

Creating And Refurbishing Your Children's Ministry Vision

Steve Alley

A ministry vision comes from God. He provides it to those whom He calls to a specific ministry venture. We all share a common foundational purpose in the "Great Commission," but it is that specific ministry vision that guides us and keeps us from getting side-tracked or from becoming "spread thin" with all the possible needs that come up. We need to periodically "refurbish" our ministry vision with God's guidance to make any adjustments needed over time.

I. What Is A Ministry "Vision," and Where Does It Come From?

A. Vision comes from God – He's been inspiring leaders for thousands of years

1. **Abraham** – *"To lead the Israelites to live in total obedience to God, leading them to a new land prepared for them, toward building a moral community based on unswerving devotion to God alone while being a blessing to all other people."* (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:15; 15:18)
2. **Moses** – *"To deliver the Israelites from oppression by leading them to a superior Promised Land, while establishing a code of conduct the people will follow to please God."* (Exodus 3: 7-10; Deut. 26: 16-19)
3. **Joshua** – *"To conquer and settle the Promised Land, through military victory, based on strategic decisions by God and moral obedience to God's law."* (Joshua 1: 1-9)
4. **Josiah** – *"To restore the God of Israel to the throne of people's hearts, destroying all vestiges of idolatry, restoring the Temple, and instituting a reign of justice and righteousness."* (2 Kings 23: 21-25)
5. **Nehemiah** – *"To rally the people of Israel to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem, toward facilitating religious reforms and spiritual revival of the Jews."* (Nehemiah 2: 17; 9: 1-3)
6. **Peter** – *"To evangelize the Jews in Jerusalem and to create a community of faith that lives by the core principles taught by Jesus and experienced during His ministry by His apostles."* (1 Peter 2: 11,12; 4: 12-15)
7. **Paul** – *"To evangelize, organize and nurture the Gentiles in the Christian faith, initiating new churches throughout the Roman Empire, encouraging new believers to reproduce themselves, spiritually."* (Rom. 15:16-20; Galatians 2: 7-10; Ephesians 3: 7-12)
8. **Jesus** – *"To bring salvation, by grace, to the Jews, and to enable them to know, love, and serve God with all their hearts, minds, and souls, and to love other people as themselves."* (Matthew 15: 24; 22: 37-39)



B. Vision is connected to the "Great Commission," your passion, your gifts, and your calling

1. What makes you cry? (condition of or situation of children)
2. What makes you angry? (condition of or situation of children)
3. What thrills you? (condition of or situation of children)
4. What are your spiritual gifts?
5. What is your calling?
6. Where has God put you?



C. Vision reflects the needs of the culture and community

1. Do you understand and "feel" the needs of the community?
2. What has God shown you about the fears of the community?

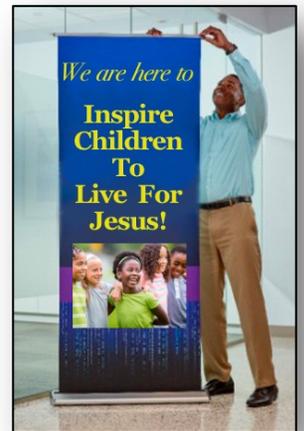
II. Why Do You Need A Ministry Vision?

- A. For direction – Knowing "where" to go in the ministry.
- B. For protection – To keep you from getting "sidetracked" in ministry.
- C. For stability – To protect you from worrying or doubting.
- D. For foundation – To provide a clear reason for all that you do in the ministry.



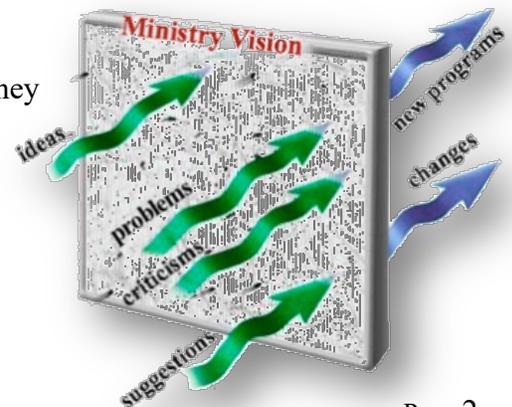
III. How To Identify, Clarify, and State Your Ministry Vision

