

## Lesson #10: Twirl with your swirls.

Life is a busy swirl for most families, but usually there is a discernible pattern to the swirl. Lesson #9 was a caution to start small and not try to do more than you can do well. This lesson is an encouragement to maximize what you do within those limits. This comes by taking a careful look at those discernible patterns in family schedules and figuring out how you can twirl along with the families in them.

### Here are some examples of swirl patterns in children:

**Toddlers and Preschoolers:** Do better with morning activities or late afternoon after nap-time. Preschoolers frequently get very tired in the afternoons and fall apart in the evenings. You may have opportunities during weekdays to offer teaching time for preschoolers, while their moms (if they do not have to work) attend a day-time small group or Bible study.

**Elementary School Age Children:** Are usually busy with school during the day. Even weekday afternoons and Saturdays can be filled with music lessons, sports, or family time. Many churches offer programs on Wednesday nights when adult Bible study take place. Home-schoolers frequently are looking for an extra, outside supplement to their curriculum at home. You can offer classes to them during the school day. Sunday mornings or evenings are frequently the best times for classes for this age range. Some children have two, working parents (or are raised by a single parent) and may be after-school care. This can be a great time to reach these kids with the gospel. Elementary school children are off of school during the summer. This can be a great time for longer events, such as camps or VBS for these kids.

But it's not just family swirls that we need to think about. Your church: ministry schedule, resources available and facility type is another area where there is usually quite a swirl of activity. It's important to consider how you can work with what goes on at your church to make a great fit.

### Here are some examples:

**Ministry Schedule:** You are a church (like us) that has only one, main worship service (i.e., if you miss the preaching, because you are caring for/teaching children during that time, there is no second service to catch what you missed.) Then, on one hand, you have a lot of children and potential teachers all at church at the same time, but you need to be careful how frequently these teachers serve and miss the service. So, you could offer Sunday School (before or after that worship service), and you will be reaching the children/supporting the parents, but at a time when volunteers will not be missing the preaching.

**Resources Available:** You found a curriculum you love, but it's very expensive or it requires a lot of teachers. That makes that curriculum "too expensive" (in money or in manpower) than your church can afford to spend. You might want to choose to find another curriculum that better fits these constraints.

**Facility Type:** Your church meets in a school and you have a lot of kids. You only have Sunday morning access. You have little storage space, but you do have a gym and great classrooms. You have a Sunday School program, but would really love to have some sort of second, missions-related program for your children. You choose to ask for use of the school during summer break (or even spring break) and have something more like a VBS-style missions program. Or, you offer smaller, back-yard Missions clubs held in homes of church members during summer break.

Working alongside who/what you have, rather than straining for what you don't have, will help you support families more effectively and more sustainably.