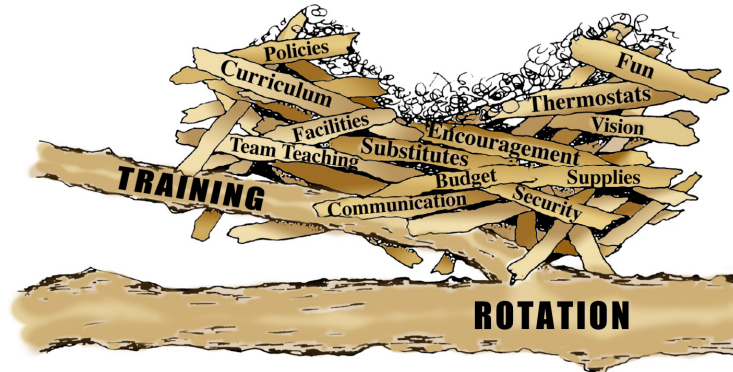


Children's Ministry Team Development Cycle

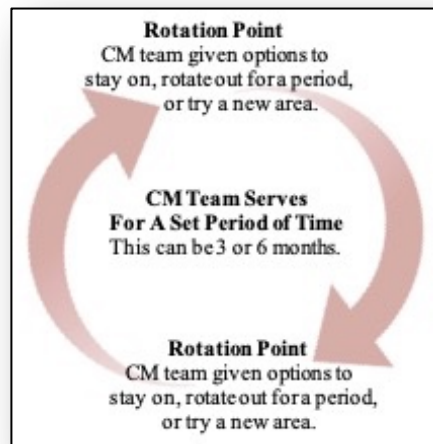
Steve Alley

Humans are high maintenance! They are social creatures who require encouragement, boundaries, purpose, and balance between “work” and “play.” The children's ministry (CM) team is ideally called and blessed by God; but He gives the CM leaders significant responsibility for the “care” of the CM team. Developing a CM team is a year-long, repeating cycle that is a spiritual “partnership” between God and humans! Here are 6 significant goals to reach in order to create a healthy team development cycle that exists year-round:

1. **Establish CM Leadership** – Ideally, there is more than one person who is paid to lead the ministry! At first, a solitary person may be called the “Director” or “Pastor” over the ministry; but soon the ministry should grow beyond that one person's ability to lead the number of people serving on the CM team. A paid Assistant Director (or Administrative Assistant) is a critical step in building the CM leadership team. Then, the next level to add is paid area coordinators to assist in supervising ministry responsibilities and ministering to the various CM team members within that age group or areas. Each paid position can begin at a part-time level, but soon grow to full-time positions.
2. **Build The Ministry “Nest”** – The ministry “nest” consists of everything the ministry needs to grow. The “nest” is built on two strong supporting “branches”: CM training and CM team rotation. Without a strong, safe, comfortable “nest” God may not bring people to join the CM team.



3. **Establish A Team Rotation Cycle** – Those who volunteer to serve on the CM team are not superheroes! They are humans who need encouragement and breaks every so often. A team rotation cycle may seem impossible at first, but it will soon be one of your greatest recruiting tools. Offer those who serve on your CM team a guaranteed time off on a rotating basis. Then, invite those team members who are “off” to be available as “substitutes” if possible.



4. **Establish A Training Cycle/Process** (rotation-based and on-going) – Training those who serve on the CM team is a critical factor in team satisfaction, longevity, and also legal protection. If the CM team feels trained, they will be more confident and be more motivated to remain on the team for longer periods of time. Training the CM team in critical areas may also prevent accusations of abuse or neglect.
5. **Establish A Recruiting Cycle** – Rather than recruiting only when you “need” people to join the team, create an on-going cycle of recruiting based on the positive experiences that those on the CM team enjoy, and on the powerful CM vision. Advertise “openings” on the team, and not “needs”!
6. **Establish A “Menu” of Service Options** – Rather than simply advertising general openings for the CM team, it is very effective to advertise specific openings for specific services within the team. People are more apt to volunteer to be a “hallway greeter,” for instance than to volunteer for a vague position. Be creative, be specific, and welcome people to join within their interests.