- A. Use Nehemiah as a mentor (read Nehemiah).
- B. Pray
 1. For God's clear "voice."
 2. Ask God to expose you to the "culture" in the surrounding community.
 3. Ask God to let you hear, see, feel their pains, fears, needs
- C. Consider your spiritual gifts – What are they and how will He use them?
- D. Consider your past experiences – How can they clarify your vision?
- E. Consider what you have learned from others.
- F. Consider your passion - What makes you cry, angry, happy, or motivate you?
- G. Consider scriptures that have impacted your life – What has God shown you?
- H. Put the vision God gives you into words – rough, long, splintered
 1. Who is your "target audience"?
 2. What does God want to accomplish?
 3. What impact or change do you want in your "target audience"?
 4. How will you "evaluate" that your work has been successful?
- I. Edit, "clean-up" your words into one statement
 1. Begin with words like, "We exist to..." or "The purpose of our ministry is to..."
 2. Reduce, refine the statement into one sentence if possible.
 3. Example: "Calvary Children's Ministry exists to create a desire for a personal relationship with God in the lives of children through stimulating programs, life-changing mentors, and spiritually strong parents."
- J. Create a short "stinger" statement that reflects the larger vision and is intriguing and easy to remember.
 1. Use "colorful" words
 2. Example: "Drawing children to God, leading them to fruitfulness!"
 3. Example: "Changing their lives, changing their world."
- K. Let your senior pastor react to and approve the ministry vision.
 1. Out of respect for the Lord's authority
 2. For unity.
 3. For his "ownership" of the vision and support.



IV. Using Your Ministry Vision To "Filter" Ministry Programs

- A. Distribute, publicize, and proclaim your ministry vision
 1. To children's ministry team – meetings, handbooks, posters, verbal references, etc.
 2. To church administration and staff – presentations at meetings, emails, printed cards, etc.
 3. To the families of the children – flyers, "take-home" papers, posters, emails, newsletters, etc.
 4. To all church attendees – PowerPoint slides, announcements, bulletin inserts, etc.
- B. Evaluate suggestions for new programs, based on the ministry vision – does it "fit" the vision?
- C. Evaluate current programs, based on the ministry vision – do they advance the vision effectively?
- D. Should you repeat the program? Is the "fruit" related to the vision?



V. Using Your Ministry Vision To Build Your Team

- A. Recruit people whose passion and character match the ministry vision.
- B. Train team members in specific vision-related abilities and procedures.
- C. Encourage and empower team members to enhance and advance the ministry vision.
 1. Publicly compliment team members who excel.
 2. Create ministry teams to create “mentors” from quality team members.
 3. Challenge, encourage, and if needed, remove team members who don’t support the vision.



VI. Using Your Ministry Vision To Strengthen Families

- A. Train parents to carry the ministry vision into the homes.
- B. Equip parents to lead their own children, spiritually.
- C. Create family events that advance the vision.
- D. Restrict “non-vision” programs or events.



VII. Using Your Ministry Vision To Protect The Children

- A. Create policies and procedures that advance the ministry vision.
- B. Remove, restrict, or end programs or procedures that place children or the vision at risk.
- C. Restrict access to children according to the ministry vision:
 1. Adults
 2. Youth
 3. Church staff

VIII. How To Update or Refurbish An Existing Ministry Vision

- A. Return and remember – **“Strip off old finish”**
 1. Return to your original vision – pray through it, consider its power and significance.
 2. Remember God’s calling on you.
 3. Remember your passion (what stirs you to tears or anger about children and their world?).
 4. Remember your “first love” when you began this ministry.
- B. Evaluate the programs – **“Sand down to bear wood”**
 1. “Fun” vs. “Fruit” – Embrace the challenge to have “fruitfully-fun” programs on purpose!
 2. “Stale” vs. “FRESH” – Replace “stale” programs with no focus or impact with FRESH ones.
 - a. **Family-focused** – Designed to support and empower the parents and entire family.
 - b. **Relationship-driven** – Strategically created to develop relationships between children and adults.
 - c. **Experience-rich** – Filled with new experiences that thrill and challenge children.
 - d. **Spiritually-based** – Every aspect of the program enhances spiritual development.
 - e. **Help-oriented** – Includes opportunities for service to others.
 3. “Quantity” vs. “Quality” – A “lean” diet of vision-rich programs instead of “fillers.”



C. Refresh the ministry team – **“Stain to bring out the beauty of the wood”**

1. Challenge “veteran” team members with new positions or functions.
2. Create “vision mentors” within the team and group team members around them.
3. Challenge/correct “blind” team members, remove them if they don’t respond to challenges.
4. “Bubble-up” leaders from within the team and let them influence programs and team members.
5. Create new vision-focused training (retreats, electronic reminders, printed manuals, etc.).



D. Create new publications – **“Apply a protective finish coat”**

1. New vision-focused posters.
2. New vision-focused handbooks.
3. New vision-focused team wear.
4. New vision-focused logos.
5. New vision-focused recruiting campaigns.
6. New vision-focused communications (to parents, team, church staff).



IX. Advertising Your Vision

- A. Use “Posterbooking” with an Amazon Firestick to display messages on video displays in hallways.

<https://posterbooking.com/?fbclid=IwAR1fCajrkmAzF9ghYVg9UILKeeXhMpzfhCBdQGIL00nimR5WGOatXY078U>