

# Expanding The Children's Ministry Leadership Team

*Building the team to protect and advance the vision*

Steve Alley

## **Premise**

Most ministry ventures (including churches, parachurch organizations, mission efforts, etc.) begin with a single person, or a small group of like-minded people. As God blesses the venture, the complexities of the work begin to multiply. If not carefully maintained, the vision may become “suffocated” by the details. When this happens, the forward movement of the vision slows. To prevent this from happening in the children's ministry (CM), “levels” of leadership must be added to continually free the “visionary” to build and move forward. Biblical principles are displayed in Exodus 18, Numbers 11, and Acts 6.

## **Principles of CM Leadership Development**

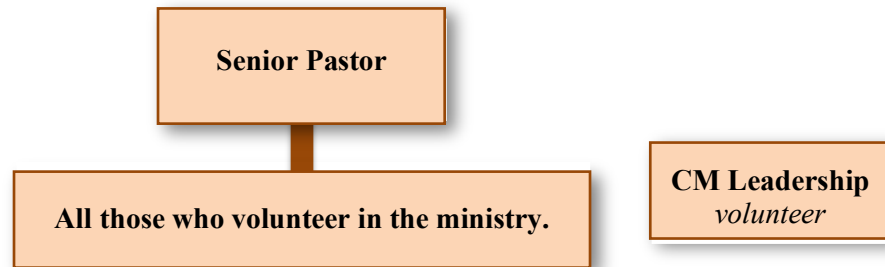
1. “...lean not on your own understanding...” (Prov. 3: 5)  
*Be open to new ideas or principles (from God and from others) – remain humble.*
2. “...in all your ways acknowledge Him...” (Prov. 3: 6)  
*Bathe the process with prayer and waiting on God's leading.*
3. “...do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.” (Prov. 3: 7)  
*Remind yourself that this is God's work, and “shun” ego, pride, and power in the process.*
4. Understand your own weaknesses and seek leaders to supplement those areas.  
*The leadership team is an “orchestration” of strengths. No one person “has it all.”*
5. Develop leadership based on vision.  
*Seek people who can advance the vision because of their connections, gifts, talents, etc.*
6. Develop leadership based on “fears.”  
*Seek people who can protect the ministry from damage or destruction (financial, legal, etc.).*
7. Develop leadership based on needs.  
*Seek people who can directly address the needs of the ministry.*
8. Develop leadership ahead of growth.  
*Don't wait until leadership is needed. Let the ministry “grow into” the leadership team.*
9. Develop leadership to enhance communication.  
*Seek people who will be trusted to “listen” and “speak” faithfully (in both directions).*
10. Develop leadership to enhance supervision and accountability.  
*Seek people who will supervise ministry operations and protect accountability in all areas.*
11. Develop leadership to enhance team development.  
*Seek people who will develop those serving in all areas of ministry (both volunteer and paid).*
12. When possible, place leaders from within the ministry.  
*Seek potential leaders from within the ministry who know the vision and are already trusted.*
13. Place only “proven,” mature people into leadership positions. (1 Tim. 3: 1-14)  
*Do not place “young” believers, immature, undisciplined or “untested” people as leaders.*
14. When possible, utilize the full scope of “employment.”  
*Begin potential leaders as volunteers, then part-time paid, and then full-time paid.*

## The Steps In Developing The CM Leadership Structure

### **STEP 1 - The Vision** – Clarifying, understanding and casting the ministry vision

Since ministry “vision” is given by God to one person (Nehemiah, Elijah, Peter, Paul, etc.), the “Senior Pastor” of the church, or “CEO” of the parachurch organization, in the early stages of the ministry, usually oversees all of the operations and the volunteers of the ministry venture. It is his/her job to communicate the vision to those who serve in the ministry.

