

Making The Children's Ministry A

Destination



Becoming a “place of wonder” or a place where good feelings join with good people in the name of Jesus.

Basic Principles of A “Destination”

1. The anticipation draws you to it, and occupies your “dreams,” long before you arrive.
2. There is a “mystery” about the new experiences that await you.
3. There is a certain consistency and predictability to the destination.
4. You know that you will enjoy the sounds, smells, activities, food, etc. there.
5. You have high hopes of “feeling good” while there.
6. You don’t want the experiences to end.
7. You “savor” the experience long after it is over.
8. You want to return to repeat the experience.



What Makes A “Bad” Destination?

1. Uncomfortable (too hot, too cold, too loud, too crowded, etc.)
2. Unfriendly service (harsh, impersonal, too rushed, feel like “cattle”)
3. Not worth your time (too expensive, waste of time, no benefits)
4. Not interesting (boring, no thrill, nothing new, nothing useful)
5. Not clean (dirty floors, dirty tables, dirty rooms, bad smell, etc.)

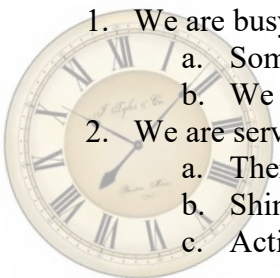
Challenges For Making The Children's Ministry A “Destination”

1. Can we create "anticipation" in the children who return to the CM week after week?
2. Is it possible for the children to look forward to coming to church or to the CM program/classroom - even days before?
3. As the children arrive, can we create a curiosity about what they will see as they enter the hallway leading up to the classroom?
4. When the children approach the classroom/CM facility, can we create a growing sense of longing to return to this place?
5. When the children enter the classroom/CM room, are their expectations or anticipations realized or are they disappointed?
6. During the ministry hour, are the children glad they came, wanting more, and filled with awe, satisfaction, and good feelings?
7. When the ministry hour is over, can we create a sense of "sadness" (not a negative feeling) that the time is over that will build an anticipation for their return?



Limitations For Making The Children's Ministry A “Destination”

1. We are busy, with other priorities and expectations in our lives.
 - a. Some things can't be done every week, for every service.
 - b. We have to choose what we can do, and what produces the most “anticipation.”
2. We are serving with volunteers.
 - a. There are some who “can,” some who “can’t,” and some who can do more!
 - b. Shine the light on those who do, and inspire others to follow.
 - c. Activate and use the power of a team!



3. We have limited funds.
 - a. “Use what is in your hand.”
 - b. Ask for donations based on the vision.
 - c. “Never turn down a freebie!”
 - d. “Display” the “fruit” and use it to stir more donations, or an increase in the budget.
4. Not everyone will “see” our vision.

The “Fruit” of Making The Children’s Ministry A “Destination”

1. In the **children**
 - a. Smiles
 - b. Joy
 - c. Laughter
 - d. Fewer discipline challenges
 - e. Consistent attendance
 - f. Deeper personal relationships with Jesus
2. In the **team members**
 - a. Smiles
 - b. Joy
 - c. Laughter
 - d. Fewer discipline challenges
 - e. Consistent attendance
 - f. “Self-recruiting” cycle
 - g. Deeper personal relationships with Jesus
3. In the **parents**
 - a. Comments of thanks
 - b. Smiles
 - c. “Tell a friend” growth



Using The “Zones” To Create A “Destination”

1. **Zone 1** – The parking lot
 - a. Greeters – “Welcome! Nice to see you!” “You’re going to have fun today!”
 - b. Painted footprints on ground – fun shapes, “This way to a great time,” “Follow me to fun!”
 - c. Person on tall ladder with binoculars/hat, waving – “Hey, (child’s name), nice to see you!”
2. **Zone 2** – Between the parking lot and the children’s ministry facility
 - a. Giant bubbles – “Whooo, whooo!” “(to a child) So good to see you!”
 - b. Sidewalk chalk with messages and pictures – Arrows pointing to CM facilities, “Fun ahead”
 - c. Greeters along walkway – “We’re learning about Noah today!” or “Your teacher is waiting for you” or “Have you seen what your room looks like today?”
 - d. Signs along walkway – “Almost there,” “Pretty soon,” etc.
 - e. Speakers along walkway (hidden person speaking) – “Hi, (name), you look nice today,” “We can’t wait to see you in the room soon!”