The Rotation Cycle

- Set a rotation cycle that fits your community or “culture.” (2, 3, or 6 months on and off). Be careful not to set a rotation beginning just before the summer. Many people travel during the summer and will not want to be committed to a full summer cycle. If you break up the 3 months of summer into two separate rotations, you will attract people who will vacation early or late in the summer.
- Connect CM recruiting, training, and appreciation to the rotation cycle. Recruit prior to a rotation beginning, train new team members at the beginning of a rotation, then appreciate the team prior to a rotation cycle ending to thank those who are rotating out.
- Poll the current team regarding their rotation intentions prior to a rotation cycle to understand where the specific “openings” will be. Then, recruit directly to those openings.
- Establish “master teachers” within the CM team to mentor new team members. This lays the foundation for apprenticeships and deep relationships between “veteran” team members and “rookie” team members.
- Place new team members into the ministry schedule based on their interests. Asking the new team members where they would like to serve is the best first step. It is critical that you, or your area coordinator, monitor their comfort weekly. After one or two services, the new team member may discover that he/she isn’t as happy with the current age group as they had hoped. If possible, shift team members around to make it possible for the new team member to serve in another age group. This shifting is easier to accomplish after a rotation cycle, if possible.

Rotation Desires		
<i>Let us know what you want to do during the upcoming rotation</i>		
Name: _____		
Email: _____		
I am currently serving in (check one):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/> Fourth Grade
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Year Olds	<input type="checkbox"/> First Grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Fifth Grade
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Year Olds	<input type="checkbox"/> Second Grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Sixth Grade
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Year Olds	<input type="checkbox"/> Third Grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Church
For the upcoming rotation, I would like to (check one):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Rotate Out Completely	<input type="checkbox"/> Switch Age Group	
<small>Not on the substitute list.</small>	<small>I'd like to serve in another age group</small>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rotate Out – Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Rotate Out	
<small>Put me on the substitute list.</small>	<small>I will rotate out next rotation.</small>	

Training Cycle

- Set an initial training (just the basics) before or at the rotation beginning dates. This initial training prepares the new team members for their first service on the team. The initial training should include a ministry vision overview, a policy overview, a brief introduction to the curriculum, a brief introduction to the schedule of activity during a service, and an introduction to the area coordinators.

- Establish a rotation-based training. This training includes ministry vision overview, inspirational ministry stories, policy overview with specific emphasis on some policies, “what if” scenarios, connection to coordinators or service supervisors, curriculum use and creative lesson ideas.
- On-going training “refresher” connections (meetings, emails, printed handouts, online videos, etc.). On-going training includes specific training in classroom management, discipline, evangelism, creativity in lesson design, policy “refreshers,” or any other needed topic.

Recruiting Cycle

- Begin recruiting weeks/months before the rotation dates. This can include short videos shown in the worship service, on-stage testimonies from CM team members, inspirational ads in the bulletin or on the church website, social media celebrations of the “fruit” of the CM and CM testimonies, CM recruiting posters or booths in the foyer or hallways, “I’m Interested” cards in the bulletins.
- Determine who will contact the “interested” people, and how (email, call, text, etc.) – **“SDR” = Same Day Response!**
- Print promotional materials (overviews, rotation explanation, “small jobs” overview, training overview, inspirational stories, applications, etc.)
- Print/prepare applications (paper vs. electronic?) – **“Q & E” = Quick and Effective** (short application, boxes to click, options to check – no long answers!)
- Schedule bulletin advertisements / inserts.
- Schedule platform announcements (utilize the senior pastor, if possible, utilize CM team members)
- Schedule a CM table (in foyer) with banner, printed material, and staffed by pleasant, out-going CM team members.
- Schedule “orientation” meetings for those interested in joining the CM. These could include “walking tours” of the CM, or in-classroom inspirational overviews.