

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

5 Mistakes You're Making With Your Children's Ministry - Episode 306

Mistakes You're Making in Your Weekend Experience (Part 4)

Nearly every pastor would agree that children's ministry is a key part of their church's ministry strategy—but oftentimes, we can unintentionally undermine our own efforts when we neglect this area or hire the wrong leaders to oversee it.

In this episode, Tony is joined by Stephanie Moreno, Director of Ministries at [Christ Fellowship Miami](#), to discuss five common mistakes churches make when it comes to their children's ministry and how they can effectively create a fun, safe, and secure environment for kids.

Mistake #1: Children's ministry is competing with adult ministries for volunteers and time slots.

Having enough volunteers is always a topic of conversation across all ministries, but children's ministry is unique because it's like a small church within the church happening at the exact same time. The Christ Fellowship team read "[The Volunteer Effect](#)" and had a mindset shift in the area of volunteer scarcity:

"There's no limit of people in our church and inside every one of them is a calling and a gifting. So it's really about taking the people that God has entrusted to us and carving out time to create connections with them to figure out what they're gifted with, what they have a passion for, and helping to connect them there. The feeling of competition for volunteers fades away because there's a bigger win here: connecting people to what God has for them."

Recommendation: Carve out time to intentionally step outside of the children's world and spend time in adult ministries, creating connections with people where you can affirm the gifts they have and invite them to the mission of children's ministry.

Mistake #2: Children's ministry staff are focused on curriculum vs. leadership development.

Most of the time kids will forget about the lesson, the game, and the snack. But what they do remember is how they felt when they were in church: "Did I belong? Was I safe? Was there someone there to care for me?" And what parents remember is: "Did I drop my kids off in a safe environment? Were they happy when I picked them up?"

While curriculum is important, it's not the most important thing that we should be focusing on. The majority of our time as leaders should be on leadership/volunteer development (making sure that we have the best volunteers that they are equipped and trained and in the right roles) and on developing relationships with parents (making sure that the parents have a connection, they feel safe, and they see our children's ministry as a valuable part of for their family).

Recommendation: Especially if you're a smaller church, there's no need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to your children's curriculum. There are plenty of great curriculum programs already available that will free up your time to focus on more important areas.

Mistake #3: They hire people who love to minister to kids rather than hiring leaders who love to build teams who minister to kids.

Much of a children's director's role has to do with leading adults and building leaders. The Sunday experience with children is really a small part of the week. During the week, the majority of our time is with volunteers who are adults, parents who are adults, and staff members who are adults. So when hiring, it's more important that we find the right person with the right leadership qualities than simply finding someone who is passionate about working with children.

Recommendation: Christ Fellowship utilizes volunteer coaches who help mentor new volunteers into their leadership pipeline. When hiring for a new position, consider starting with a volunteer leader and see if they are the right fit for the role that you're looking for.

Mistake #4: Not creating fun, safe and secure environments for kids.

We have a unique opportunity in kids ministry because we get to show kids from a young age that church is a fun place. We want kids to receive God's word, but we also want to show them that God is creative, fun, and most importantly, that God is not boring.

Recommendation: Do research and spend time figuring out what's fun to the kids who are showing up to your church.

Safety and security should be a pillar in every single children's ministry because children are a very vulnerable demographic. The Lord has entrusted us with them, so we need to be good stewards of them and show parents first and foremost that their treasure is going to be safe with us.

Recommendation: Background checks are the bare minimum of safety. We need to have policies and procedures for every scenario, training for our volunteers to identify things like abuse, and set up our team members for success.

Mistake #5: Ministering to kids without prioritizing equipping parents.

Even as children's ministry leaders, we have a limited amount of time with a child—at the maximum, one hour a week. On the other hand, parents spend the majority of time with their children. If we really want to make an impact and help a child come to know the Lord, to love him, and to follow him, our biggest win is to equip parents to do that.

Many parents are also struggling in their parenting—it's our job as children's leaders to come alongside them and partner with them in loving their children and teaching them God's word.

Recommendation: We have to make sure that we are carving out time to invest in parents because they're the ones that have the majority of time and influence over their children.

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