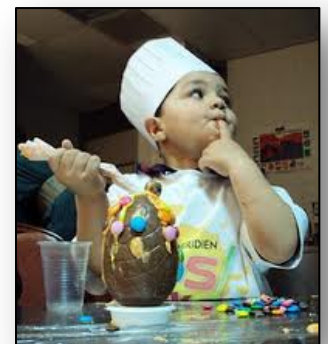


3. **Zone 3** – The children’s ministry facility (before the room)
 - a. Pictures, posters of images from the lesson
 - b. Footprints on floor (for all ages) doing cute things (hop-scotch, etc.) toward rooms
 - c. Greeters – “Hey, (child’s name), nice to see you!” “Are you ready for what your teacher has for you?” “Wow, I wish I was in your class! It looks so fun today!”
 - d. Greeters with wagons (with rotating lights) offering children rides to the classrooms
 - e. Signs along walls (for each age group) – “Fourth graders are cool!” “First graders are tops!”
 - f. Crepe paper streamers along top of wall and ceiling (color-coded for each age group or class) – “Follow your color to your class”
 - g. Tokens given at entrance to hallway (with instructions to “redeem” them at classroom door) that are “redeemed” for something at the classroom doorway.



PREPARE THE DESTINATION – Group discussions/plans

4. **Zone 4** – Outside the child’s room (large group room or age group room)
 - a. Team members outside greeting each child by name or with “high five” or “fist pounds”
 - b. “Lookouts” by room, standing on stools (looking down the hallway for children) – (waiving) “Hey, (child’s name), welcome! I’m so glad to see you! Come on, we’ve been expecting you!”
 - c. “Prep Team” members – greeting parents with slips of paper announcing lesson topic and ideas for questions / challenges afterward (“Your child will learn about ____ today! See if he/she can tell you about ____ afterward!”)
 - d. “Prep Team” members – asking about unusual things the children will discover (“What is a ____?”)
5. **Zone 5** – Inside the child’s room (during service)
 - a. Personal attention (eye contact, name use, appropriate touching, smiles, listening, friendly)
 - b. Visuals that represent the lesson (questions, images, statements, etc.)
 - c. Fresh smells – bubble gum, cherry, linen, etc.)
 - d. Sounds – children laughing, children signing, nature sounds, etc.
 - e. Fun environment – laughing, joyful, almost too much fun!
 - f. Interactive environment – movement, talking, exploring, risking, supporting
 - g. Useful, applicable, real – age-appropriate connection to the child’s world
 - h. Discovery / experiential environment – “What do you think?” “How does this work?” “What should happen?” “What can be done?”
 - i. Supportive / complimentary environment – “Great job!” “You’re so smart!” “I’ve never thought of that” “That’s a good idea” “I like your perspective”
 - j. “Family” flavor – Sorry that class is over, “I really enjoyed seeing you again,” “See you next time,” etc.



6. **Zone 6** – Outside the child’s room (after service)
- a. Complimentary farewell – “Your child was such a joy today,” “We had so much fun today,” “See you next time!” “I’ll pray for you all week!” “I really like having (child’s name) in class” “You’re so blessed to get to be with (child’s name) all week!”
 - b. “Take away” items – lesson-related items to remind the child to apply the concept all week long. “(child’s name), make sure you tell your parent about the (item’s name)”
 - c. “Farewell” team member waving goodbye dramatically and saying drama-laden things like, “Farewell, (child’s name), we’ll miss you so much until we meet again!” or “Are you sure you have to go?” “Have fun, don’t forget about us!”



