

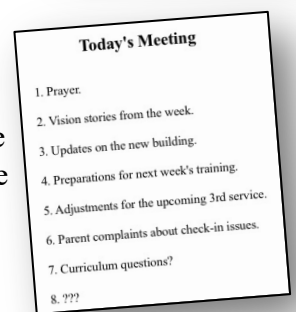
The Basics of A Good Meeting

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An important part of a strong children's ministry (CM) team is having good meetings. The definition of "good" varies with every person, but generally a good meeting is one that is short, fun, interactive and productive. We have all experienced a "bad" meeting that isn't fun, is simply an "address" by the boss, and ends with no real purpose for having the meeting! A regular diet of "bad" meetings can produce a negative "tone" in the team.

You should meet with your CM leaders on a regular basis. If they are paid leaders, you should meet with them weekly. If they are volunteers, you should have at least one meeting each month. Here are some ideas for making meetings "good" on a regular basis:

1. **Offer goodies** – Simple goodies for each meeting adds a personal touch to the meetings. There is power in incorporating food with conversations. Jesus did it regularly. Bagels and cream cheese are always a hit. You rotate through various options so the "menu" doesn't get boring. Donuts are also a good idea, but limit those to once a month or so to benefit those who are watching their sugar intake. Fresh fruit is also a great option, but it takes more work. Drinks should also be offered. Coffee, tea, juice, or cold water are all great options.
2. **Greet each member personally** – make some "connection" with what their lives have been like in the past day or week. This is just to prevent any feelings of their value only being based on what they can do for you. They are valuable people apart from their position or tasks. This part of the meeting may need to be ended with some sort of comment like, "Well, we better get started on our agenda." If that happens, that is a good indicator that you and the team members are connecting on a personal level well.
3. **Share vision stories** – Challenge team members to share stories from the past week or so that reflect the CM vision or that highlight some "fruit" of the ministry. This challenges the team members to remain focused on the real purpose for the ministry. You might have to "prime the pump" by sharing a story yourself. Without this "real" touchpoint, the meetings could "evolve" into business "stuff" apart from any connection to the ministry vision.
4. **Move through the agenda** – With one "eye" on the clock, and one "ear" on what is being said, you have to move the meeting forward toward the final agenda item within the amount of time you have. If you get "stuck" in one item on the agenda, and you don't get to the other items on the agenda, this may cause "ripples" that flow into next week. These "ripples" will always require more time from you to solve or deal with. It is better to move the meeting rapidly through the agenda while you have the team together, than to have to deal with the items you missed later.



5. **Meeting vs. briefing** – There is a huge difference between a "meeting" and a "briefing." Bosses who run "meetings" as "briefings" don't want others to talk, and they don't care what others think or feel. These "meetings" are simply times for the boss to disseminate his/her information or agenda. Disseminating information is important, but you need to find a "sweet spot" between telling and listening based on your own personality. A good leader discusses, listens, and then decides. An "open" leader listens to the wisdom of others, while always being aware that "the buck stops here" with him/her. There are times when you will make decisions based on the team's wisdom, and there will be other times when you simply need to correct or tell the team what to do. The team needs to respect your final decision, though.



6. **Delegate as much as possible** – During the meeting, make sure that each agenda item is "closed" by assigning jobs or deadlines accordingly. The team needs to know that you aren't responsible for doing everything. They should be willing to shoulder the responsibilities that you give them. A meeting that is just a bunch of "fluffy conversation," without any decisions or actions, is a pointless meeting. The team needs to preview the agenda and attend the meeting with a certain anticipation of how they will need to jump in and assist with these challenges.



7. **Enjoy momentary "bird walks"** – while still staying on task and completing the agenda. We all need to laugh and be distracted periodically, but it is up to you to get the conversations back onto the agenda soon.



8. **Be complimentary and positive** – "Season" the conversations during the meeting with generous amounts of compliments and positive encouragement. Don't let the meeting become so focused on getting through the agenda that it becomes "robotic." You do well with this, and you'll find your balance.

9. **End the meeting well** – End the meeting with a positive note, more compliments, etc. This makes your team appreciate you and look forward to the next meeting.

10. **Summarize the meeting soon afterward** – Summarize the meeting in some sort of emailed "minutes" afterward. Make sure you copy your supervising pastor and even the senior pastor.

