

Evaluation

A Key to Ministry



Volume 8, Issue 5

May 2004

Ministry Direction

"I went to Jerusalem and stayed there three days. Then at night I started out with a few men...I went up the valley at night, inspecting the wall. Then I said to them. 'You can see the trouble we have here. Jerusalem is a pile of ruins...Come, let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem'" (Nehemiah 2:II-12a, 15a, 17a).

"As cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah was in a comfortable, secure leadership position. But when he heard that Jerusalem's walls were in ruins, Nehemiah was moved to tears and got permission to lead the rebuilding. Before doing so, however, he carefully evaluated the situation so the workers could focus their efforts where they were most needed. Just as Nehemiah realized the advantages of effective evaluation, so should the leader of a smaller-church children's ministry." (taken from Guide for Smaller Churches, by Rick Chromey, Published by Group Publishing)

There's a saying, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else." Do you know where your Children's Ministry is going? Evaluation will let you know if you're achieving what you set out to accomplish.

Why Evaluate?

"A ministry of excellence is clear on its ministry progress and is continually adapting, changing, and

growing to meet the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of its children and families." ("This is a Test!" by Debi Nixon, *CM Magazine*, Sept.-Oct, 2000)

Evaluation is an important tool for ministry success because it:

- Helps assess the progress of your ministry in fulfilling your ministry vision or purpose.
- Examines the difference between your vision and what you're currently providing. This can help create new ministry programs.
- Affirms success. You can build on programs that are working.
- Forces you to look at the quality of your programs.
- May reveal resources you don't know about. (For example, adults eager to work with drama, puppets, etc.)
- Lets the staff and volunteers see that someone cares enough to look carefully at what they are doing.
- Can provide a sense of unity among the staff when you review your ministry goals and rededicate your efforts.
- Enables your ministry to move forward

What to Evaluate?

To decide what to evaluate begin with clearly defined goals and objectives that are consistent in fulfilling your ministry vision. Then evaluate all you have to offer.

Yourself. "For our ministries to children to grow we must be willing to grow in leadership abilities. Individual growth comes before corporate growth."

Attitude: Do I have the heart of a servant? Am I a team player? Am I grumbling and complaining? Do I have a heart for God? Am I thinking about me and my wants too much?

Priorities: Make a list of your top ten priorities for your life and ministries. If you don't have priorities you can't keep them.

Time Management: How am I spending my time? Am I spending time daily with the Lord? Is my family suffering while my ministry flourishes?

Performance: Am I a team leader or a one-man show? Have I communicated clearly to my volunteers? Can I be relied on to complete assignments and keep commitments? (Adapted from "Evaluating Yourself as a Leader", Jim Wideman, *CM Magazine*, Mar.-April,2003)

Teaching. Were the children excited and challenged? Did the lesson activities involve the children? Did the students relate to each other? Were the lesson objectives met? Did the children apply the Bible truth to their lives? Was the teacher prepared? Does he/she serve with gladness?

Facilities. Are they child friendly? Inviting? Are they adequate to meet the goals and objectives of your ministries?

Curriculum. Does it meet all the objectives defined in your ministry vision? Are the children attracted to the lessons? Are there new information and challenges that would cause them to consider salvation? Do they get to participate in interactive learning activities? Does the curriculum challenge them to apply principles of discipleship to their lives? If you evaluate the curriculum by surveying, involve all those who use it including the children and parents.

Children's Ministry Newsletter is published monthly by Children's Ministries of the Church of God of Prophecy

Managing Editor: **Kathy Creasy**
Contributor: **Jean Gillette**
Layout & Design: **Leslie Green**

P.O. Box 2910, Cleveland, TN 37320
Phone: (423) 559-5328 Fax: (423) 559-5302
Email: cgpkids@cogop.org
Visit Us On The Web: children.cogop.org

Programs/Events. What programs does your church currently offer to children? Do they meet the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of the children? Are the programs still effective in furthering the ministry vision? Which programs/events are your strengths? What can be done to improve the weak ones? Do new ones need to be added? Do you have people and funding to run every program?

