



## **DEVELOPING LEADERS IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WHAT'S OUR STRATEGY?**

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What is the best strategy for assuring that the children of our congregations and communities experience anointed and excellent ministry? The most significant component of an effective children's ministry is leadership. Therefore we will have the greatest impact on children and ministry to them if we develop those who God has called to lead them.

### **IDENTIFY**

The first step in leadership development is to identify those God has gifted in leadership. How are potential children's ministry leaders identified?

- Through prayer. Jesus spent the night in prayer before appointing twelve disciples as apostles (leaders of the soon-to-be early church). We too must find the mind of Christ concerning leadership of children's ministry now and in the future. The first step in knowing who He is preparing for leadership is to pray.
- A good understanding of the characteristics of a leader. An effective children's ministry leader is not always the one who is the most relational with the kids or who can plan a successful big event. A leader sees the big picture for the ministry he serves rather than just the small piece of the picture that he is directly involved in. A leader has influence. Others follow his lead and he impacts their thinking and their actions. A leader takes initiative. He doesn't settle for the status quo. Instead he initiates programs, finds funding, builds teams or takes whatever steps are necessary for the ministry to develop.
- A realization that God's call to leadership is not limited to adults. Many children and teens in our congregations are gifted as leaders. Now is the time to begin developing their leadership gift and the character qualities that are needed to lead effectively.

### **TARGET**

It isn't enough to know that God has called someone to leadership in children's ministry. Now we must target them for intensive development of godly character, sound biblical theology, as well as leadership and ministry skills.

I believe this is biblical. Paul targeted Titus, Timothy and other young leaders in the early church for intensive mentoring. He was not just concerned with helping them become excellent preachers. He consistently challenged them in the areas of godly character, sound theology and leadership. He was their spiritual father and an example to them of how to live the Christian life.

I do not think leaders can develop to their fullest potential without others making a consistent, personal investment in their development. Any Christian God has called to lead needs others to walk alongside him challenging, encouraging, and holding him accountable for integrity in his ministry and his personal life.

## **TRAIN**

Finally, leaders in children's ministry need to develop leadership skills that are common to all leaders. And they also need a unique set of skills required to lead and minister in children's ministry. Training is not limited to classroom instruction but can be done in a variety of settings: reading articles and books, observing other leaders and children's ministers, serving alongside those gifted in leadership and children's ministry, and instruction. Training is most effective when the learners determine how the training has impacted them personally and what steps they will take to implement what has been learned.

Our vision is to facilitate the development of excellent ministry to children in every congregation and community throughout the world. We realize we cannot accomplish this "one child at a time" but we can accomplish this by developing the leaders who lead or will lead these ministries.