



Growing a Children's Ministry on Any Budget

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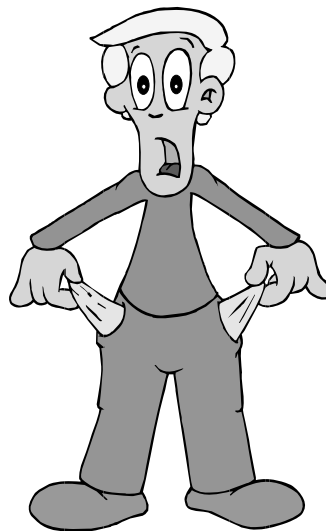
Many churches postpone children's ministry for lack of funds or personnel. But there are some ideas leaders can incorporate to develop good ministry programs for children. Parents, especially young couples, are usually motivated to give money and time for their children.

Self-Funding Ministries

Weekly offerings can fund your Sunday School and children's church. *Radiant Life* curriculum costs less than 40 cents per student per week for a student quarterly and weekly take-home paper. *Radiant Life's* children's church materials provide more helps than an average teacher can use for less than \$60 per quarter.

Many events for children—Junior Bible Quiz, vacation Bible school, and district summer camp—can be self-funding. One fall we hosted a free spaghetti supper to recruit kids into our JBQ program. We took a free-will offering that more than paid for the meal. The kids who join JBQ are charged a \$20 registration fee. Other expenses—the Bible Fact Paks, parties, and trips—are covered on a pay-as-you-go basis.

District summer camp costs are predictable. If a family saves \$10 a week during March through May, they will have more than enough money to send their child to camp. Churches can also take an offering to help those who may not be able to afford camp tuition.



Parent-Sponsored Events

Ask parents to volunteer. They are usually the first to suggest activities for their children.

Recruit them for a limited time, a specific event, or for a cause that is close to their hearts.

Special Offering

Christmas pageants can be paid for through an offering on the night of the event. Expenses for a kids crusade can be met through a boys-against-girls offering contest, but also take a designated offering on Sunday morning to help fund this event.

Co-Sponsoring Department

One department can adopt another department to subsidize expenses and assist with leadership responsibilities. Women's Ministries groups assist Missionettes, and HonorBound groups sponsor Royal Rangers.

The Women's Ministries group in one church buys the diapers, toys, latex gloves, and cleaning supplies for the nursery. In our church the adult education budget supplements the children's ministries budget. This year our missions budget financed the kids crusade.

Start Small and Build

When a church establishes a children's ministry, it should take

one step at a time. First, organize the ministries that are important to your Sunday morning service—nursery, Sunday School, and children’s church. Then follow with midweek ministries such as Royal Rangers and Missionettes.

A church can start its children’s church with all children

ages 4 to 11 in the sanctuary with their parents. During the offering, the children can go to another room where they have a Bible story, a memory verse exercise, a craft, and prayer time. This can be accomplished with two volunteers and one teacher’s quarterly.

When my church first asked

me to do a children’s musical, the first pageant I did was simple, but cute. While these musical events have grown from one year to the next, so did my staff of volunteer parents, my church resources, and my understanding of how to organize.

Questions For Further Study—

1. What type of children’s ministries activities would you conduct if finances were not a problem?
2. What other church department might you partner with to fund some much-needed ministries?
3. How might you use parent volunteers and/or finances to help achieve your ministry goals?