

The Benefits of Grade-based Divisions

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There are two basic ways to divide your children in children's ministry (CM): 1) By age, or 2) By grade. Dividing your children by grade removes some significant confusion and add some great benefits



1. **Promotion** – In a grade-based program, promotion can happen at a set date for all grade level classes. The children younger than 5 years-old would still be “promoted” at their birthdays. This provides the entire children's ministry with a set date for ALL classes to promote up.

2. **Age-appropriate grouping** – Although there are some variations between children of the same grade, in a grade-based program the children can all be using the same curriculum and engaged in the same activities.



3. **Aligning with the curriculum publishers** – Most curriculum is grade-based (after 5 years old/Kindergarten). This makes choosing or improving the curriculum much easier.

4. **Successful youth ministry “bridge” efforts** – It is much easier to prepare the “top” children's ministry grade children to “graduate” into the youth ministry in a grade-based program. If the local school districts utilize “middle school” grade divisions (usually 6th, 7th, and 8th grades), then you can begin your “bridge” programming in the 5th grade children's ministry classes. The 5th graders can get to know the youth ministry leaders, programs, and students through some planned “cross-age encounters” and participation in selected youth ministry events.



5. **“Mirroring” the school settings** – Children and their parents need the security of knowing to what classroom their children go, and what they will experience in that classroom. In a grade-based program, the parents and children are comfortable with the grade their children are in because it matches the school environment.