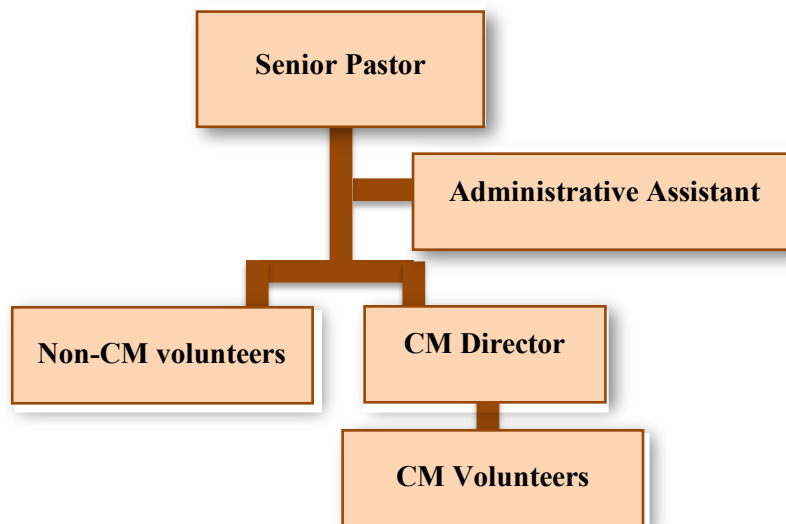
Since most churches desire to attract and minister to adults, it is understood that parents will bring their children. So, the church establishes someone to oversee the ministry to the children. At the early stages, this may be a volunteer position; but, soon the responsibilities of the CM grow beyond what a volunteer can give. This position **MUST** grow into a part-time paid position!



### **STEP 2 – Administrative Assistance** – Administrative assistance in the details of the ministry

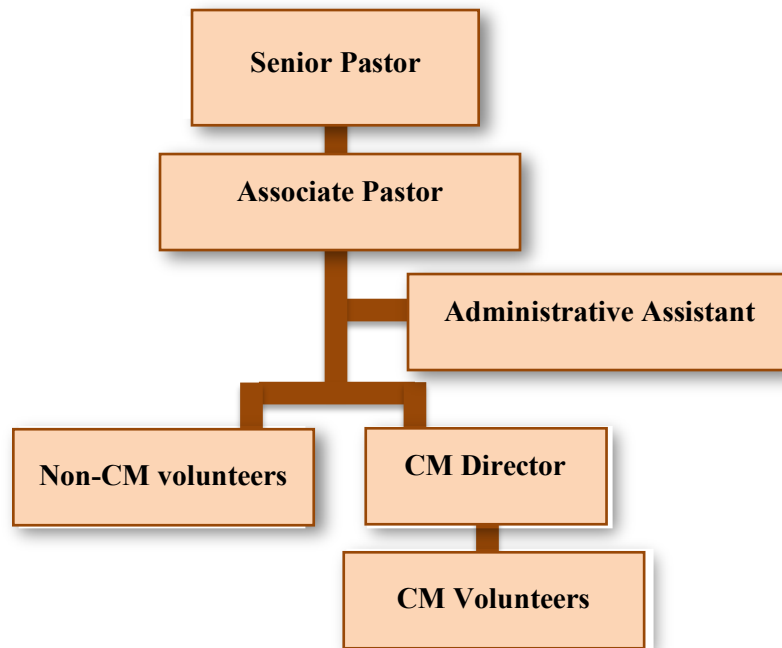
As the ministry venture is blessed by God, it grows in the number of people involved and in the complexity of the associated programs. This good growth can easily “weigh down” the Senior Pastor with the day-to-day details of the ministry. When this happens, it is usually the forward movement toward the vision that suffers. The “visionary” becomes the “doer” of the work. To enhance the safe movement toward the vision, an “Administrative Assistant” is added to the leadership.

At this point, the CM Leadership position may be pulled “under” the supervision of the Administrative Assistant. At this point, hopefully, the position of the CM Director is at least a part-time position.



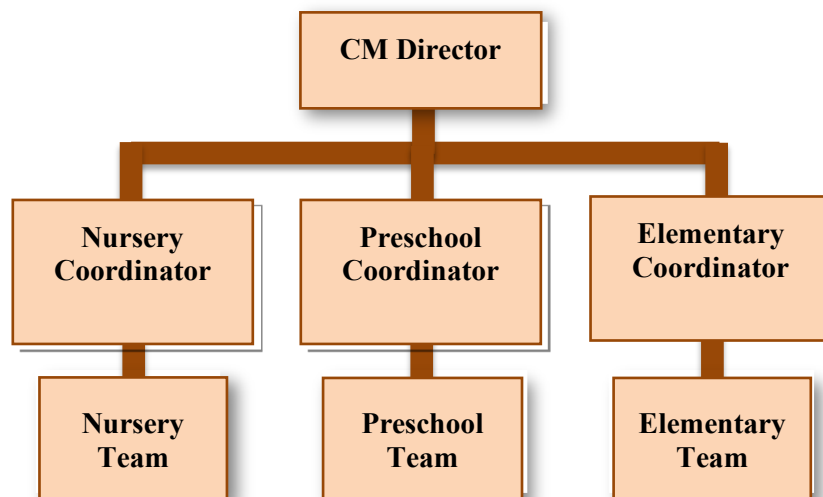
### STEP 3 – Associate Pastor Added – Leadership development beyond office details

