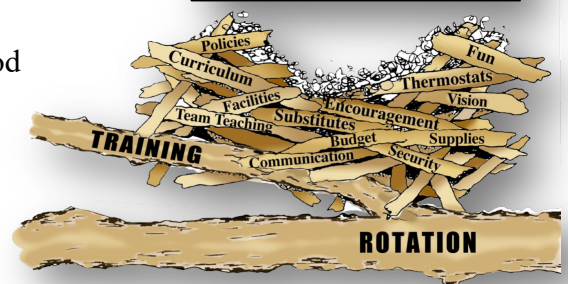


Basic Principles of Children's Ministry

Steve Alley

The best thing to do in becoming a faithful leader of the children's ministry is to apply as many of the basic principles of ministry as you can. These principles are scripturally based and proven over time to produce an "environment of blessing" in the children's ministry. What you really desire is for God to bless the work you and your team are doing! That's the true "magic"! But, to get to that point takes much prayer and dedication. Here are some priceless principles I've learned:

1. **Dedicate, consecrate yourself to Him!** - God always blesses the "work" of those who are dedicated and obedient to Him! (Deuteronomy 28, 2 Kings, Psalm 1, Micah 3, Malachi 2)
2. **Love people and sacrifice for their needs!** - Too often, we get focused on the "business" or "to do lists" of the ministry, and we neglect the people. God consistently blesses those who sincerely love, and sacrifice for, people! That includes your CM team members, the children, and their parents. The more you sacrifice for others, the more they will want to serve faithfully! (1 John 4, Philippians 2, 1 Corinthians 13, John 13: 34, 35)
3. **Create a ministry "nest" for your CM team!** - I've learned that God won't bless your ministry if you don't create an environment that is a "warm, safe place" for your volunteers! People are fussy! They are like sheep - they get bothered and scared quickly! As a "shepherd," you must create a "nest" for them to flourish!
4. **Empower people / develop leaders!** - One of the most critical tasks of a pastor is to develop people. This goes beyond recruiting. It goes beyond delegation. It is discipleship! It is also one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself! Developing leaders (coordinators) under you will prevent you from becoming burdened by the work of the ministry; and it will enhance the fruit of the ministry! (Exodus 18: 13-17; Jesus and His disciples John 17, 2 Timothy 2: 1, 2, 14)
5. **Be a shepherd for the children!** - Be willing to protect and "take the hit" for the children's ministry! The children's ministry is all-too-often viewed as the "least important" ministry of the church. This is not how Jesus sees it! Be willing, and ready to speak up for the children (budgeting, programming, facilities, attention from the sr. pastor, etc.). Say, "No" if there is something that will harm the children's ministry team, or the children.
6. **Always ask, "What's best for the children?"** - This powerful question "cuts through" emotions, differing views, or political confusion! This question can assist in developing the children's ministry team, curriculum, programs, policies, and procedures!
7. **Always protect the "Three S's"!** - I have learned to protect the "Spiritual" aspect of the ministry, the "Safety" of the children, and the "Sanity" of the children's ministry team members above all else! This principle protects you from overloading classrooms, and from over-using team members. It also will guide you in your programming. If a program is unbalanced, and it is only fun, without being spiritual, you need to adjust it!



Spiritual
Safety
Sanity

8. **Over-communicate!** This principle applies to everything you do! I have never regretted over-communicating; but I have many times had to deal with the problems created by a lack of communication. Include a wide circle of people in your emails, send the senior pastor regular updates on the children's ministry, develop "task force" groups instead of deciding on your own, etc.
9. **Develop your paid staff!** - I've learned that in today's world, you can only grow the ministry so far on the shoulders of volunteers. The majority of your children's ministry team will be volunteers, but your leaders should eventually be paid. Once you are able to "spin off" ideas and expectations to paid coordinators, you will begin to be able to focus on the vision and lead the ministry to new areas. Without paid coordinators, you will always be stuck in "maintaining" the ministry.

