

PLANTING A  
FRUITFUL  
NURSEY MINISTRY



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# PLANTING A FRUITFUL NURSERY MINISTRY

## I. INTRODUCTION

- \* Evaluate.
- \* Define - the foundation of a fruitful ministry.
- \* Where do we begin?
- \* Setting goals - organizing around your purpose.

## II. THE CHILD

- \* Characteristics and needs of a 0-2 year old.
- \* What babies can learn.
- \* Methods to interact with babies and toddlers.

## III. THE NURSERY STAFF

- \* Expectations of staff.
- \* Commitment to staff.
- \* Hallmarks of your nursery team.

## IV. THE PARENTS

- \* What do parents need?
- \* Meeting those needs.

## V. THE FACILITIES

- \* Room arrangement.
- \* Safety guidelines.
- \* Basic supplies.

## VI. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER - ORGANIZATION

- \* What organization is **not**.
- \* What is organization.
- \* How much organization.
- \* Determine an organizational structure.
- \* Develop a nursery manual/handbook.

## VII. SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

\* Workshop description: Behind the organization and direction of fruitful nursery ministries, lie vital biblical principals and truths that **separate** nurseries having conformed to baby-sitting, from nurseries **transformed** into ministries with vision and purpose. Whether your desire is to plant and cultivate a nursery ministry that will make a difference, or you are seeking to **renew** the thinking and purpose within an existing one, then perhaps this workshop is intended for you. This will be a two-part workshop.

## A. LET'S EVALUATE

1. Where we currently \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Asking questions challenges our \_\_\_\_\_ and defines \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Questions also help find \_\_\_\_\_ between \_\_\_ way of thinking vs. \_\_\_\_\_ way.

### 4. Examples

- \* Are you beginning, refining or changing direction in your nursery?  
(Seasons of ministry)
- \* Why does your nursery currently exist? (purpose and vision)
- \* Are you providing ministry to babies/families or childcare?
- \* What standards does your church require of a teacher or caregiver?
- \* Does your nursery reflect God (His love) for His little ones or honor our desires and conveniences?
- \* How fervent and effectual are the prayers towards your babies and their families? (James 5:10)  
- **fact** - The nurseries are the most neglected areas of ministry in the church today!
- \* Does your nursery have a clearly defined purpose and vision for its youngest attenders?
- \* What are some ways your church communicates love, support and importance for babies and parents?
- \* Do you know how 0-2 year olds learn or how teachers should teach?
- \* How can your church minister to families through its nursery?

**B. DEFINE: The foundation for fruitful nursery ministry.**

1. (Matt. 7:24-27)

2. **Five building blocks** --- solid foundation

a. c e.

b. d.

3. The philosophy and purpose of your entire ministry will be built upon these five vital and foundational building blocks. An excellent **example** (adopted from Adventure Land Children's Ministry) is provided on page six.

## C. WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

\* **Prayer** (Matt. 6:6-8 - Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.)

### 1. **Spend time laying a solid foundation in Christ. (How?)**

a. 1 Cor. 3:10-11 - "But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."

b. James 1:5 - "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

c. (1 Cor. 1:10)

### 2. **Clearly define your purpose. (Mission statement/philosophy of ministry)**

a. **"Why do we exist?"** (Purpose statement)

b. Prov. 29:10 - "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

1.

2.

3.

3. **A clearly defined purpose** will bring the following blessings to your ministry.

- a. 1 Cor. 1:10 - "Be of one mind, unified in thought and purpose."
- b. Isa. 26:3 - "God gives perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in Him."
- c. Phil. 3:13 - "I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing, forgetting what is behind and looking forward to what lies ahead."
- d. Ezra 10:4 - "Tell us how to proceed in setting things straight, and we will fully cooperate."
- e. 1 Cor. 13:5 - "Examine yourselves, test yourselves."
- f. Healthy, growing ministries have a clear cut direction and purpose. They know what God has called them to do and what **not** to do.

\* Establish what really counts in your ministry!

## **D. SETTING GOALS THAT ORGANIZE AROUND YOUR PURPOSES**

1. "Define your roles, then set your goals."

a.

b.

2. Prioritize goals according to needs within your nursery ministry, (Primary and secondary goals that lead to your objective.)

