



# *Kid's Ministry* **TOOLBOX**

## **10 KEYS TO UNLOCKING BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

Communicating with parents can be a challenge for next generation leaders. It's not that we don't want to but rather we get so focused on leading our ministry that we miss out on communicating clearly with mom and dad. Here are 10 keys that can help you be a better communicator to parents on a week to week basis!

### **10. ARE YOU CONSISTENT?** *Frequent and scheduled*

Communication bogged down when it is not frequent, consistent, and on a schedule. Make a plan to communicate with the parents of your ministry on a regular schedule. Whether it be monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly make sure to plan to communicate with parents and then stick with it.

### **9. ORGANIZE IT!** *Know what you need to say and say it*

Parents, like their kids, are swimming in a constant flood of messages, advertisements, and communication. Additionally, they are running hard with a packed schedule of life. When you want to communicate something, whether written or verbal. Then you have to be organized and to the point.

Tell them what you are going to say, say it, and tell them what you just said.

### **8. BE CLEAR, BE CONCISE:** *Sometimes less is really more*

Know what the most important things you need to communicate and communicate just those things. Skip the cute and the funny; cut to the absolute most important information that is needed. Do not worry about future events, ideas, or other things. In a Twitter/Facebook status world, people want the short, to the point idea.

### **7. BLESS THIS MESS:** *Share the blessings first*

As much as you want to share the concern, the issue, or the need, start off by sharing the positive first. If it's communicating to a group, tell them the most recent ministry win. If it is communicating to an individual or couple, try to think of one thing that is positive about their child to share. Often the only time parents get communication is when there is an issue, need, or an announcement. They will appreciate hearing something good first as part of the message.

### **6. OVER COMMUNICATE:** *Use every form possible to communicate*

Say it, write it, text it, and even photograph it. Use every form of communication at your disposal to make sure that you are communicating. The old rule of seven seems to still ring true especially when it comes to the over busy parents of your ministry. You may need to communicate something at least seven times in order to get the message across. Over communication is not an annoyance; it just plain effective ministry communication.

## **5. TWO WAYS: *Invite and welcome response.***

Communication is not one-sided and that applies to us in ministry too. We absolutely need to make sure we are openly inviting and welcoming responses. If you are going to establish a strong parent ministry, as an extension of your youth ministry, parents must know they are heard. In electronic forms, make sure there is an open dialog for comments and questions. In verbal communication, whether from upfront in a meeting or leaving a message on a voicemail, make sure that there is a clear invitation for response.

## **4. SOFT ANSWERS: *The response is sometimes the only message***

It is a Biblical truth we like to teach, but we often have a harder time living out. It's especially hard in those defensive moments. Know and remember that far beyond what the issue may or may not be, your response will be the message that comes through loud and clear. The greatest goal you can have is for parents to leave a conversation a bigger fan of what you are doing, then when it started. It may not be easy or what you want to do humanly, but "a soft answer turns away anger..."

## **3. FACE TIME: *Use any and every opportunity for personal spoken communication.***

It is more than an I-phone app! It is the real old-fashion way of getting something communicated to someone else - looking in the eyes and talking to him or her. While it may seem to be more and more a rarity, it is beyond value in your ministry. See a parent in the church hallway, picking up their children at the end of the night, or running into them at the local store, take the opportunity to stop and talk. Beyond the bulletins, media slides, texts, emails and social media posts, a 5 minute face to face will not only communicate but will also "earn you the right to be heard" in the future.

## **2. ADULT TO ADULT: *Communicate directly with parents too***

While we think what telling kids something or handing them a flyer will be an effective way to inform their parents of what is going on, reality is it is not. Even if a child remembers to communicate something it is only half of the information, if we are lucky. There is a power in having adult volunteers and small group leaders communicating directly with the parent. If you want to effectively communicate, that must be part of your ministry plan. Adults understand what other adults need to know and will make sure it is relayed.

## **1. PAID BY THE WORD: *We are paid to communicate***

You are paid to use words and transfer information. All be it sometimes not well paid, you are all the same - a professional communicator. Whether it is a lesson, sermon, or the next big program announcement, you are choosing words that you hope will stick. Since you are a paid communicator, choose wisely. Become a "word-smith" forming and crafting what, how, and when you communicate. Every word has a meaning, every phrase contains a message, so think before you let the words leave forever. You will never regret if you do and you will be surprised how much you can unlock with the right words.