

# Children's Ministry Rotation Overview

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A wise shepherd once said, "Healthy sheep reproduce healthy sheep." If the shepherd takes care of the sheep he has, those baby sheep that are born within the flock will also be healthy and happy. As children's ministry (CM) directors or pastors, we must learn much from this wise shepherd. We are shepherds of the "flock" of CM team members who currently serve in the CM. It is our responsibility to care for those team members. If the CM team members are unhappy, they will tell their friends and family to "stay away from the CM"! If the CM team members who are currently serving feel secure, trained and appreciated, they will invite their friends and family to join them in this great ministry! Healthy sheep reproduce healthy sheep!



Those who currently serve on the CM team may have no plans, hopes, or promises of any "time off." If they need to be away from the ministry (for health or restoration purposes), they may feel guilty. Most of the CM team have probably served for many years faithfully without a break. This condition doesn't necessarily produce "healthy" or "happy" sheep!

The concept of rotating the CM team is much like the concept of crop rotation. Farmers will tell you that the soil in their fields can become weak and non-productive due to over farming. Farmers rotate their crops to replenish what one crop removes from the soil. God encourages farmers to go one step further and to let their fields go "fallow" once every 7 years:

*"For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove."* Exodus 23:10, 11



Can we, or should we let loyal CM team members have an entire year off? We may not need to do that if we have given them guaranteed "time off" periodically through the year.

Another reason to provide a rotation cycle for your CM team is the very fact that we shy away from endless commitment (except for marriage). Announcing that you have a CM rotation plan will attract more people to join the team! They will feel less "trapped" and more secure knowing that their own personal needs are being cared for!

## Laying The Foundation For A Rotation Cycle

You might have thoughts that say, "How can we build a rotation plan? We barely have enough team members as it is! There's no way that we'll ever have enough team members to let some of them rotate off!" These are logical fears. But, God will bring more people to your team when you announce your plan to give them scheduled time off! Here are some steps to take to get ready:

1. Develop area coordinators (over age-group areas of the CM).
2. Coordinators identify "master teachers" within their own age-group CM team.
3. Coordinators assist in "polling" their CM team members to determine who wants to rotate out.
4. Coordinators are ready to assist in recruiting, training and placing new CM team recruits.
5. "Master Teachers" within each age group are ready to apprentice new CM team members.



## Rotation Structure – A 3 or 6-month cycle.

The “pros” and “cons” of a 3-month cycle vs. a 6-month cycle:

**3-Month Cycle** – “Pros” = may be more attractive because of a shorter commitment period.

“Cons” = since the cycle is shorter, you will always be preparing for rotation.

Also, you may “wear out” the church by always announcing rotation/recruitment.

**6-Month Cycle** – “Pros” = more time between recruiting/rotation cycles.

“Cons” = may be less attractive to people due to longer commitment.



### Pre-requisite Structure Improvements

A rotation cycle can only be established and advertised AFTER the leadership structure is stabilized! (A strong, positive leader with department coordinators).

1

#### **TWO MONTHS BEFORE**

##### Current CM Team Surveyed

The current CM team is asked if they would like to “rotate out” when the rotation starts. This gives an indication of the need.

2

#### **TWO MONTHS BEFORE**

##### Recruiting

A recruiting campaign is begun that advertises the CM vision, CM “fruit,” training, and rotation plan.

#### Screening

CM applicants must fill out an application and pass the screening process.

3

#### **ONE MONTH BEFORE**

##### Orientation / Training

Introductory orientations are held during each service with training sessions scheduled. Dept. coordinators assist with training.

#### CM Leaders “All Hands on Deck”

On rotation day, all CM leaders are present to assist and pray for new CM team members.

4

#### **THREE WEEKS BEFORE**

##### Rotation Apprenticeship Begun

The new recruits are placed into rooms to be apprenticed by “veteran” CM team members who have been prepared to mentor and observe the new team members for a period of 3 weeks.

5

#### **ROTATION BEGINS**

##### Team Members Rotate Out

The CM team members who wish to rotate out, and who aren’t serving as mentors to new team members are now able to “rotate out.” They can rotate to 3 options.

#### “Out”

A complete break from children’s ministry for 6 months.

#### “Substitute”

To be available to serve as a substitute if called.

#### “Floater”

To show up at a given service to serve if needed.

#### CM Team Celebration

CM team members who are rotating out are celebrated at a lunch or dinner.