



5 Things I Wish I Knew When I Started Children's Ministry

New and veteran children ministry leaders answered the following questions during during the 2015 Merge Leadership Conference lab: 5 Things I Wish I Knew When I Started Children's Ministry.

1. What would you say to a new children's leader?

- Be aware of food allergies/high risk medical kids.
- Parents matter - parents should be part of the picture.
- Notice the "acting out" child - love them, work with them.
- Vocabulary is different for children than youth or adults.
- Educate yourself if you have a special needs child or seek help from people who are experienced in this area.
- Be intentional about your schedule and time, especially if you may work full time/volunteer at the church.
- Its about the investment and the relationships that are built - not just the sermon you teach.
- Get written approval from parent/guardian to take pictures of their child.
- Ask for help/use your extended team.
- Be a problem solver, do not just bring problems to your senior pastor and keep a good relationship with him/her.

- You can't make everyone happy, do the best you can.
- Do not carry the guilt if a child you have invested in decides to walk away from the Lord.
- You may receive harsh words from kids' or kids families – there is an opportunity within that to dig deeper.

2. What have you learned about being a team member at your church?

- Be flexible – each team member has different gift sets.
- Show appreciation for the people around you, make them feel wanted.
- The entire church team is one and are all linked together.
- Celebrate wins with each other.
- Integrate ministry activities.
- Regardless of the staff turnover, be intentional about building relationships.

3. How do you maintain a good relationship with your church team?

- Explain the culture of your ministry to other team members in the church.
- Share your strengths.
- Involve your senior pastor, make the invitation known.
- Understand the vision of your lead pastor for the church and communicate to him/her how you are working that vision into your particular ministry.

4. What have you learned about holding events?

- Bigger is not always better.
- Each event may not hit every developmental aspect for each child. Pick one and go with it.
- Know your finances/budget.
- Know your volunteers/staff's strength and put them there.
- Do not overcomplicate things with your own schedule during the event.
- Review your details, think them through before the event.
- Do not expect big events to grow your church.
- Make sure the event lines up with the mission of the church.
- "I am not the main event."

5. Best Resources / Who are you listening to?

- Pinterest
- Google
- Facebook groups
 - Discussions
 - Ideas
 - Resources
- Lori Eilers, Newton - Find her on Facebook.
- kidology.org
- Teacher resources - abcteach.com, Education.com
- People who attend your church.
- Staff at your church.
- Our entire state network – connect with other churches/leaders.
- New appropriate movies/examples in our culture that grab attention of our kids.
- Ryan Frank - www.ryanfrank.com | kidzmatter.com
- Brian Dollar - www.briandollar.com | Kids Ministry Resources.

- artofmanliness.com | Understanding the development of boys & girls in our society today.
- Dan Bittinger | Red Culture Kids Leadership Team - Find him on Facebook.