

Children's Ministry Introduction / Training Overview

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In order to “keep the pump primed,” we need to be consistently offering Children's Ministry “Introductions,” and a regular “diet” of training.

We walk a “fine line” between doing too much or too little of either of these important components of a healthy Children's Ministry team. If we don't offer enough introductions, we may not effectively move interested people on to actually applying. If we offer too many introductions, we will “numb” the people into not paying attention to the ministry. The same is true with training; too little becomes dangerous because our team might not be adequately trained, and too much could exhaust the team and actually push them away.

Here is an overview of what we could/should cover in the “Introductions” as well as the training:

Introductions

1. **Warm / cold drinks and something to nibble on.** It's important to have coffee, hot water for tea, cold bottles of water, doughnuts / bagels or fruit. People feel valued and relax when there is something to eat. Jesus knew this and used it well!
2. **An enjoyable visual presentation** (5-6 minutes) of the children's ministry. This can be video or a slideshow of photos with a narration that highlights the joy of serving in the Children's Ministry, our ministry vision, while celebrating the great “fruit” that God is producing.
3. **A printed flyer or brochure** that does the same thing as the visual presentation above in printed form. This can be taken with the attendees. This printed piece highlights what God is doing in the children's ministry and encourages the reader to join the team. It also clearly describes the process for joining the children's ministry team.
4. **A short verbal overview of the children's ministry.** This follows the presentation and is a personal segue to the overview of what we offer.
5. **An overview of the service opportunities within the children's ministry.** A quick “fly over” of the age groups, class divisions, and service times within the Children's Ministry. This overview should also contain a brief description of the other options within the Children's Ministry (Hallway Assistants, Special Forces, skit teams, worship team, curriculum prep., supply assistance, etc.)
6. **An overview of the rotation plan.** The options for service commitments (3-month, or other form of rotation) are described.
7. **An overview of the training process.** To soothe the fears of those who might wonder if they can do this, a quick overview of the training process is given. This includes the regular, scheduled all-team trainings as well as the “on-going” training that is conducted.
8. **An overview of the team connection.** An explanation of the value of serving as a team! The “never alone” rule and the joy of being supported by fellow team members.
9. **An overview of the screening process.** This includes a quick overview of the Ministry Questionnaire and the fingerprinting requirements. Hold up the questionnaire, but don't give them one right away.



10. **Questions / Answers.** Let the people ask questions about anything that wasn't covered. Give positive, complimentary responses. Invite them to contact someone in the Children's Ministry if they need further answers (that person's name must be on the printed piece that you give them).
11. **A stack of Ministry Applications.** Don't hand these out right away – they're scary! Have them available to hand them to the people as they leave. Make the applications available online as well.
12. **Pray them out.** Make sure you pray and thank God for those who come and reinforce the fact that this is His work.



Initial Training of New Team Members (Orientation)

This is most likely conducted during a Sunday morning service. On specific training days (prior to a rotation), these introductions/trainings may be conducted during all Sunday morning, and midweek services. The “ideal” setting for the initial training would be a half day seminar; but it is becoming more and more difficult to successfully carry out this length of a seminar due to busy family schedules.



1. The critical importance of children's ministry
2. An overview of our Children's Ministry vision
3. An overview of the critical CM policies
 - a. “Never Alone” policy
 - b. Appropriate touching
 - c. Check in / check out security
 - d. Emergencies / injuries
 - e. Blood and bodily fluids
 - f. Sick children
 - g. Classroom management
 - h. Emergency procedures
4. An introduction to the Department Coordinators who will conduct initial training in:
 - a. Classroom procedures
 - b. Check in specifics (repeat)
 - c. Curriculum (if applicable)
 - d. Specific challenges (parents, classroom control, etc.)
 - e. Getting a substitute
 - f. Specific emergency procedures
5. Design a significant giveaway item to give to those who come to the training/orientation, to remember the day.
 - a. Simple cross pins to remind them of their purpose
 - b. Small smooth stones (available at Home Depot) to remind them to remember what God has done for them (Joshua 4).
 - c. Little Lego pieces glued or attached to a key ring to remind them that they are building kids.
6. Final conclusion - spiritual moment of commitment and worship and reliance on God
7. Distribute "giveaways" to entire team.

