

Qualities of An Effective Children's Ministry

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Scriptural Foundations

1. **God causes the growth** – A balance between what we plan and what God does. We must be faithful and do the best we can, but we must always remember that our efforts are only as good as how much God leads and blesses us!

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." (1 Cor. 3: 6,7)



2. **Without love, we're just "noise"** – To do the work of the ministry without love for the CM team, the parents, or the children is just useless "noise." We must always ask ourselves if we are known for love or just programs.

"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing." (1 Cor. 13: 1-3)

3. **We must acknowledge Him** – No matter how many years we have been "doing ministry," it is vital to trust in God's wisdom and leading and not on our own plans.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge to Him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3: 5, 6)



4. **We are about the "Great Commission"** – We should be planning fun, interactive events and programs; but we should never lose sight of the foundational purpose for all we do: to lead children to the Lord and to assist the parents in discipling them. Every program and every training effort should include an emphasis on evangelism and discipleship.

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matt. 28: 19, 20)

5. **We must "remain" in Him to bear much fruit** – If we experience success and growth of the ministry, we might tend to forget that we need the Lord. To "remain" in Him means to stay connected to Him and to continue to rely on Him. Success can be dangerous.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15: 5)



Effective Ministry To The Children

1. **The programs are age-appropriate** – whether it is a classroom or mixed large group, the CM must be appropriate for the ages involved.
2. **The children are inspired to worship** – "real," personal worship, not simply following instructions from leaders.

3. **The children are inspired to develop relationships with Jesus** – children making personal connections with Jesus and relating Him to their own lives right now.
4. **An environment of “unconditional love”** – children loved for who they are, and not effected by what they do or don’t do.
5. **The children are inspired to “hunger and thirst” for God’s love** – not just “educating” the children, but inspiring them to want more of God’s Word, and His love.
6. **The children want to come back** – children who may not want to leave the environment, and who want to come back when the program is offered again, or as often as possible.
7. **The programs reflect today’s current “culture”** – ministry to the children that is “current” and reflects today’s kids. The children are interested.
8. **The needs of the children are represented among the entire church** – the children are not “kept” away from the rest of the church, they are represented and presented to the whole church regularly.
9. **The children laugh and are happy and cheerful** – their faces, voices, and attitudes reflect their joy, peace and enjoyment of the environment.
10. **The children love their teachers (CM team members)** – the children are comfortable talking with them, and at rotation, the children are sad to see team members rotate out.
11. **The teachers (CM team members) love the children** – they give friendly personal attention and eye contact.
12. **The children remember what they experience in the CM** – what they experience makes an impact on their minds, and lives for a long time (not easily forgotten).
13. **The use of repetition in the environment enhances retention** – knowing and using repetition in an enjoyable way increases retention.
14. **The children are exposed to the entire Bible** – not just “favorite” stories, but the whole Bible.



Effective Ministry To The Parents

1. **The parents are happy with what is taught and done** – as evidenced by personal comments, smiles, and recommendations to friends.
2. **The parents feel safe leaving their children** – perhaps the most important factor to the parents, they will leave or return as an indicator of their satisfaction.
3. **The parents want their kids to have fun** – the parents want their children to enjoy “being at church.”
4. **The parents want a strong, yet welcoming structure** – parents want a controlled, scheduled environment that isn’t “militaristic.”
5. **The parents are informed** – they want to know what is scheduled, what is taught, and how the CM is operated.
6. **The parents are invited to join and participate** – they want to be welcomed and invited to participate or observe.
7. **Printed material is available to the parents** – the printed material ranges from a “Parent Handbook,” to specific flyers or cards about events, lessons, or emergency procedures.



8. **The parents are supplied with support in leading their own children to Jesus, and discipling them** – printed tools, booklets, and “Next Step” program readily available (with people placed for assistance).
9. **The parents are connected through social media** – use of social media for communication, training, networking, etc. (Carefully done through Harvest.)
10. **There is a parent “buy-in”** – because of how we’ve communicated, invited, and informed the parents, they have a “buy-in” (ownership) of the CM.
11. **The parents are invited to give feedback** – we are aware of the parents’ reactions to the CM programs or events. We listen to the parents’ comments, and then consider these comments for future programs.

