

Random Ideas For Ministry with Children

(Presented for the children's ministry workers at the Light Kids Conference, First Baptist Church, Maryville, IL)

1. Decorate Door Posts Write stuff on the door post of the entry ways to your meeting room – even if you have to take it down each week... just something so as they enter, they get a glimpse of the good news!
2. Do a study from Luke 15 on “lost”... and how much lost people matter to God. Hide something tiny in the room and send the kids to find it.
3. The Prayer Jar I heard of a church in southern Illinois where the children's leader uses a prayer jar that kids write prayer requests in as they come into Wednesday night children's ministry. They spend a few minutes each time they meet praying for those needs. (idea: Bill Swinford, Marion Aldersgate)
4. Music as they gather as kids come into your class or worship time, utilize the gathering time for building excitement and giving them something to do – music, video's, drawing something on a huge wall board, etc.
5. Do a “kingdom of heaven is like” series... and have kids draw pictures, describe parables, do skits about what it is – do a different one each week.
6. Decorate, if possible, the space that you will be using for Sunday school or children's worship.
7. Follow the Arrows (with the right kind of tape) – arrows leading from the sanctuary to the place where you meet for children's worship to build excitement.
8. Think about new kids – did you have one last week or month? Did you send them a note? Have you contacted their family? Did you do something special for them?
9. The Week Before Thanksgiving - Ministry has become segmented by age and something for the family could be refreshing for the church folk and a great outreach to the community. one idea around thanksgiving: have kids and families go through a series of rooms in the church decked out with the story of how the country began, the roots of religious freedom... get family pictures in a boat with pilgrim hats they might have made in one of the activity rooms, have pumpkin pie, samples of turkey or a full blown meal if the budget allowed, have someone bring a live turkey in a cage, have someone tell the story the first ones to our country, etc. Recruit the older ones in the church to help make each room special with activities, etc. (Idea from: First UMC, Peoria, IL)
10. A kids Lenten worship or Christmas worship service... where the service is orchestrated from a kids point of view and families just come together. Kids could be involved in this.
11. Watch the Jesus movie for kids.
12. Invite a Friend - Encourage kids to bring their friends to children's worship or Wednesday night activities... this can happen no matter the size of your ministry!
13. “Where'd you get that?” “From my church!” ... if someone is here from now until Pentecost Sunday (May 11) they get something special... and I mean special. Find a place in your budget, to spend the right kind of money to get things that kids would find worth while... and they will love it! Things like backpacks with the church name on it, a cap, etc. Something that they can be proud of receiving for being here every week for the final push of April and May (or whatever season).

14. “Sub of the week” – I heard this idea the other day. Line up 4-5 people who are “on call” as Sunday school teachers. You can have one person always take the first Sunday of the month – and on that Sunday that person would come up to the children’s ministry leader and just simply ask, “do you need me today?” If so, they are ready to go... if not, they are free that day. It’s a great way to keep from having to run around and find someone to fill in at the last second... you’ll probably have to do that for other things. (idea from: Troy UMC, Troy, IL)
15. Bubble Prayer – stand in a circle and blow bubbles. As the kids pop a bubble, they mention the name of someone they would like to pray for. Close in prayer holding hands.
16. Upset the Fruit Basket – a great game for all ages and a great time filler.
17. Kingdom View – help the kids get a hold of the larger scope of the kingdom by taking part in missions around the world – heifer project, sponsoring a child, operation Christmas child, etc. Or close to home missions with local food pantries, pregnancy centers, etc. Think of ways for children to do something to become involved in giving their lives.
18. Don’t expect too little from kids - encourage them to memorize scripture, learn to pray out loud, talk about Jesus, sit through church, etc.