As the church continues to grow, the Senior Pastor begins to face significant decisions and challenges that exceed the abilities, or responsibilities of the Administrative Assistant. Challenges such as financial accountability, legal responsibilities, facility concerns, and general safety requirements all begin to, once again, challenge the Senior Pastor. An “Associate Pastor” is added. The CM Director now reports directly to the Associate Pastor.



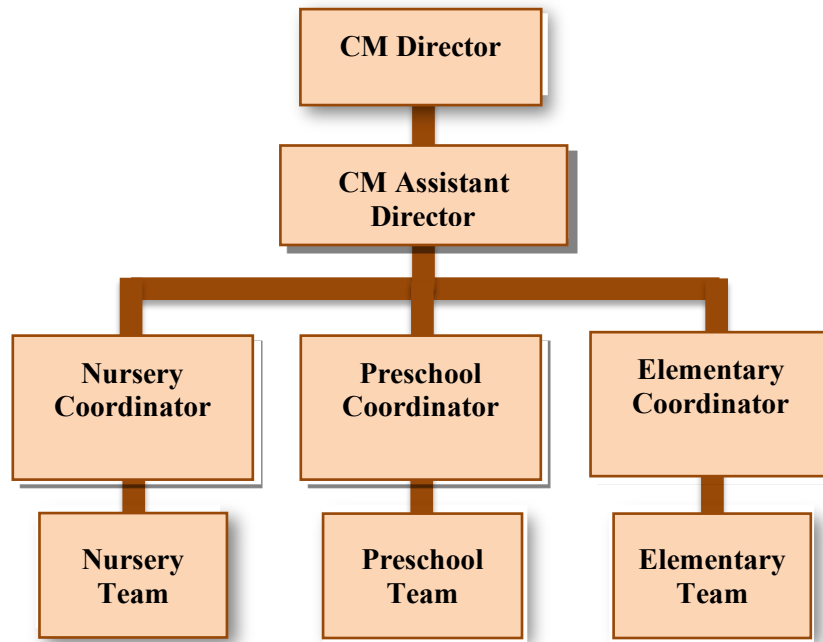
### STEP 4 – CM Coordinators Added – Area coordinators oversee CM team members in that area

As the ministry continues to expand, the number of volunteers, and the complexity of the ministry programs and demands grow as well. This growth begins to “stretch” the leadership team. The CM Director establishes coordinators, from within the CM team, to oversee age-based areas or departments. These coordinators may serve as volunteers initially, but they need to be advanced to part-time and then to full-time pay quickly. The coordinators assist the CM Director with recruiting, training and overseeing the CM team members in their areas.



## **STEP 5 – CM Assistant Director Added – To assist the CM Director**

The church growth demands the addition of multiple services. When this happens, the CM team must multiply to serve in those added services. The load of recruiting, training, and supervising this larger CM team results in the need for more CM leadership assistance. The CM Director hires a CM Assistant Director from within the CM team or from the outside. This position needs to be a full-time paid position. All CM team members and leaders report directly to the CM Assistant Director now. This frees the CM Director to return to being a visionary of the CM efforts and plans.



## STEP 6 – CM Supervisors Added – The “Cadillac” Level

The CM is organized with multiple levels of leadership. At the coordinator level, the people who serve in those full-time positions assist with recruiting, training, rotation, budget, curriculum and communication. The coordinators may handle the needs for substitutes for their areas as well. This function may be “pushed down” to the service supervisors underneath them, or there may be a specialized “Sub Coordinator” that handles all of the substitute needs.

The Service Supervisors are placed over specific services to free any one of the CM leaders from having to be on site for every service.

The coordinator structure and titles are based on an age-group organization of the CM. If the CM is a large-group based ministry, the coordinators can be titled and placed to oversee other functions of the ministry such as: “Creative Coordinator,” “Experience Coordinator,” “Outreach Coordinator,” etc.

