

Children's Ministry Large Group Program Principles

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Today's culture is moving away from "long and complex," and embracing "short and simple." We still want to be captivated and inspired; but we are not as patient as we used to be. Today's large group gatherings in children's ministry (CM) must be stimulating and quick. There must be a purpose for, and use of the information, or children lose interest. The presentation must be "fresh," and it must relate to the children's present needs and interests. Here are some "principles" and "components" that make large group gatherings effective.

Operational Principles

1. **Reflects the church vision** – Make sure the church and CM vision "drive" the program.
2. **Attractive to children**
 - a. Identifiable by kids – contains topics that today's kids understand and talk about
 - b. Interesting to kids – includes topics or content that kids want to know more about
3. **Fun for children**
 - a. Interactive – lets the children talk back, voice opinions, give answers
 - b. Surprising – surprises come in the spoken dialog, staging, entrances, visuals, etc.
 - c. "Sensual" (involving the senses) – incorporating visuals, smells, sounds, feelings
 - d. Funny – use of humor, jokes, slapstick, realistic behavior gone "bad"
 - e. Messy – use of water, messy liquids, gross stuff, falling items (glitter, powdered sugar, etc.)
4. **Technically "tight"**
 - a. Communication between audio, video, and stage people
 - b. No "down time" – the video controller must have a "filler" video to show if necessary
 - c. Lights – 50% at kids' walk in, 0% just before show starts, 100% when show begins.
5. **Energetically varied**
 - a. Times of high energy excitement
 - b. Times of low energy, thoughtful moments
6. **Contains clear scripture passage/principle**
 - a. Easily understood by children
 - b. Repeated often
7. **Includes a clear, realistic (age-appropriate) challenge for evangelistic application**
 - a. Something the children can use/apply today!
 - b. Something that is measurable next week

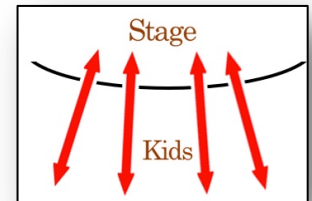
The "Golden Rule" of Productions
*If it isn't meaningful to the children,
it is meaningless!*

Specific Components

1. **Something interesting as the children enter** ("Cool" Factor)
 - a. Video clips of lesson-related activity
 - b. Video clips of random, thrilling activity (amazing feats or stunts)
 - c. Video clips of animals doing cute or funny things
 - d. Lesson/topic-related decorations
2. **Friendly staff to welcome the children**
 - a. Greet them at the door with smiles and "high fives"
 - b. Assist them in getting seated in their areas



3. **Energetic stage greeting from kid-focused, happy team member**
 - a. A personal welcome, “So glad you’re here!” (Engage the kids!)
 - b. Reinforce the name, purpose, topic for the program.
 - c. Introduce the guest or worship leader (if the greeter isn’t the worship leader).
 - d. Use volume - Speak loudly, but possibly use low talk or silence to capture attention.
 - e. Must demand attention from the very beginning.
4. **Audio mood setting**
 - a. Use of audio to signal or set a mood.
 - b. Well-rehearsed (no “dead time”)
5. **Energetic, active worship** (also applies to a single performer)
 - a. “Up and moving” motions – not “tired” motions, but creative, fresh ones.
 - b. Words on screen – for only new songs.
 - c. Repeatable phrases or shouts for kids.
 - d. Brief introductions or applications between songs (optional).
 - e. A blend of loud and quiet songs (variety).
 - f. Professional-looking kids on stage.
 - g. A mixture of familiar and new songs.
 - h. If “adult” songs are used (main stage songs), they must be “energized” with movement.
6. **An interesting guest** (may deliver the lesson)
 - a. Exciting, interesting to the children (not only to adults).
 - b. Good with children (can talk to them, and “play” with them).
 - c. Demonstrates something that is related to the topic.
 - d. Actions or story can be applied to the children’s lives or Christian life.
7. **An interactive lesson** (if there is no teaching guest)
 - a. “2-way” conversations (from stage to kids). (*Have you ever...?*)
 - b. Thought-provoking challenges. (*“What would it be like if...?”*)
 - c. Humorous, purposeful “bird walks,” or comments. (*Wow, that’s a great shirt!*)
 - d. Speak the kids’ thoughts. (*Why do I always have to do the right thing?*)
 - e. Bring the scripture “alive” to the kids’ day today!
(*That means when your brother...*)
 - f. Use of repeated statements, comments, or phrases.
(*But, God’s love is different!*)
 - g. Clear, specific lesson application in an action or attitude.
(*So, next time you...*)
8. **A spiritual challenge**
 - a. Be aware of “peer pressure” during physical call forward or hands up.
 - b. Connect the lesson to the kids’ relationships with Jesus.
 - c. Clearly challenge the kids to respond to the message.
 - d. Identify the kids who express a desire to become a Christian.
 - e. Contact the parents at the end of the service (offer assistance, connect to “Next Step”)
9. **A “Wow Moment”**
 - a. At the end of the program
 - b. “Grand Finale” with balloons, glow sticks, etc.
 - c. Surprise factor (may be anticipated, but not totally known)



Add Some “Sauce” To A “White Rice” Program or Script!



Change the settings, plots, lines, or songs to match the children in the audience!
Remove “dated” references. Add terms, titles, objects or lines that the children know, and use today!



Add some interaction with the children. Let them react, give opinions, etc. Add some visuals, smells, sounds, and feelings! Add some humor or funny physical comedy. Add some surprises through adlib or unusual entrances. Add some mess to the stage or audience.



If there isn't a clear scriptural principle that is the focus of the script or idea, add one. If there is more than one scriptural principle, remove one. Use and repeat the one scriptural principle many times throughout the program.



If there isn't a clear, age-appropriate application challenge that the children can apply today or tomorrow, add one! Without a realistic, repeated, life challenge, the program is just entertainment!



Script or Production Idea

Every script or production idea can be compared to a bowl of white rice. It may contain “the basics,” but it may need some “sauce” to make it more attractive or effective for children.