

## Follow-Up Work before Module 3

Everyone:

- Read *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus* chapters 1 and 2, paying particular attention to the history of Christian Education
- Spend 15-20 minutes reflecting on your own background in Christian Education.
  - What was normative in your childhood experience?
  - What did you like or dislike?
  - What fruit, good or bad, did you reap from your experiences?

Children's Ministry Leader:

- Finish drafting 1-page statement summarizing your theology of children, give it to the pastoral member of your team for final edits and theological nuances.
- Reflect on the history of children's ministry in your own congregation. If you're part of a church plant, consider the churches people on the plant-team are coming from.
  - What influences have shaped the content?
    - Publishing houses (Group, GospelLight, denominational)
    - Person or Leader (i.e. a pastoral leader or children's ministry leader with a particular vision)
    - Cultural trends (series based on a movie or trend)
  - What influences have shaped the format?
    - Length of lesson time
    - Space
    - Convictions
    - Particular desires/needs
  - See the bottom of this page for a sample reflection
- Make a list of every program your church is running for children including each classroom setting and teacher (or teacher team)
- Meet with lay team member before the next meeting to talk through and adjust your responses. If the lay leader does not have significant history at the church, consider bringing someone else from the church into the meeting, too.

Pastoral Leader:

- Finish editing or nuancing 1-page document after your children's ministry leader gives it to you. Bring a copy for each team member to your next meeting.

Lay Leader:

- Meet with the children's ministry leader to talk through the influences in the various programs. The more nuanced this list is, the more helpful it will be at your next meeting!

## Fictional Sample Reflection for Children's Ministry Leader

Setting: New Hope, a suburban church established in the mid 2000s from an Episcopal background

## Content Influences:

- Church planted with children's ministry at start in 2003
  - Most on church-plant team have elementary-age children or are empty-nesters
  - Most coming from evangelical or non-denominational background
  - Emphasis for children seems to be helping them know Bible stories
- Mostly focused on elementary-programs early on- didn't add preschool lesson until 2007
- Used various all-in-the-box lesson packages from 2003-2009. Hired various leaders 10 hrs/week to run programs.
- 2007- Tried Narnia-based curriculum to use Narnia live-action movies. No one seems to remember much about it except that we did it.
- Sally Johnson served as leader 10hr/wk (but really served more like 20...) 2009-2011 creating stories and teaching with her husband or 2-3 volunteers each week. Moved out of state in 2011.
  - Creative story-telling with dressing up
  - Lots of games and prizes
  - Children seemed happy in children's ministry, but no particular church growth
  - Launch VBS
- Went back to all-in-the-box 2011-2014, hired Janet 15 hrs/week for coordination
  - 2 levels- one for preschool, one for elementary
  - Lots easier for set-up and clean-up
  - Difficult recruiting
  - Less engaging for kids- families leaving or coming less often because kids seem bored
  - Difficult volunteer recruitment
- Hired Janet 20 hrs/week in 2014
  - Began using a denominational publishing house curriculum with commitment to stick with it for 2+ years- some digital resources for first time
  - Invested in screen technology for children's rooms- video projector, laptop, and iPad
  - Children's ministry growing! Lots of children born into the church are reaching elementary school
  - Bring back summer VBS after 3-year hiatus
- 2017- realizing that after 3+ years with denominational curriculum, children still have low biblical-literacy and don't seem to engage in corporate worship.
  - Most parents don't seem to care because their children are happy and well cared for
  - Janet is getting restless and trying to figure out how effective her ministry really is.
  - Church has 60+ children on a weekly basis and is ready to focus on children's ministry

## Format Influences:

## 2003: Church plant!

- Single service
- 1 adult, 2 youth helpers for lesson
- 10-12 children/Sunday PreK-5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Lesson in side room at community center used as a temporary worship space- tables and chairs not moveable
- Children in service for beginning and end, released for sermon (45-minutes)

## 2007:

- Move to different location- local school
- Church meets in a school auditorium, nursery and elementary programs meet in the cafeteria
- Children begin in service and then leave; are picked up by parents.

## 2009-2011:

- Still at elementary school. Nursery moved to local classroom, elementary still in cafeteria
- Sally's husband, Don, constructs small stage for her drama-based program
- Church building campaign! Children's ministry will be in large multi-use space that doubles as a fellowship hall. Permanent nursery space.

## 2011-2014:

- Church building!
- Invest in technology as final part of building campaign (2014)
- Children begin returning to service again after the lesson to emphasize corporate worship (pastor-led change)

## 2014-2017:

- Children's area is permanent (sometimes multi-use mid-week, but designated children's)
- Adequate technology in each classroom
- Classrooms are table-and-chair format (no desks) with curriculum-provided posters on the walls
- Children in rooms for 30-40 minutes/week
- Difficulty finding enough teachers to meet safety standards, so sometimes we combine classes which makes the rooms crowded

## Programs:

- 2 services- during each we have...
  - Nursery (rotating team of volunteers, need 3/service)
  - PreK-K (Lois P., Allen's, Dave P., and Lopez' rotate)
  - 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> (Britney F., Cho's, Sam R., Caleb E., O'Malley's, Maxwells rotate)
- Lent Program (6-weeks, looking for new leader)
- Advent Program (4-weeks, Maxwells lead)
- VBS each summer (Janet w/team)