

Kids' Ministry Training Video 11: Transitions

Many churches have programs for children based at least loosely on age. Children might move from creche, to a preschool/infants program, to a primary program, and then into the youth group. Transitions can be tricky, and need to be done well to help kids forge their way into new friendships, programs and rhythms. Here's some simple strategies for children and youth ministry leaders to prepare kids for key transitions.

Connect

Work with the leaders of other groups to plan smooth transitions. Leaders from older groups might visit younger groups as "guests" from time to time to get to know the kids they will soon have in their group. Think carefully about the best times for transitions to take place, even if they are not typical times.

Communicate

Explain to the children what will happen when they move from one age group to the next – who their new leaders will be, when the changes will take place and what they can expect. Explain to parents the importance of positive transitions so that they can be key supporters. You could arrange a time for kids to meet their new leaders, send out personal invitations to the kids or host a parents' information session.

Create

Create special "rites of passage" around key transition points to create meaningful experiences for children. Transitions can be great opportunities for graduation events, times of prayer and encouragement, or intergenerational activities.

Challenge

Make sure kids at the upper end of each program are not growing bored. Creating leadership opportunities, special jobs or deeper projects for these kids can help them to enjoy their time in their current program, and prepare them well for the next stage.

Further Reading

Lost in Transition - Or Not? David Goodwin

<http://togethermagazine.com.au/2018/04/09/rites-of-passage/>

<https://childrensministry.com/smooth-transitions/>

Questions for Your Team

- Where are the key transitions in our ministry with children or youth that we need to give attention to?
- How closely are we currently working across age group to make transitions smooth.
- Are there any events, meetings, invitations or experiences we could add to improve our transitions?
- How well are the oldest children in each age group engaging? Is there anything we can do to improve?