3. Examples of **primary goals**:

(child) a.

(parents) b.

(staff) c.

### **4. Examples of Secondary Goals**

a. Solidly linking the church and homes.

b. Evangelistic opportunity

### **5. Remember:**

a. **If we build our nursery ministries on the following:**

1.

5. (con't.)

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

b. Biblical principal in John 15:5 = A fruitful nursery ministry.

\* **John 15:5**, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear **much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing."



**NURSERY MINISTRY GOALS**  
(Summit Christian Fellowship)

**Our Goals Are:**

1. To provide a safe, clean, peaceful and loving environment for our young children where ministry can take place.
2. To help children feel a warm sense of belonging to their church family.
3. To pray for our babies and their families regularly.
4. To provide trained and prepared servants who will maintain high standards and goals.
5. Smooth, simple and orderly procedures for influencing our children in ways that are desirable to God.
6. A desire for parents using our ministry to be pleased and confident that their children are in a nurturing and caring atmosphere where ministry is taking place.
7. To support the family in their responsibility for the spiritual nurture and growth of their child.

## II. THE CHILD

### A. Characteristics and needs of 0-2 year olds:

1. A baby is a **whole** being - body, soul and spirit!
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of a child's life are of great importance for many reasons that will largely \_\_\_\_\_ the child later on:
  - a. The foundation for \_\_\_\_\_ development **begins** here.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ are being learned (foundational for growth and development).
  - c. Our desire is that as each child \_\_\_\_\_ loving care and prayer, he/she is \_\_\_\_\_ which will enable them to **return that** \_\_\_\_\_ later.
3. How do we help to **build trust** and **encourage learning**?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
4. You are teachers:
  - a. Not because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. But because a babies learning begins \_\_\_\_\_.  
A young infant may not be reached with \_\_\_\_\_, but will learn through their experiences and feelings; \_\_\_\_\_ is one of these. (Active learning)

## **B. What Babies Can Learn**

### **God**

- \* Can learn God loves and cares for him or her.
- \* Provides sun and rain, the world we live in.
- \* Can thank God and sing to God.

### **Jesus**

- \* Identify more easily with Jesus, especially baby Jesus.
- \* 2-3 year olds can learn that Jesus is the son of God.
- \* That he was once a child like they are (avoid “past” events.)

### **Bible**

- \* Pleasant experiences and hearing Bible stories are the first step toward developing a love for God’s special book.

### **Church**

- \* Church is a place to learn about God and to see friends.
- \* As they visit church, they can come to know it as a loving and caring place where God’s people come to share God’s love.

### **Prayer**

- \* Can be taught simple table or bedtime prayers before snacktime or naptime.
- \* They will give thanks for all things.
- \* Simple Bible songs can also help toddlers learn to pray.
- \* Children at this age love music and the opportunity to dance and play.

### **What About Curriculum?**

- \* Understand that in reading scriptures to babies and young children, you are filling them, even though they may not be capable of intellectually comprehending the words you speak.
- \* No structured curriculum for 0-2 year olds.
- \* Select major concepts or themes that will be emphasized.
- \* Avoid temptation to use secular books or curriculum.

### **C. Methods to Interact with Babies and Toddlers**

a.

b.

c.

d.

### III. THE NURSERY STAFF

**Matt. 18:5** - "Whoever receives one little child like this in my name receives me."

1. Jesus compares our **attitudes** towards a young child with our attitude towards Him. (How?)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  
2. Remember, a child responds to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **A. Expectations of your staff.**

1. Decide what characteristics and requirements are necessary before one can serve in the nursery ministry:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  - f.
  
2. Many factors are involved in a successful church nursery - staff being one of the most important.

3. **Quote** by H.B. Adams; “A teacher affects eternity: He/she can never tell where their influence stops.”
- a. **Heb. 11:1**

**B. Commitment to your staff.**

1. To seek out those who are \_\_\_\_\_ to serving Christ and desire to minister to children.
2. To provide your volunteer staff with adequate \_\_\_\_\_ for their various roles with ....
  - a. A well-planned, orientation training program.
  - b. A well-planned, on-going in-service training program.
  - c. Training that is made available at convenient times.
  - d. Training that meets specific needs.
  - e. Training that is biblically and educationally sound.
3. To provide adequate facilities, equipment, and materials and maintain these in good order.
4. To support each member of your volunteer staff in \_\_\_\_\_ and to provide adequate \_\_\_\_\_.

