

# The DNA / Culture of An Effective Children's Ministry

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Jesus' ministry is a good example of an effective ministry. For 3 short years, He ministered and trained His disciples to carry on the ministry. When He left, there was sorrow, but the ministry continued and flourishes to this day! Here are the qualities of the "DNA" / culture of Jesus' ministry:

## The "DNA" / Culture of Jesus' Ministry

1. A clear calling and vision – *He knew who He was and what He had to do.*
2. A ministry bathed in prayer – *He used personal and public prayers to strengthen the work.*
3. A "proven" curriculum – *He connected what He was doing to the past and future.*
4. "Hand-picked" leaders – *He knew His Apostles and chose them carefully.*
5. A consistent focus on evangelism and discipleship – *His challenged people to "come" and "follow."*
6. The use of "spectacle" only as an attractant – *He used miracles only as an introduction to teaching.*
7. Built-in service to others – *He went out of His way to help and serve others.*
8. Mentorship modeled and expected – *He expected His Apostles to duplicate His mentorship of them.*



### Jesus' Ministry Was "FRESH"!

- Family-focused
- Relationship-driven
- Experience-rich
- Spiritually-based
- Help-oriented

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone, as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Acts 2: 42-47

## Building Your Children's Ministry "DNA" / Culture

1. Remember your **calling**, clarify your **vision**.
  - a. Embrace your "**heritage**"
    - 1.) Rely, delight, and return to the Lord (Psalm 1; 37:4; 127: 1,2; Joshua 4).
    - 2.) Abide with, yoke to, follow, depend on Christ (not your own abilities) (Deut. 8).
  - b. Remember and apply your calling (Ephesians 4: 1).
  - c. Stir up your passion, and compassion (Nehemiah 1, 2: 12-18).
  - d. Clarify your vision! Vision comes from God, it is "born" of:
    - 1.) A spiritual, personal relationship with God.
    - 2.) **Seeing** the need (being aware of the world of children).
    - 3.) **Hearing** God's voice! (Acts 9: 1-6).
    - 4.) Ask yourself, "What will the Lord have you do about the condition of the children?"
    - 5.) Ask yourself, "How will you take them from hopelessness to discipleship?"
    - 6.) What do the specific needs/culture effect your methods?



2. Pray more **personally**, and **within your ministry**.
  - a. Purge “self-sufficiency,” embrace dependency.
  - b. Talk with God throughout the day.
  - c. Devote time to prayer in meetings.
  - d. Talk about reliance on God at meetings.
  - e. Share victories and answers at meetings.
  - f. Pray “instantly” when a need arises (with children and team members).
  - g. Expect teachers to make time for prayer in classes.
  - h. Encourage and affirm children praying:
    - 1.) In large group (with adult or child “leader”).
    - 2.) In small groups (with adult facilitator, and fellow children.
    - 3.) “One-on-one” encounters (with fellow children, adults, or parents).
    - 4.) Private, “quiet time” moments (alone with guided topics, or purely self-directed).
    - 5.) At home with family.
    - 6.) For personal needs.
    - 7.) For church needs.
    - 8.) For peer needs.
    - 9.) For community, national, and world needs.
    - 10.) Highlight “praying children” as examples.
    - 11.) Add children to adult church “prayer chains.”
    - 12.) Create a children’s “prayer chain.”
3. Develop, evaluate, build your **curriculum**
  - a. Vision + needs of children = choice of curriculum.
  - b. Godly people vs. “Godly curriculum”? (*Godly people can lead children to the Lord without any curriculum! Great curriculum given to ungodly people will be a waste!*).
  - c. Child-targeted vs. lesson-targeted?
4. Build your children’s ministry **team** prayerfully!
  - a. Recruit **to your vision**.
  - b. Screen **with your vision**.
  - c. Limit additions to the team **because of your vision**.
  - d. Train in critical areas:
    - 1.) The ministry vision.
    - 2.) Policies / procedures.
    - 3.) How to evangelize and minister to children.
    - 4.) The curriculum.
    - 5.) Emergency situations.
    - 6.) Ministry to parents.
  - e. Create an apprenticeship plan for all new recruits.
  - f. Create an on going, yearlong, training plan.
  - g. Team-teach in all areas (“Never Alone” rule).
  - h. Have fun together! (living mentors vs. “robots”)
  - i. Stand by your standards and remove team members if necessary!
5. Create programs with **evangelism** and **discipleship** as goals.
  - a. Programs are environments in which children are attracted by fun experiences, then led to God through relationships with Godly mentors who teach Biblical lessons.
  - b. A program advances the ministry vision, or it doesn’t exist.
  - c. Evaluate existing programs using the ministry vision (fruit vs. tradition).
  - d. Fewer programs with high levels of “fruit” is better than more “unfruitful” programs.



