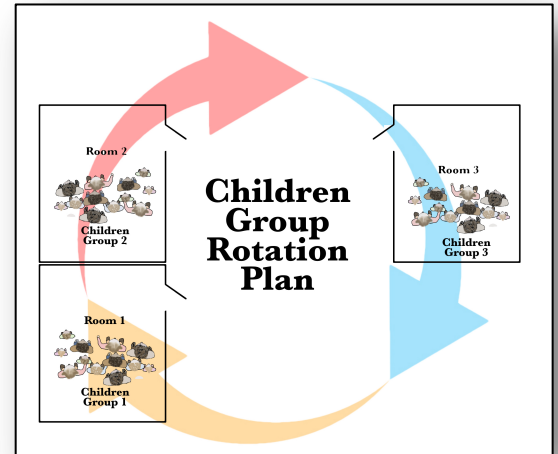


# Thoughts On A Rotational CM Program

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Utilizing a rotating cycle of children's ministry (CM) classes offers variety and freedom to both the children and to the CM team members. In a given hour, the children might rotate in groups through 3 or 4 different classrooms.

The presenters of each group activity or experience present their lesson portion in a given period of time, then the groups of children rotate to the next room where they experience the next presentation. This rotation repeats itself for as long as the service lasts until all the children have experienced every presentation. Here are some of thoughts on the rotation options.



1. **Synchronizing Rotations** - It is critical that you guarantee that the timing of the rotations is exactly the same for all rooms. If one rotating group or person takes longer than they are allotted, you'll have rotating groups waiting in the hallway! This could greatly challenge the CM team members in those two rooms! Synchronized clocks in each room, or synchronized timers on cell phones will help you rotate at the same time.
2. **Timing of Rotations** - If you have 90 minutes for the service, you have 3 rotations. You can decide what each rotational "stop" includes. You might have a time of worship, a drama presentation of the lesson, some sort of lesson-related craft, a guest that reflects the lesson, a lesson-focused video, etc. With 10 minutes for check-in at the beginning, and 10 minutes for clean-up/prayer time at the end, that leaves you roughly 20 minutes for each rotation. You need to plan for the occurrence of a longer service, or a shorter service as well. If the service goes longer, do the CM team members have ideas/options for that in their rooms? If the service goes shorter, will there be a way to communicate that to the rotation leaders?
3. **Worship** – If you plan to make worship one of your rotational "stops," make sure to begin and end on time. Include active songs and thoughtful songs in a "compressed" period of time. Make sure to talk briefly about how the songs relate to the lesson throughout the worship time. End with prayer and release the children to go to the next rotation stop.
4. **Crafts** - With a rotation format, the crafts will have to be designed with the age group differences in mind. Always shoot for the older kids! The younger kids will enjoy a more challenging craft, but the older kids will be insulted by a craft suited for "little kids."
5. **Snacks** – Providing snacks for children is a complex decision. It would be best to not provide snacks if you are operating a rotational program.
6. **Bible Teaching / Storyteller** - The person, or persons, who lead this group must be animated! The worst thing you could do for the kids, and the CM team members, is to have a boring person in this role. This person should employ puppets, object lessons, character props, large pictures, sounds, smells, etc. The kids should be "locked into" what he/she does! There should be laughter, or reactions to something "yucky" throughout the 20 minutes. This person should use various creative teaching techniques like open-ended questions, "what if" scenarios, pretend situations, etc. to capture the kids' attention to the Bible story or passage.

7. **Directed Play Time** - Be very careful where you "place" this aspect of the service. If you place it at the end of the service, the parents will come to pick up their children, and they may assume that the whole hour has been this "disorganized." Instead of viewing this time as "free play," change the name to "directed play." When you view this time in this way, it forces you to create "play" experiences that connect to the lesson, or that are used to develop relationships between the CM team members and the kids. The term "free play," is too often viewed as "time off" by the CM team members! If you have "directed play" time at the beginning of the service (during check-in), make sure to create areas of play for the children instead of a box of blocks poured out on the floor!
  
8. **Clean Up / Closing Prayer Time** - This is a great time to reinforce the purpose of the lesson! This is a great time to underscore the application of the lesson in the kids' lives (in the car on the way home, at home, in their interaction with kids at school, with their parents, etc.). Design one clear, realistic challenge for the kids, and make that the focus of your closing time and prayer (i.e. *"Be kind and respectful to your brothers or sisters, and to your parents this week."*)