On-going Training

This “on-going” training is conducted through scheduled all-team meetings (quarterly), emails, social media posts, and printed pieces. The all-team meetings consist of large group addresses and small group department meetings. Here are the topics that are “rotated through” in on-going training:



1. Children’s Ministry vision (refreshers)
2. Age-group characteristics
3. Learning styles
4. Age-group trends (kids and families)
5. Success stories (from own team and others) which inspire and challenge
6. Scriptural challenges regarding building relationships and discipleship
7. Challenges to personally recruit others
8. Age-appropriate classroom management and discipline ideas
9. Challenges and ideas for parent support
10. Ideas for "out of classroom" encounters with kids (soccer games, etc.) (share stories)
11. Age-group curriculum use suggestions and challenges
12. Shared letters and comments from parents, pastors, and staff members
13. Leadership challenges and opportunities (coordinators, supervisors, etc.)
14. Community or church news that pertains to the children's ministry
15. Age-appropriate procedures (small groups by class or dept.)
 - a. Learning styles
 - b. Specific classroom management issues
 - c. Schedules for the hour
 - d. Specific needs of the kids or parents
 - e. Specific procedure/safety policies (especially check-in / out)
 - f. Specific set-up / cleanup procedures
 - g. Specific team member roles or partnership functions
 - h. Specific communication procedures (rotation, substitutes, etc.)
 - i. Specific curriculum issues or process
16. Policies (refreshers)
 - a. “Never Alone” policy
 - b. Appropriate touching
 - c. Check in / check out security
 - d. Emergencies / injuries
 - e. Blood and bodily fluids
 - f. Sick children
 - g. Classroom management
17. Child evangelism
 - a. How to be “salty” with the children (memorable, evangelistic, challenging)
 - b. Answering their questions
 - c. Connections with / support of the parents
 - d. Leading a child to the Lord (if parents aren’t able or interested)
18. Building relationships with the kids and their parents (including inspiring stories)
 - a. At the classroom door (greeting kids and parents) – before + after
 - b. In the classroom (classroom management)
 - c. Within the lesson (child-focused, interactive, REAL application, personal)
 - d. Outside the classroom (casual real-life encounters, teachable moments)

A "To Do List" In Preparation For A Half-day Training:



1. Meet with the age-group leaders to discuss the training process and unify the leadership team.
2. Create, revise, or update the children's ministry vision statement (if needed).
3. Review your policies as they stand now (make plans to update if needed).
4. Create "giveaways" for the half-day training (inspirational, vision-related items).
5. Schedule the room for the half-day training, and the break-out rooms for the age-group meetings.
6. Print the schedule for the day.
7. Communicate with your team about the day (personal from you and emailed).
8. Invite the senior pastor to participate (speak on the value of children's ministry).
9. Decide on the refreshments for the morning (drinks, pastries, etc.).
10. Create the handouts for the morning (schedule, policies, vision, team roster, etc.).
11. Plan and purchase the decorations for the room (balloons, table and wall decorations, etc.).
12. Recruit help to run the morning (set-up, "registration" table, refreshments, etc.).
13. Prepare the age-group leaders and supplies for their small group meetings.
14. Reserve or acquire the A/V equipment (video/DVD, microphone/speakers, audio music) for the large group room.
15. Purchase the "giveaway" items.
16. Contact volunteers about telling their story (you tell, they tell?).
17. Observe volunteers to look for ways to compliment them publicly.
18. Look into subscribing to Children's Ministry Magazine for entire team (they offer a reduction for team!) (groupublishing.com).
19. Pray diligently, eat well, rest hard, and laugh lots!