7. **Zone 7** – During the week
- a. Survey cards to parents, “What is your child up to during the week?” (checkboxes and lines for information)
 - b. Sports games
 - c. Recitals
 - d. Band performances
 - e. Service projects (family focused)
 - f. “Blog” that children can listen to/read during week
 - g. “Skype” or “Face Time” appointments (with parents present)
 - h. Visits to school campus (Christian club?)



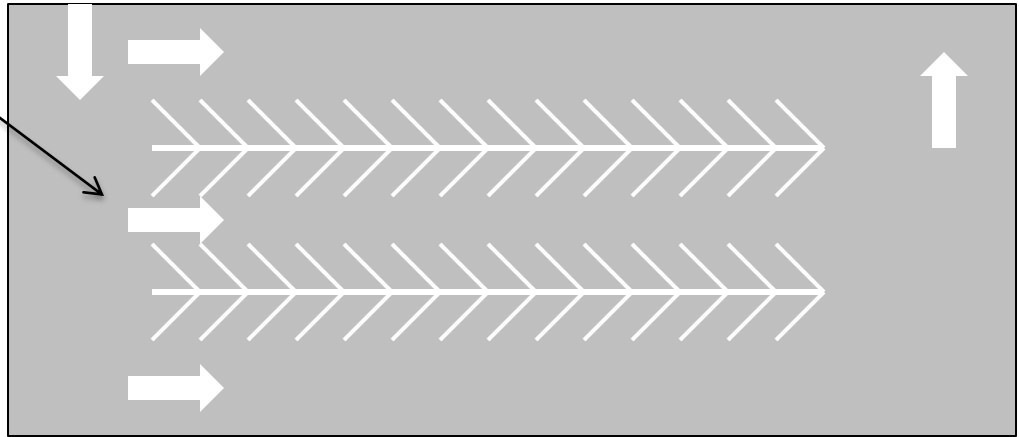
PREPARE THE DESTINATION – Group discussions/plans

The “Zones” of The Children’s Ministry

Taking advantage of every moment and space

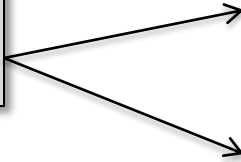
Zone 1

The parking lot



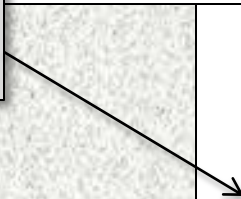
Zone 2

Between the parking lot and the children’s ministry facilities.



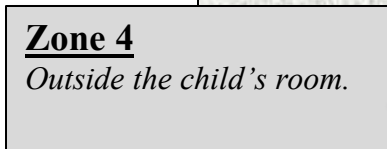
Zone 3

The children’s ministry facilities. Before the room.



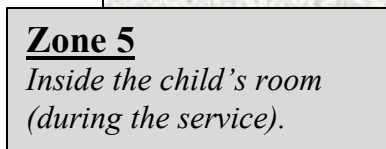
Zone 4

Outside the child’s room.



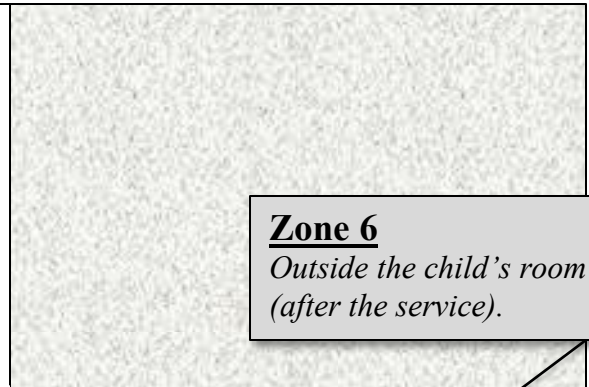
Zone 5

Inside the child’s room (during the service).



Zone 6

Outside the child’s room (after the service).



Zone 7

During the week.