Effective Ministry To The CM Team

1. **The CM team is well trained** – trained in safety, emergency procedures, child evangelism, effective teaching techniques, classroom management, communication with parents, discipleship, etc. This training includes initial and on-going.
2. **The CM team has a personal love for the Lord** – the CM team members must have growing, vibrant, personal relationships with the Lord.
3. **The CM team has an interactive love for children** – being a part of the CM cannot be a “duty” or somehow satisfying some misplaced guilt or duty. They must serve because they love children and want to interact with them.
4. **The CM team is well informed** – communication must be regular, scheduled, and efficient. Weekly / monthly meetings, regular newsletters, printed information, and any other means necessary!
5. **The CM team has access to shared, coordinated calendars** – the team members must be able to access the calendars to review upcoming events and deadlines. This shared access should be limited by their placement within the CM.
6. **The CM team is well screened** – initial screening and continual or repeated screening to assure that the team members are still okay to be with the children.
7. **The CM team is well identified** – the ID badges should be clearly displayed and monitored. This is also important for pastors and other church employees or staff.
8. **The CM leaders are visible in the halls and in the classrooms** – regular presence in the hallways and in the classrooms enhances the strength of the leadership.
9. **The CM team enjoy plenty of fun and social interaction** – this is “complicated” in today’s busy world, but fun and social interaction enhances longevity and unity.
10. **The CM team members are never alone with children** – use of team-teaching increases partnership and protects security.



Effective CM Programs And Events

1. **CM Programs are prepared and organized** – planning in advance that reduces surprises or problems. Target or deadline dates set and monitored (this refers back to the unified, shared calendar).

2. **An obvious “buzz” before and after the CM program or event** – before and after the event, the team, the children, the parents, and the church staff are all excited and talking about the event.
3. **Effective and regular communication with the church attendees** – announcements, flyers, stage announcements, during the worship services and online.
4. **Effective and regular communication with the church staff** – at staff meetings.
5. **Effective and regular communication with the parents and children** – through flyers, emails, social media, etc.
6. **Effective and regular communication with the CM team** – at CM meetings, through emails, newsletters, flyers, etc.
7. **CM Programs have clear, realistic, observable goals** – knowing why the program or effort is being done, and then evaluating the successful reaching of the goal afterward.
8. **CM Programs include evangelism** – offering an opportunity for children to accept the Lord, or at least challenging them regarding their own relationship with Jesus. Involvement of or support for the parents.
9. **CM Programs include discipleship** – specific teaching / challenges / training for the children in growing closer to Jesus through specific personal actions or choices. Involvement of or support for the parents.
10. **CM Programs are fun and interactive** – the children are enjoying the experience, there is interactive conversations and movement, no lectures.
11. **CM Programs incorporate scripture** – the programs incorporate the entire Bible, not just “popular” verses.



Effective CM Security

1. **CM security/emergency training and preparation** – emergency procedures, bomb threats, active shooter, intruder, fire, earthquake, etc.
2. **Regular CM security communication with parents** – through emails, printed cards, flyers, posters, and on the website, our serious focus on the safety of the children must be clear.
3. **CM hallways “locked down”** – access to CM areas is restricted after check-in, and before the end of the service, by using greeters or security personnel who confront visitors in the hallways.
4. **CM personnel accompany children to and from restroom** – two screened female CM team members accompany children who must leave the CM rooms.
5. **CM check-in / check-out security** – parents must check their children in and out of the CM areas. No child is ever let out of the CM area without a verified parent check-out confirmation.
6. **“Never Alone” policy** – a strict, enforced policy that states that children will never be alone with a single CM team member; nor will a CM team member ever be alone with children.

