



Bubbling Up Children's Ministry Leaders

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The concept of “bubbling up” leaders from within the ministry team is similar to the bubbles that form on the bottom of a pan of water or on the inside of a soft drink glass. Over time, the bubbles gradually make their way to the top. “Bubbling up” leaders takes prayer, time, attention, and diligence; but, the results of this on-going process will produce regular “harvests” of leaders throughout the year.

Biblical Foundations For “Bubbling Up” Leaders

- **Moses** – “...select able men who fear God...and place them as leaders...” (Ex. 18:13-24)
- **The Choosing of The Seven** – “...choose 7 men from among you...” (Acts 6:1-5)
- **Peter, James, and John** – “...He took with Him Peter, James, and John...” (Mark 5:35-39)

The characteristics of people who are candidates for "bubbling up":

1. **Spiritually growing** (yes, this is the most important!)
This doesn't mean "super Christian," but it does mean hungering and thirsting, reading, praying etc.
2. **Kid-focused**
They are always at "eye-level" with kids; touching, talking with, helping, holding, and engaging kids.
3. **Faithfully serving**
Not only are they on the team, but they can be depended on fulfilling their commitment. It is important that they not be "once-a-monthers." They may have started at that level, but they don't stay there!
4. **Actively serving**
While serving, they aren't "wall flowers." They engage kids and parents, do what needs to be done, and look for more to do.
5. **Happily serving**
While they serve, they smile, laugh, sing, make positive comments to others, and exude joy.
6. **"Bookend Servers"**
They show up early to get ready, and stay afterward to clean up or assist in transitions.
7. **Clear vision**
They understand the ministry vision and see how everything they do fits into that vision.
8. **Submissive**
They happily do what is expected of them, readily adjust to changes, and trust the leadership.
9. **Team players**
They perform their service as part of the whole team.
10. **People magnets**
They are never alone; others seek them out, they are always surrounded with laughing, happy people.
11. **Challenge-ready**
They are ready to take on new levels of responsibility. Some timidity is natural, but they don't let fear stop them. This connects greatly to #1 above- trust, faith, focus on God's power, etc.

When one of these people is "discovered," he/she needs to be cultivated! Direct, immediate, positive recognition from a significant mentor or leader is a critical first step! Late recognition is weak recognition. Here is a list of things to begin the bubbling process:

How To Facilitate The Bubbling Process:



1. Immediate, direct, personal recognition and encouragement.

"I was watching you. You're so good at this!" or "You're gifted at this," or "Wow, I'm impressed!"

2. Personal eye-contact and touch.

This can be a "drive by," or an extended encounter. The person must know, without doubt, that you are pleased and impressed enough to make the effort to say so.

3. Personal note, card, email, or phone call.

This could be considered a "late" recognition, but it is the power of it. This must be done within 1 day of the observed exemplary behavior. A note or card in the mail could take longer, but that's ok. "I was thinking about you...." The power of being "remembered" is unbelievable!

4. "Talking about them"

When you tell someone that you were talking about them to others, it stirs them. This validates their servant's heart. They begin to feel confident in their service.



5. Public compliment

Compliment their service or faithfulness to others (parents, team members, other pastors, etc.) This can be done either in the room while they are serving (make sure they hear it), or in a team meeting in front of their peers. This plants the "seeds" of leadership in them.

6. Casual escalation

In the "hallway" after a service, casually restate your appreciation for their service and say something like, "We are always looking for people who might be willing to help us train our new volunteers. You are so good at..., I would really like to have our new volunteers learn how to do that from you. Would you be interested in doing something like that?" Let them think, pray about it. If they say, "Yes," use them carefully. If they say, "No," you may try to encourage them if their confidence is an issue, but you may just have to accept their answer. Always leave the door open, and, with a smile, say, "Ok, but I'll probably ask you again. People like you are special, and we want to duplicate your talents in others."



7. Share a meal or coffee

Jesus was an expert at using a meal as a time to connect and solidify relationships. If the answer to #6 is, "Yes," let this meeting be a celebration of your faith in them, a time to clarify responsibilities and clear away fears. Be careful of the male/female issue. If you are "bubbling up" a person of the opposite sex, ask a third person, from your leadership team, to join you.

8. Repeat the process!

Once a person begins the "bubbling up" process, it is vital that he/she not be neglected. Repeat the process from 1 through 5 with that person as he/she steps into the new responsibility. Compliment as he/she learns how to do what you believe he/she can do. Remember that the difference between a success and a "failure" is in the application of the experience. A "failure" can become a success if there is a supportive person who can positively identify what can happen next time to make it a "success."

9. Lead leaders

Once a person has accomplished the process of developing volunteers, he/she is ready to develop other leaders. Now, leaders are developing other leaders! This is the ultimate goal of administration!



Encourage every member of the leadership team (coordinators, master teachers, supervisors, etc.) to be “bubble monitors” among his or her own team areas. As they serve alongside the volunteers, challenge them to watch for people who might “fit” the list of characteristics above. Remember that the Lord is looking for people with Godly hearts (II Chronicles 16:9), and so should we. People with Godly character can always be taught the methods and techniques of ministry. People who don’t have Godly character, regardless of their competencies, are a risk in ministry.

Bubbling Worksheet

“Bubbling” Candidate 1

Name: _____

Possible Position: _____

“Bubbling” Candidate 2

Name: _____

Possible Position: _____

“Bubbling” Candidate 3

Name: _____

Possible Position: _____