### C. CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR STAFF

1. Know their \_\_\_\_\_ . (0-2 year olds.)
2. “Learners don’t \_\_\_\_\_ until they \_\_\_\_\_.”  
(1 Cor. 13:8 - “Love never fails.”)
3. Sensitivity and understanding of family units - to acknowledge that children come from various family units; what is the babies \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Being aware of their \_\_\_\_\_ in the lives of each child and that child’s family.
5. Possessing a \_\_\_\_\_ - to seek out hurting children.
6. **Pray** for each young child and his/her family.
  - a. (Luke 1:39-44).
  - b. **How** can we specifically pray for our babies?
    1. Pray for the ears of each child’s spirit, that they will hear, listen and later obey the voice of the Lord.
    2. That they will learn to distinguish the voice of the Lord from the voice of the enemy.
    3. That they will respond to salvation and accept the Lord at an early age.
    4. Being aware that the Lord has a specific purpose for each life (Jer. 1:5-7, Ps. 139:13-16), pray that **others** will be led to Christ through the testimony of the child you are holding. (Ex: Billy Graham).

#### IV. THE PARENTS

1. **“Total ministry”** means ministering to the total needs of both the \_\_\_\_\_ and his/her \_\_\_\_\_, knowing them well enough to know their needs and seeking to meet those needs.

a. Need to communicate \_\_\_\_\_ to parents.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of a baby is one of the best times to minister to parents because a newborn often creates an \_\_\_\_\_ towards the churches care and support.

3. **What do parents need?**

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.



5. Meeting those needs - throughout the week: (How?)

- a. Home visits, phone calls, cards and letters.
- b. Parenting classes.
- c. Organize a parent's prayer team.
- d. "Life-stage" support groups.
- e. A mother's club (supportive peer group - Titus 3)
- f. Celebrate births, adoptions, dedications, etc.
- g. Organize a parents time out.
- h. Family retreats, camps.
- i. Family month - emphasis from pulpit, activities and events that build the family.
- j. Parent **resources**:
  - \* Parent's bulletin boards.
  - \* Take home cards/papers for 0-2 year olds.
  - \* Open house in your nursery department (promote it).
  - \* Publish a nursery newsletter with parenting tips, praise reports, themes of study, family activities and events, prayer requests, etc.!
  - \* Nursery brochure for new parents (explain)
  - \* Parent report (how their baby did)
  - \* Baby/toddler information card (designed to help team & child).
- k. Is your nursery **parent friendly**?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.

## THE FACILITIES

1. To encourage learning we need to provide the right atmosphere.

### A. Room Arrangement

- \* Best location for your nursery:
  - Near the sanctuary or next to an entrance and parking lot.
  - Near a bathroom.
  - On the ground floor with easy access to an outdoor exit.
  - If possible provide close parking from families and pre-schoolers.
- \* Avoid locations:
  - Close to long stairways.
  - Rooms without access to outdoor exits.
  - With doors or exits leading to a busy street.
  - Attics
- \* Infants and toddlers should be separated. The number of babies and toddlers you have will determine the number of rooms you will need or the layout of a large room.
- \* Rooms should be spacious, clean, warm and comfortable.
- \* Ventilation is very important. Maintain temperature between 68 -78 F.
- \* Rectangular, 900-100 sq. ft. is adequate, 300 sq. ft. minimum. (25-35 sq. ft./1 child and 1 caregiver.)
- \* Soft natural lighting throughout the room; avoid glare.
- \* Ideally floor should be a high density synthetic carpet with substantial rubber backing or a nonporous cushioned vinyl with nonskid rugs. Set up a regular schedule of cleaning and de-germing carpets. Removing shoes will help a lot.
- \* Adequate number of exits essential for emergencies.
- \* Half doors at doorways with safety doorknobs, over which the children may be passed are ideal.
- \* Ceiling should be covered with acoustical tile or plaster to reduce sound; walls should be sound proofed, well insulated and painted with nontoxic paint preferably in soft colors.

