

A FRESH Approach To Children's Ministry

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Ministry Today Must Be FRESH

fresh \ adj 1. free from taint: PURE 2. a. not altered by processing b. having its original qualities unimpaired, full of or renewed in vigor or readiness for action, not stale, sour, or decayed, not faded 3. original, vivid
(Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary)

Parents expect it, children need it, pastors dream of it...

Family – focused

Ideas:

“A majority of the parents surveyed are going it alone in the vital and challenging task of raising children and teenagers. Most say they don't often turn to their extended family, friends, and community resources for support in parenting.”
“Building Strong Families,” YMCA and Search Institute, (Abundant Assets Alliance)

1. Offer **parenting classes** and design **at-home family activities** that will assist parents in leading their children spiritually.
2. Design **family ministry events** in which entire families are involved in fun, interactive, relationship-building experiences together.

Relationship – driven

Ideas:

“Relationship issues stand at the heart of postmodern culture...The more impersonal the transactions (economic, social, etc.), the deeper the hunger for relationships and community....The more connected we become electronically, the more disconnected we can become personally.”
Leonard Sweet, “Post Modern Pilgrims”

1. Create small group environments (in and out of class) in which adult mentors' testimonies, and personal discernment skills can be passed on.
2. Recruit and train adult volunteers to be child-targeted instead of lesson-targeted.

Experience – rich

Ideas:

“This generation hears with its eyes and thinks with its feelings.”
Ravi Zacharias

1. “Season” your learning environments with thrilling guests, cooking, building, playing, multimedia, and interactive, messy adventures.
2. As often as you can, take the lesson out of the classroom, and into the “outside” world.

Spiritually – based

Ideas:

“Although two out of three teenagers are involved in church youth programs, only one out of three plans to attend church when they move away from home. This...is the outcome of the ‘entertainment-oriented brand of Christianity.’”
Holly Peters, “Evangelicals on the Decline,” Biola University

1. Connect children to God, personally: vibrant worship and prayer experiences, scripture memory, stories, personal purity challenges.
2. Don't treat the Biblical stories as “old fashioned.” Tell the stories with contemporary parallels.

Help – oriented

Ideas:

“We need to trust children's capacity to be motivated to want to please God because they love Him and want to be like Him. We need to give them a heart for godliness that will endure.”
Larry Shallenberger

1. Expose children to the needs of others by regularly reading news stories or talking about personal encounters with people in need.
2. Design quarterly service projects in which entire families serve the needs of others together. Remember to prepare and debrief to ensure the best spiritual “harvest” from the event.