

The Stages of Ministry Leadership Development

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Ministry is about inspiring people, challenging people, and empowering people. Leading a ministry is about organizing people to serve together as a team. The goal of ministry is to unite people into one common effort, or vision, and to free people to use their gifts and abilities within coordinated “boundaries” in order to reach the understood goal.

As a children’s ministry (CM) grows, the CM team increases to reflect the growing number of children and program offerings. In the beginning, a single leader can lead the small number of volunteer CM team members. As the CM grows, that one leader begins to be challenged as he/she tries to stay ahead of the expectations of the ministry. Soon, he/she is unable to positively minister to all of the CM team members as well as supervising the policies, curriculum, training, and budget. The CM leadership team must grow! This document is a pictorial journey through the developmental “stages” of CM leadership development. Ultimately the growth and development of the CM and its leadership is in the hands of God!



Stage 1 – “Conception”

- A new church is begun with a few people who share a common dream.
- There is usually one “leader” and some volunteers.
- This new church may be a “plant” from a “mother church.”
- This new church may be separate from any other church or organization.
- There may be limited financial support (if this is a church “plant”).
- The people involved usually invest their time voluntarily.
- There is a strong sense of unity and a “pioneer spirit.”
- There is a small gathering of adults who entrust the others to minister to their children.



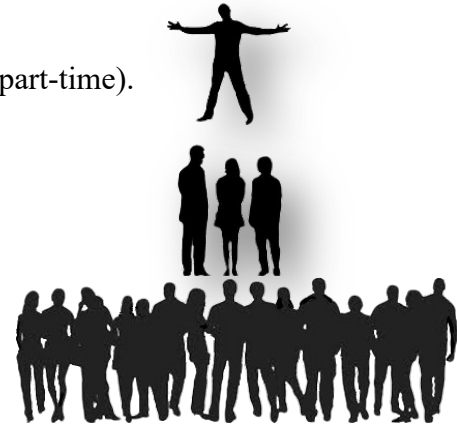
Stage 2 – “Infancy”

- The church is holding weekly meetings.
- The church may or may not enjoy its “own” facility.
- There is a single leader who is paid a small amount to oversee the CM.
- There may be other leaders who are paid or volunteer their time.
- There isn’t a significant need for organization at this level.
- The goal is to establish the church’s presence in the community.
- Offerings are received, financial structure is established (accounts, records, etc.).
- There is something offered for children.
- There may be something offered for youth.



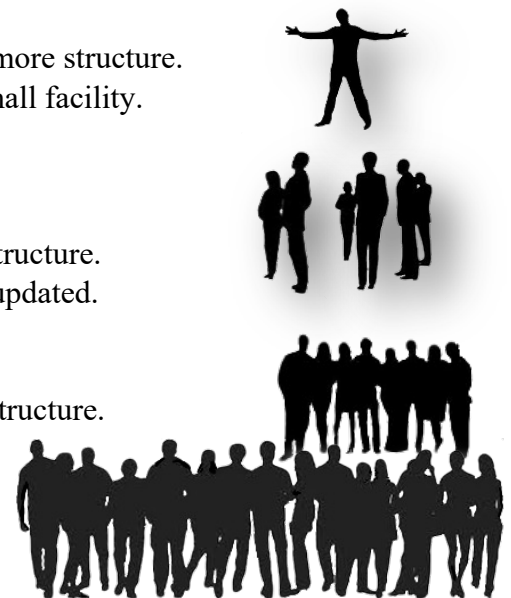
Stage 3 – “Childhood”

- The “complexities” of the church requires more CM leaders (volunteer or part-time).
- The CM leaders serve specific functions.
- The level of volunteerism is increasing.
- There is usually a building that is owned or rented.
- There is usually a church office with at least one paid office employee.
- The cost for CM and youth ministry is increasing.
- The excitement to add programs grows, as does the need for organization.
- The CM leader considers paying all on the CM leadership team.
- CM policies and procedures are established to protect the ministry.



Stage 4 – “Adolescence”

- The size of the church has grown to challenge the leadership structure.
- The lead pastor may or may not desire to be “involved” in all the details of the ministry.
- There may be some evidence of “administrative confusion” among the leaders.
- The CM leadership team has increased.
- The number of volunteers has grown to a critical level than requires more structure.
- The church holds multiple services to handle the population in the small facility.
- The CM team is struggling to offer CM for all services.
- The CM establishes “Department Coordinators” over the CM team.
- The CM Department Coordinators are offered part-time pay.
- The risk of a “big mistake” forces reconsideration of the leadership structure.
- The CM policies and procedures are constantly being evaluated and updated.
- Communication is critical, and yet not as efficient as could be.
- CM monthly meetings are established.
- The scope of the ministries offered is beyond the current leadership structure.
- Future growth may not be possible within the current structure.



Stage 5 – “Adulthood”

- The church considers moving to a new facility.
- The size of the church may double after the move.
- The CM leadership and volunteer team must increase BEFORE the move.
- The scope of the ministries may double after the move.
- The CM leadership must add another “middle management” level.
- The CM adds a “CM Director” (or Assistant Director) who oversees the coordinators.
- The CM policies continue to be updated to match the growth.
- Communication must be strengthened BEFORE the move
- The CM adds weekly meetings for the CM leadership team.
- Regular (monthly or bi-monthly) CM team meetings are established.
- Financial accountability must be strengthened BEFORE the move.
- Spiritual accountability within the leadership must be strengthened BEFORE the move.
- After the move, the CM will continue to adjust to the new facilities.

