsibilities pertaining to the children of the local congregation, and to all who disciple those children.

The children's minister ***gathers and communicates the information the senior pastor needs to oversee the total congregation.*** The senior pastor is the one who is ultimately responsible for the spiritual health of his congregation, it is the children's minister who supports the pastor by being "in touch" with the needs and condition of the children. When discussing the job description of a minister, whether he ministers to adults or children, there are two lessons that lessons that must be "mastered": how to be a servant, and how to disciple others.



Be A Servant

The greatest thing you, as a minister, can do, whether you work with children or adults, is to **prove** yourself to be a servant first. This can easily be done in a matter of months as you do the menial tasks that could be assigned to an underling. This is not done to call attention to your great humility, but, rather with the attitude of service to the Lord. It is also done in order to experience what each phase of the ministry requires. Those who you later direct in those areas will respect you, knowing that you understand. Jesus did this when He took on the menial task of life on this earth, doing such things as washing the disciples' feet.

Disciple Others

The second greatest lesson that you should learn is how to disciple others. It would not be healthy for you to continue doing the menial tasks for a prolonged period of time. The Lord has called you to carry the Gospel to children, and you should seek the Lord for workers who could be trained to do the menial tasks. This would then free you to devote your total attention to creating and shepherding. This is the same dilemma the early apostles faced in Acts 6. Your ego must be laid aside in order that others might be used to enhance and multiply the ministry.

To give you some idea of just what it is that most churches expect from a children's minister, I have compiled a general list of typical functions performed by those who are in full-time children's ministry positions. Keep in mind that it would be impossible for any one person to be care for all of these areas, but you should be prepared to do them just in case.

The Typical Functions of the "Children's Minister"

- * Recruiting and Training Workers
- * Develop and Maintain The Budget
- * Develop The Camping Program
- * Be Involved In Church functions
- * Teach A Sunday School Class
- * Direct Seasonal Programs
- * Disciple Coordinators
- * Oversee The Daycare Program
- * Evaluate and Revise Curriculum
- * Counsel With Workers and Families
- * Develop and Run Summer Programs
- * Attend Church Board Meetings
- * Lead A Mid-Week Bible Study
- * Attend Conventions
- * Discipline Children
- * Oversee the children's safety

As you can see, the children's minister may be expected to have his thumb in many church pies. This is very healthy! You will be a feeder ministry to the rest of the church. Children will be trained and equipped for service under your guidance; then, they will be channeled back into the church body to serve and hopefully disciple others themselves.

Being confident in whom you are (vision), and what is expected of you is critical to your "success" in the ministry. Although I can't give you a "ready-to-copy-and-implement" ministry job description, let me give you some principles.



Principles of Developing A Healthy Job Description

1. Clearly connect the position to the ministry vision
2. Clearly define the general "area" of service (age-group, etc.)
3. Clearly define the "chain of command" administratively
4. Clearly define the specific responsibilities and expectations
5. Clearly define the criteria for evaluating "success"
6. Clearly state the salary
7. Clearly state the hours of service
8. Clearly define the process for updating or enlarging the responsibilities