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## **The Nursery Can Be The Most Dangerous Room In Your Church**

What do you get when you mix one hand-me-down walker, three used toys and a chipped crib? A dangerous place.

And that could be your church nursery. Last year more than 80,000 kids younger than 5 were rushed to emergency rooms, reports the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Churches could steer clear of a lot of accidents if they inspected nurseries for potential problems and trained the people who staff them.

How safe is your church nursery? Form a nursery committee and look for these warning signs:

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### **B. Safety Guidelines**

- Is a smoke detector installed? Are the batteries good?
- Is a fire extinguisher handy?
- Is the first aid kit stocked and available?
- Post emergency information on a bulletin board.
- Never administer medicine to any child. Have phone numbers for a local poison control center, 911 and hospital emergency department posted.
- Be sure room is child proofed.
- Vision to every part of room should be unobstructed.

### **Dangerous Objects**

- Vacuum or sweep floor regularly.
- All sharp corners protected.
- Electrical outlets should be installed out of a child's reach or covered with safety plugs.
- Supervise use of crayons, playdough, chalk, etc.
- Safety latches on cabinets and drawers.
- Furniture and shelves secured to walls.
- Toy chest lids.
- Cover any floor heaters or radiators.

### **Suffocation**

- Keep all plastic bags out of reach.
- Do diaper pails have secure lids? Children have died by falling head-first into a diaper pail.
- Never prop a bottle in any baby's mouth.
- Don't let babies suck or chew on balloons, small objects or large pieces of food.
- No loose cords, strings, or ropes within a child's reach.

### **Falls**

- Never leave a baby unattended on a changing table or on a swing.
- Secure crib sides whenever a baby is inside.
- Don't allow children to climb on tables or chairs.
- Windows should be shatterproof glass with bottom sill a minimum of 2 ft. from the floor.
- Never place climbing equipment near windows.
- Make sure all rugs are secured to the floor.

### **Special Areas Within Room**

- Area for nursing mothers with privacy and a rocking chair.
- Quiet area for toddlers.

### **Decorating Ideas**

- Bulletin boards, posters and murals, mobiles, pictures of babies, etc. are some ways to decorate walls.
- Bulletin boards can have monthly themes for children and another board for general information.

### **C. Basic Supplies**

- \* Laundered items:  
Crib sheets, receiving blankets, smocks for caregivers, extra items of clothing.
- \* Purchased items:  
Disposable diapers (all sizes), pre-moistened wipes, plastic gloves, wax paper sheets, tissue paper, plastic bags for soiled cloths or cloth diapers, paper towels, soap for washing hands, disinfectant (1:10), snacks if provided, tapes and items for labeling children and belongings.

### **Equipment for the Nursery**

- \* Cribs (made after 1973), slats must be 2-3/8" apart max. with snug fitting mattress and bumper pad for cribs.
- \* Playpens in infant room.
- \* Rocking chairs in infant rooms only.
- \* Changing tables(s), shelf or cabinets for diaper changing supplies.
- \* Covered diaper pail.
- \* Wastebasket.
- \* Diaper bag shelves or hooks on walls, coat rack.
- \* Baby swing(s) in infant room.  
Don't use for babies less than 6 weeks. Always use safety strap and never leave baby unattended.
- \* *Cassette player and tapes.*
- \* Low table and chairs in toddler room.
- \* Shelves for books and toys.
- \* Optional equipment could include:  
Small refrigerator, bottle warmers, communication system to sanctuary for use in case of emergency.
- \* *Avoid walkers and jumpers. 20,500 children were injured from these in 1990.*

## **Books and Toys**

- \* *Many on market are dangerously unsafe.*
- \* Play only with objects too large to swallow (larger than 2" in diameter).
- \* Use toys that are unbreakable and easy to wash.
- \* *Remove eyes, nose, buttons on stuffed toys or dolls to prevent being pulled off and put in mouth.*
- \* *Avoid anything that cannot be washed.*
- \* Toys should be made of nonflammable, nontoxic, and lead-free materials.
- \* Be sure toys are age appropriate for 0-2 year olds.
- \* Check toys for rough, sharp or splintery surfaces.
- \* Discard any unrepairable toys or equipment.