Parents' and Children's Satisfaction. Are parents satisfied with the ministry you offer their children? Do you encourage parent participation? What are the children's attitudes? Do they bring their friends? Do they feel like they belong? Do you ask them what they like and don't like and then listen to them?

Policies/Procedures. Do you have written policies for recruitment, screening, and training of volunteers? Does the staff have specific job descriptions? Is it clear what the supervision and discipline procedures are for classrooms and special events?

When to Evaluate?

To improve your Children's Ministry, evaluate the details of your ministry weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. A weekly walk-through of your facility can assess the repair needs, room cleanliness, and needed supplies. Choose to evaluate certain programs such as Children's Church after each weekend. Special events should be evaluated as soon as they're over. What went well and what could be improved?

Ideas You Can Use!

Brainstorming

This is a great way to gather ideas and information about your ministry. No ideas or thoughts are rejected during a brainstorming session. All ideas are discussed and evaluated. This evaluation method can be used with ministry leaders, teachers, volunteers, and parents. To brainstorm about Sunday morning Children's Church you might ask such questions as: What kind of music should be included? What can we do to encourage children to become more involved in the worship?

It is helpful to have a specific list of questions to keep participants on track. From the brainstorming session develop action plans to meet your ministry objectives.

Round Table Discussion Groups

Round table evaluation involves meeting with selected focus groups of four to ten people to discuss current ministry programs, events, concerns, future needs and plans. These people can be children, parents, volunteers, or teachers

To evaluate and collect information on a certain issue, invite a selected group of participants to a morning coffee or weeknight dessert. Children would love to eat pizza or ice cream with you. Establish on going round table groups to evaluate the details of your ministry. By involving people in the process, they'll take ownership of ideas and be more passionate about seeing the vision realized.

Parent Surveys

This method of evaluation is important when you understand that part of your ministry success depends on parents' and children's satisfaction with the ministry programs you're providing. You can conduct effective surveys quarterly, every six months, or annually. Parent surveys assist in collecting information about strengths, weaknesses, and interests in your ministry programs. By doing the same survey periodically over the course of the year, you can measure change, and redirect your course. It's helpful to have parents and children provide feedback on special programs/events immediately afterwards.

Multiple-Choice Response Survey

The likelihood of a survey being returned depends on how easily understood the questions are and how easy it is for the participant to complete the survey. It is more likely that one will complete the survey when he or she is able to choose a multiple-choice response with a clearly identified value, such as 1=Needs Improvement, 2=Fair, 3=Good; and 4=Excellent. A variation of this would be, rate this on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent.

Vision Statement Evaluations

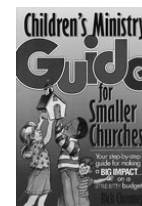
As a ministry leader, it's important to assess your current ministry offerings in relation to your vision statement. Make a list of the ministries, programs, and events you're offering to fulfill your purpose. What is it that you want to keep? What needs to change? What ministry offerings aren't consistent with your ministry goals? What ministry

programs, activities, and events need to be added to help fulfill your vision? This evaluation can be very effective if done at least every six months.

*(Evaluation ideas adapted from "This is a Test!" by Debi Nixon, *CM Magazine*, Sept.-Oct, 2000.)



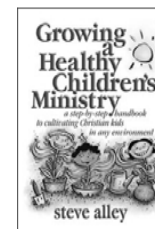
Resource Review



Children's Ministry Guide for Smaller Churches by Rick Chromey. Group Publishing, P.O. Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539; 800-447-1070; www.grouppublishing.com
Cost: \$15.99.

This guide gives some practical, real-world suggestions for making the most of your small church ministry. You'll find strategies for turning problems into possibilities, tips for finding resources and prying money from overstretched budgets. It gives insightful information on evaluating your children's ministry with forms that are reproducible for local church use.

Growing a Healthy Children's Ministry by Steve Alley. Standard Publishing, 8121 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45321; 800-453-1353; www.standardpub.com
Cost: \$19.99.



This book is a creative hands-on guide that helps adults who minister to children take a closer look at their ministries and programs, evaluate them, and improve them. It features step-by-step instruction and dozens of useable reproducibles for children's ministry including evaluation forms with permission given to reproduce for local church use.