

## The Budget – Your Ministry Vision In Dollars

*Expressing your passion in numbers!*

*Steve Alley*

“Building” a children’s ministry budget is a challenging task! We walk the “fine line” between what we want and what we have. A children’s ministry that doesn’t have a budget may be viewed by church leaders as “non important.” A children’s ministry that has a budget that never increases may be viewed by church leaders as ineffective. A children’s ministry with a vibrant, increasing budget captures the attention of church leaders!

### Foundational Truths

1. **God is the provider.** Everything about the ministry comes from God (vision, calling, the CM team, the facilities, the curriculum, the supplies, the programs, the children).
2. **God will bless the ministry based on our submission to, and acknowledgement of Him.** *“In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”* (Prov. 3: 5, 6) *“Delight yourself in Him, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”* (Psalm 37:4)
3. **God will bless us with “large things” only after we are good stewards of “small things.”** *“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”* (Matthew 25: 14-30)
4. **A small budget keeps us on our knees before God.** A large budget can tempt us to trust in the budget – work hard to develop the budget, but never forget that God is the provider!
5. **A ministry that doesn’t have a growing budget is a ministry that may be perceived as “not effective.”** Human perceptions are critical when working in a church.

### Be A Good Steward of What You Have

1. Use it well – no waste, no neglect.
2. Project a thankful/positive attitude.
3. Keep good records.
4. Share victories/blessings with the CM team and the church.



### “Collect And Create” Do A Financial “Archeological Dig”

1. Collect figures for CM expenditures for past year (from church accountant).
  - a. This might be the most challenging part of budgeting!
  - b. Filter out duplicate entries.
  - c. Filter out non-CM entries.
2. Create a “picture” of what you currently spend (from CM expense figures)
  - a. Send list of current expenses to CM leaders – ask for insight re: what expenses were for.
  - b. Create CM accounts (supplement ones used by church, use responses from CM leaders)
  - c. Send proposed new CM account titles to church accountant or supervising pastor.
  - d. Assign current expense figures to new CM accounts (use actual expense figures for now).
  - e. Create an Excel spreadsheet with monthly expenses and totals for each account.



## Project, Review, And Propose Future Costs

1. Let the current CM expenses depicted on Excel spreadsheet prayerfully “simmer” as you consider the CM vision! Do the figures represent the CM vision? (priorities, goals, etc.)
2. Project future costs based on your analysis of the current expenses and their relationship to your CM vision, identify the “weaknesses” in the use of funds. Where are you spending too much? Where should you spend more? “Protect,” “Redesign,” or “Trash It.”
3. Project future costs based on projected growth (programs, kids, etc.).
4. Let your CM leaders review the proposed CM budget. Ask for opinions, reactions, etc. Honesty & truth!
5. Make adjustments, if needed.
6. Propose the CM budget to your church supervisor/board. Request a personal meeting to review the numbers and explain your vision.
7. Prayerfully await the decision and accept the response thankfully.



## Operate, Maintain, Record

1. Connect all purchases / expenses to new account numbers (P.O.s, checks, cash, etc.).
2. Use church’s financial tracking system/software or create your own system.
3. Stay within the budget in the first year.
4. Present accurate records at the end of the year – down to the penny!
5. In successive years, propose vision-based increases to reflect increased growth or movement toward vision – justify the proposals with specific plans!
6. Regardless of the outcome of your proposal, continue to keep faithful, accurate records and remain a good steward of the finances given you.

