

Lesson #24: A few, good men are hard to come by... ...but they go a long way!

Most Children's Ministry programs have a high percentage of women volunteers and a low percentage of men volunteers. God uses women to do wonderful things in Children's Ministry.. at least I hope so, because, of course, I'm a woman!

But... there is something very special that happens when men help in Children's Ministry. We have seen it over and over again. Perhaps it's seeing them tenderly care for the children. Perhaps it's the authority and leadership their presence brings to the classroom. Perhaps it's because there tends to be less of them volunteering. Perhaps it's that extra reflection of the loving Heavenly Father that a godly man can give. I can't say I have anything really solid to go on here, but I know it's true.

Not only is it good for the children in the classroom, but it's great for the men, too. We have found that Children's Ministry is a wonderful place for men to develop their teaching skills (and maybe one day become a small group leader or even a pastor). We have seen man after man grow in his teaching ability with the children and before long, be asked to teach the adults in some capacity. And, it is great for men who hope to be fathers one day or who are fathers already and who want to grow in their understanding of children of various ages. It's even been good for men looking to find a wife (Yep! Many a dating relationship, then marriage has had its first spark as teachers teach together.). And lastly, we have seen men grow in their own relationship with God as His child, as they work with the children. It has grown their understanding of what it means to be a child: their needs, the way they think; and their dependence upon others to take care of them.

How do you get men to serve? Here's a few ways we do it:

- The pastors preach and encourage it from the pulpit.
- The church leader who oversees Children's Ministry (the pastor of families, in our case) calls men and asks them to serve.
- We use men in our Children's Ministry leadership—specifically, the deacon of Children's Ministry. We make sure that he is a godly, SINGLE (yes, single) male—and usually we choose a man who is fairly clueless, but very willing to learn, about Children's Ministry when he starts. As he serves the Children's Ministry every week, other men—even those hard to get single men—see him serve and are much more willing to serve themselves. He has been effective in getting men volunteers than the women on our team. And, because he, himself, comes to serve in Children's Ministry with little or no experience and survives...even thrives, he can make a powerful case to other single men to do the same.
- We provide mentoring situations so that they know will have help learning what to do.
- We provide novice-level, short term volunteer opportunities so they can dip their toe in the water and try it out, instead of throwing them in the deep end and refusing to give them a helping hand out for a whole Sunday School year.

Lesson #24: Questions for You in Your Ministry Setting:

1. Do you have difficulty getting men to serve in your ministry setting? Why?
2. Have you asked (many) men why they don't serve?
3. What could you do to get rid of any of your men's barriers to serving?
4. What do/what could your church leaders do to encourage men to serve in Children's Ministry?
5. Do you have any men who do serve who could share with the congregation and encourage other men to serve, too?
6. What fruit have you seen from men serving in Children's Ministry... in the children's lives? in men's lives? in families' lives?