

Creating A Supply Room

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Supplying your CM team with the supplies they need is a great way to keep them satisfied. A satisfied, supported CM team will stay with you longer. A great way to provide supplies, is to create a supply room. There are many supplies that will be needed by all on a regular enough basis to warrant them being purchased in bulk and stocked in a supply room. Other supplies may be provided on an as needed basis.

Every children's ministry should have a supply room. If you are a small church with little or no budget resources from which to purchase supplies, there are still some great ways to gather those needed supplies.



Inventory Current Supplies

You can't adequately order supplies unless you have inventoried those supplies you already have stored away in some forgotten shelf under the old magazines. If this is the first time you are doing this, it will be a large task. If you have done this in past years it may be easier. There are two purposes for the inventory:

1. To discover items that aren't used.
2. To determine what quantities are used and needed.

Another side effect of the inventory is to drive your teachers or yourself to doing some spring cleaning. You'll be amazed at what you find. You will come across useable items that you didn't know you had, and some other items that you can store in the big green storage bin behind the church (you know the one with the flies).



The inventory can be done by the teachers or coordinators themselves, but it might be best for you to do it yourself. Regardless of who does the task, here are some suggestions for carrying it out:

1. Formulate a list of supplies you will provide. Ask for specific needs from each department.
2. Print an inventory sheet listing the supplies you are interested in inventorying.
3. Ask for the supplies to be counted and the totals put on the sheet which is returned to you, or:
4. Ask for all the supplies listed to be returned to the office

Formulate A Supply List

Soon, you should be able to build a list of needed supplies. Keep in mind that the curriculum-related craft needs change periodically. Specific supply needs will exist from the nursery and toddler departments. There will be special needs at special times (VBS, camps, etc.). If you do a year's calendar, you should be able to plan to purchase the needed items ahead of time.

Formulate a List of High-Frequency Supplies

You need to determine what supplies are needed on a frequent enough basis to warrant their purchase in bulk and storage in the supply room. Ask your CM team members to help you form your list

Designate A Room As A Supply Room

It would be great if you could designate a small room as your supply room. If this isn't possible, you may be able to use a large closet or storeroom. Use whatever space you can creatively organize.

Prepare the Room

There are some things the supply room needs to make it smooth-running. Some of these items can be done later, some should be done before the room is opened.

1. Build the shelves.
2. Build or buy the cabinets. Make sure they're locked.
3. Label the shelves.
4. Make a check-out counter (half door?).
5. Make a Supply Room sign for the door or wall.



Prepare Yourself

The worst thing you could ever do is to advertise the opening of the supply room before you are sure of the policies and procedures involved. You will find that it is the gray areas that will give you the most problems. Do all you can to think everything through. The following questions will help you develop some basic policies and procedures:

1. Who are the supplies for? Teachers only? What about other ministries?
2. How are the supplies checked out or returned?
3. What quantities of the supplies do you give out?
4. Should any supplies be kept in the classrooms? How are those supplies inventoried or replenished?
How are those supplies secured? Will you use supply tubs (see note below)?
5. Who is allowed in the supply room? Who gets keys to the door, or cabinets?
6. When is the supply room open for business?
7. Who oversees the supply room?
8. When are the supply orders, and inventories done? Who does the orders?

Prepare the People

You won't have any problem getting the team members excited about having the supply room. This will be water to a thirsty land! The difficulty will come in your organization of the actual working of the room. If you've done the necessary work suggested in the previous steps, you should be fine. Be ready to make adjustments or additional policies during the first few months of operation. Let the team members know how to access and use the supplies.