- e. Have a blend between “come to church” and “outreach” programs.
  - f. “Link” your programs together (sandwich principle!).
  - g. Cooperate with other ministries.
  - h. Cooperate with other churches.
  - i. Assure that your programs equip children and parents to make Godly choices in real life!
  - j. Incorporate success stories and testimonies into every program.
  - k. Train your team members and parents to use “teachable moments.”
  - l. Dream big! God is able to do beyond what you dream! (Ephesians 3:20)
6. Use “**spectacle**” cautiously; don’t create a shallow ministry.
- a. “Come for a ‘spectacle,’ stay for a ‘meal,’ return for a relationship!
  - b. “Spectacles” can create a desire for more, with no real depth (Matthew 12: 38, 39).
  - c. Create a balance between being “boring” and too spectacular!
7. Create a **culture of service** in all you do!
- a. Recruit and expect servants in the children’s ministry team.
  - b. Plan regular service projects (involve entire families).
  - c. Plan ministry-wide service projects (invite/involve entire families).
  - d. Invite/involve the senior pastor as much as possible.
  - e. As a director, you must also be involved as much as possible.
  - f. “Advertise the fruit” in the adult service.

“This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” James 1: 27

### An “Acts 1:8” Service Plan

*“...And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the outermost parts of the world.” (Acts 1: 8)*

#### “Jerusalem” = **home**

Pray for the family members  
Simple chores (room, toys, animals, etc.)  
Voluntarily work (“How can I help?” attitude)

Clean up own messes  
Assist with other family members' chores  
Help with meals or yard work

#### “Judea” = **community**

Pray for leaders (pastors, police officers, etc.)  
Send cards to hospitalized children and parents  
Volunteer at church (events, work days, etc.)  
Be a positive “light” at school by helping others  
Volunteer time at local Boys & Girls club, etc.

Donate food, clothing, toys to needy  
Visit retirement homes  
“Adopt a park” program (pick up trash, etc.)  
Assist shut-ins with house / yard work  
Volunteer at other churches or city events

#### “Samaria” = **outside community, within state**

Donate food, clothing, toys to needy of other towns  
Write to/pray for people in other towns (phone bk.)

Volunteer at beaches, parks (clean up trash, etc.)  
Pray for news items or people (from newspaper)

#### “The outermost parts of the world” = **beyond state and world wide**

Send support and write (email?) to missionaries  
Sponsor a child through Compassion International  
Send shoe boxes to Samaritan’s Purse

Travel to, and assist, a missionary's work  
Send school supplies to foreign children  
Send support/supplies to disaster victims

8. **Mentorship** of the children must be modeled and expected.
- a. Instill a “Go Beyond” mentality among the team:
    - 1.) Go beyond the curriculum – adapt, add, or personalize the curriculum to suit the children
    - 2.) Go beyond the walls of the classroom – and into the children’s real lives at home, school, etc.
    - 3.) Go beyond the class time – interact with the children after class, before class and during week
  - b. Remember the children’s prayer requests, comments, etc. Refer to them next week!
  - c. Connect with the children outside of the class via email, text, or social media.
  - d. Connect all you teach to real-life applications.