

Planning And Executing Off-site CM Events

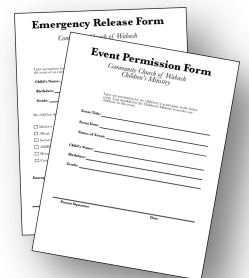
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Events that take place off the church campus are exciting! They add a thrilling variety to the children's ministry (CM) program "menu." Off-site events must be carefully planned, or they can become something that harms children, the CM team, or the reputation of the CM.



CM off-site events can occur during a regular service, but this requires even more detailed planning and clear communication with the parents. Here are some things to consider when planning an off-site CM event.

1. **Overview** – Create an overview of the event to use as a proposal. The overview/proposal must contain information about the following:
 - a. Title of event –
 - b. Ages/grades of children involved –
 - c. Location of event –
 - d. Possible date and time for event –
 - e. Goal/purpose of event –
 - f. Who will run the event –
 - g. Parents/families involvement –
 - h. Transportation of children (parents driving their own children or a leased bus) –
 - i. Involvement of other ministries –
 - j. Cost of event –
2. **Propose** – Propose the event to CM or church leadership for approval. Based on the result of the proposal, re-work the plan for another proposal, or move on with the development of the event.
3. **Logistics** – Work out all the logistics of the event (preparing the team to operate the event, planning transportation, preparing the location (permissions, reservations, safety, etc.), deciding where to buy the supplies, creating the "curriculum" for the event, planning for the safety of the children during the event, and how to incorporate parents or other family members into the event.
4. **Flyer** – Once the event's specifics are roughly planned, create an advertising flyer for the event, and get it approved by the CM or church leadership. The flyer must include everything the parents will need to know about the event (where, when, who, why, etc.). Make sure to clearly identify how their children will be protected during the event.
5. **Distribution Plans** – Decide when the advertising flyer will be given to the children. Decide whether to advertise the event in the adult service (bulletin announcement, announcement slide before the service, "live" announcement during service, etc.).
6. **Repeat** – Distribute advertising flyers and adult service announcements for 2 or 3 weeks prior to event to make sure that all families know about the event.
7. **Forms** – Prepare the two forms requiring parent signatures for the event: "Event Permission Form" and "Emergency Release Form." The event information should be included at the top of the "Event Permission Form" before the form is printed. The "Emergency Release Form" is a general form that is not event specific. Have both forms approved by the church leadership, church legal person/attorney, and church insurance agent before printing or distributing.



8. **Sets of Forms** – Make sets of the two forms and the flyer and staple each set. This is what will be handed out to the parents at check-in or check-out. (If they are handed out at check-in, the parents could bring back the filled in forms at check-out.)
9. **Roster** – Collect all signed forms and keep a roster of all the children whose parents have submitted signed forms.
10. **Communicate** – As the date of the event approaches, communicate with the parents about the event. This is an excellent way to invite the parents’ involvement in the event (if that is your desire), or to keep the parents informed about the event or any changes that have occurred.
11. **Scoop Sheet** – Create an event “Scoop Sheet” for the event. The event “Scoop Sheet” is designed to give the parents everything they need to know about the event:
 - a. The name of the event.
 - b. The date and times (when leaving and returning) of the event.
 - c. The ages/grades of the children involved in the event.
 - d. The goal/purpose of the event.
 - e. The transportation used for the event (parent cars or leased bus company)
 - f. The location of the event (name, address, phone number)
 - g. Cell phone number of CM team member traveling with the children on the event.
 - h. Cell phone number of CM team member who will not be going on the event, but who will be at the church during the event and when the children return.
12. **Forms Accompany Children** – On the day of the event, bring copies of the two forms to the event, along with all the signed forms and roster. For those children who haven't submitted signed forms, and who come to the event, ask the parents to sign the forms as soon as they arrive. Adjust the roster to reflect those signed forms. The “Event Permission Forms” can be discarded after the event. The “Emergency Release Forms” can be kept in a secure location in the CM office for future events.
13. **Document The Event** – Record video or take pictures of the children enjoying the event. Interview the children, CM team members, and parents about the event. These images or videos will be used to “display the fruit” of the event in the adult service next week!
 
14. **Return On Time** – Update the CM team member who is at the church about the planned time to return the children to the church. Only make changes to the return time in the event of an emergency! Do all you can to return to the church exactly when planned!
15. **Document Injuries** – If there is an accident or injury during the event, fill out an "Accident/Injury Form” and have the parents sign the form when you return to the church facility. Take scrupulous records of the situation that caused the accident or injury and what actions were taken. Follow the directions for completing and distributing the form. Give the parents a copy of the signed form. Inform the CM leadership and church leadership about the accident/injury.
16. **Display The Fruit** – Create a “fruit display” overview of the event. This “fruit display” will hopefully be shown or used during the adult service next week! Share the success of the event, what the children or parents said, and use this “fruit display” as an advertisement for the next CM event. Also use the “fruit display” as a recruiting tool for the CM team! Invite people to join the CM team to share in the great experiences that the CM creates. Have a CM table or booth in the foyer or insert CM recruiting cards in the bulletin.
 