

Kids' Ministry Training Video 6: Multi-Age Groups

Many churches are opting for multi-age kids' ministry programs. Smaller churches often prefer to combine kids from across a wide age span into one bigger group. Some bigger churches also prefer multi-age groups to achieve their goals. With a little thought around the relationships, content and structure, you can create a fantastic environment for children of all ages.

Relationships

Multi-age groups can have great strengths, as older and younger children interact, learn and cooperate together. Set the tone, encourage the group to work together, and praise them when they achieve a goal!

- Buddies.** Pairing up older and younger children promotes integration between the ages, rather than the similar-aged children sticking together. Older children help the younger children and everyone grows.
- Responsibility.** Give older children special projects or responsibilities that require more skill to help them engage at their own level. Could they act out a play, do the actions for a song, or help set up?

Content

Finding a good curriculum that is designed for or can be adapted for multiple ages will be extremely helpful.

- Pitch.** Aim for the middle, but if in doubt, it's better to stretch younger children than to bore older children. Younger children will soon catch on by listening to the older kids respond.
- Application.** Make one point clearly to everyone, and then allow the kids to apply it to their various life stages. You might use activity sheets, reflection time or an activity in age-based pairs to do this.

Structure

Plan how to deliver the content, so that all ages stay engaged.

- Timing.** Younger children have a short attention span, so ensure that children are moving frequently, and aren't sitting still for long periods of time. A consistent structure from week to week can be helpful.
- Preparation.** You may find that the same activity can be done differently by children of different ages. For example, you might pre-cut craft for younger children, while older children can do their own.

Questions for Your Team

- What are/could be the strengths of a multi-age kids' program at our church?
- What roles and responsibilities could the older kids in our group take?
- Do we make one point clearly that all ages can grasp, or are we overcomplicating our content?
- Is our current structure working for both younger and older children? Is there anything we need to change?