## VI. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER - ORGANIZATION

1. **Let's define** what organization is and is **not**, because there are many misconceptions about organization.

a.

b.

c. "Methods are many, principals are few, methods always change, principals never do." (W. Wiersbe)

2. **What** is organization?

a. Organization is a \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord uses.

b. 1 Cor. 14:40 - "Let all things be done decently and in order."

c. Order \_\_\_\_\_ (God)/chaos \_\_\_\_\_ (our enemy).

d. A well run ministry reflects \_\_\_\_\_ by the importance and priority it has in our lives, and thus attracts people.

e. Properly understood and properly used, order \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. **How** much organization?

a. Enough to make clear \_\_\_\_\_ is to be done, \_\_\_\_\_ to get it done and \_\_\_\_\_ will be responsible for doing it.

b.

c.

4. **Determine** an organizational structure.

a. The nursery can be under any one of the following in your churches line of spiritual authority.

- \* Youth Pastor
- \* Director of children's ministry
- \* Sunday School Superintendent
- \* A board or administrative team composed of a representative from each age level department who carry out the administrative and communicative functions of children's ministry.

5. Develop a **Ministry Manual** for your nursery department.

a. It's a \_\_\_\_\_ of your ministry.

b. A nursery manual should be established in any well run nursery department even when working with dedicated people because:

1. It ensures that the same standards are applied to all similar situations.
2. Allows you and your staff to refer back to the standards as needed.
3. Helps you to discover possible overlaps or gaps in necessary tasks.
4. Puts expectations in writing so that everyone knows their responsibilities as well as how to relate to one another.

c. **Contents should include:**

1. Letter of welcome.
2. Your churches statement of faith.
3. The vision and philosophy of your nursery ministry.
4. Goals of your nursery ministry.
5. Requirements/expectations of your nursery volunteer staff.



6. Structure and organization of your nursery ministry within the churches organization.
7. Policies and procedures should include the following: security system (tags) during check in/out, bathroom policies, medical procedures, emergencies (fire and earthquake, child abuse, etc.), record keeping and forms, locating parents, snacks, crying, supply areas and inventory, infection control policy and procedures.
8. Job description and responsibilities.
9. Age-level characteristics (nursery department).
10. Nursery forms, tags, brochures.
11. Resource room - all resources available to equip staff.
12. Volunteer application: each volunteer should have a completed application on file in children's ministry office before they are approved to volunteer in a classroom.
13. Policy for staffing and scheduling.

**\* Summary:**

1. Organization will benefit your entire ministry because the following basic and important needs will have been met:
  - a. You will know the direction and purpose of your nursery ministry.
  - b. You will know the basic chain of command.
  - c. Those involved will know what policy and procedures are.
  - d. Your staff will receive training which will equip them to successfully teach the age level they have been recruited to teach.
  - e. You will know your educational goals (curriculum) and how to use it.
  - f. Your parents and staff will have opportunities to share frustrations, solve problems and plan (training meetings).
  - g. Order and affirmation bring **unity** - people involved in your ministry will feel that someone cares about them personally through support of your children, their parents and your volunteer staff.

## VII. SUPPORT

- \* Cultivate the attitude of a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Grow in the role of serving your volunteer staff.
  - Help all your volunteers experience success and appreciation.
  - Be sensitive to the needs of your volunteers.
  
- \* Provide \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- \* Practice \_\_\_\_\_ communication.
  - Communicate information to your staff.
  - Receive feedback from your staff.
  - Keep in personal touch with individuals.
  
- \* Express \_\_\_\_\_ generously.
  - Find ways to affirm volunteers \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Get to know volunteers more intimately.
  - Provide activities to events in appreciation for service.
  
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ regularly for your volunteers.
  - Cover your nursery ministry in prayer.
  - Support specific prayer needs of volunteers.
  - Develop prayer support among volunteers.
  
- \* In closing - I would like to support you in any way I can.
  - You have my phone number - please call (909 - 585-5980)
  - If any of you have been feeling discouraged
    - Want to remind you that God is honoring all your unseen and seemingly unappreciated labor!
    - You are doing a wonderful job and making an eternal difference.
    - Your time is one of the best investments you'll ever make.