

## Opening Thoughts

- ❖ How do you think about recruiting?
- ❖ How do we go from dread to delight?

I have received much help from a well-known Christian writer and broadcaster on the topic of recruiting for Children's Ministry. He helps us by saying, "If you are given the task of recruiting Sunday-school teachers, you must not pray earnestly and ask God to take control of the situation; you must grab guilt by the horns and wrack people's lives with it. Say things like 'I'd like you to consider teaching our third graders this year—that is, unless you don't think children are important,' or, 'I saw you going to a ball-game the other night. It's a shame you couldn't spend half that time to prepare a lesson for the kids in our sixth grade class.'"

And what if others don't respond to your efforts? This writer has more help for us.

"If others do not respond to your call on their lives, make them feel guilty. Bring up their past wrongs, shame them and urge them to do what you want in order to make God like them again. If they still refuse, knit your brow, fold your arms and sternly say, 'I'll be praying that God will change your heart.'"

Yes, the writer says, "Guilt is the best motivator for the ineffective Christian. Use it today to your best advantage" (Habit #75 the book *The 77 Habits of Highly Ineffective Christians* by Christian writer and broadcaster, Chris Fabry).

I have received much help from the Christian writer above on exactly how **NOT** to go about recruiting for children's ministry. So how should we go about it?

## Getting God's People Involved in the Ministry

### 1. Be a Spiritual Leader

- a) Lead with the Word of God and prayer—spiritual means Bible and Holy Spirit.
- b) Model with Integrity:
  - i. Be who you are—can't really be something you're not.
  - ii. Be what you expect of them; Be a servant of the servants.
- c) Shepherd with humility. **1 Peter 5:5b-6**
- d) Be God-centered; people-sensitive.
- e) Be a servant of servants—"How May I Help You?"
- f) Care for people more than the volunteer roster:
  - i. Be in the room as much as possible.
  - ii. Roam room to room; stay in rooms the whole hour.
- g) Let people see you—"shepherd by walking around."
- h) Read good books the buoy your spirit in God (books by dead and deep guys and gals).
- i) Observe Christ-exalting ministries.
- j) Pray for people weekly.
- k) Feed your own soul through the Word of God and Prayer—Feed, then lead!

- i. **Ephesians 4:11-16**—this is where I have been feeding leading up to this conference...
  - ii. We will get to the nitty gritty practical “how” stuff later.
  - iii. This text has implications that are very practical.
  - iv. Right off the bat: We want us to get this recruiting right in our hearts, so we turn to God’s Word...
  - v. Let’s follow the flow of thought in **Ephesians 4:11-16**...
2. **Recruit People to a Vision**—People are more likely to commit to something when the vision is clear—not just to a need.
- a) Pray that the vision be fulfilled before the end of the school year
  - b) Motivate with a vision.
  - c) Evaluate with your vision—avoid warm body mentality which says “You’re moving and walking—you fit!” **NO!**
3. **Set High Standards** (touches on warm body idea)
- a) Be choosers, not beggars—never beg or plead, push, prod, etc.
  - b) Encourage without begging—there are ways to ask and encourage without begging.
  - c) Start staffed:
    - i. Announce that children’s ministry will not begin without being fully staffed.
    - ii. Why? To value children and value volunteer servants.
    - iii. How?
      - ◆ Get buy-in.
      - ◆ Make it clear how it will work (describe efforts):
        - What does fully-staffed mean?
        - Specifics by campus, by program
    - iv. If you do this:
      - ◆ More likely to have success from the start; and
      - ◆ More likely to have people continue next year.
  - d) Set qualifications—sense of call, “Why do you want to serve children?” Willingness and desire to follow the vision.
4. **Be Clear About Expectations**
- a) Have job descriptions / expectations:
    - i. Long version—one full-blown
    - ii. Short version—to whet the appetite
  - b) Ask them to count the cost.
  - c) Ask them to take the job seriously:
    - i. Consider having a **ministry covenant**
    - ii. Our covenant
    - iii. Let them know that you take this role seriously and so should they.

- d) Call volunteers to be students of the Word.
- e) Call them to prayer.

## 5. **Have a Process**

Ask yourself: What will be my steps when I recruit? Whatever your process is...

- a) Recruit early
- b) Recruit year-round
- c) Recruit with a deadline:
  - i. Give yourself breathing room—*“If not [x %] recruited by [date] we will not start Sunday school.”* (clarify this)
  - ii. That way you start ready, not limping.
- d) Remember: Recruitment happens best when it is relational and revelatory—where there is natural relationship with others and where there is a Spirit-wrought revelation, through which God is calling people into ministry.

## 6. **Understand Motivation**

- a) Take the time:
  - i. Personal interview really helps with this (see interview form).
  - ii. My favorite time (1 hour each)—I personally do them.
- b) Listen carefully.
- c) Ask probing questions and follow-up questions.
- d) Look for growth in grace:
  - i. Look for people who are spiritually-minded.
  - ii. Evidences of growing in grace:
    - ◆ Fruit of the Holy Spirit
    - ◆ Gifts of the Holy Spirit
  - iii. Listen carefully to his or her testimony.
  - iv. Interview every person—go through the questions.

## 7. **Match Gifts with Needs**

- a) Make the match—benefits the ministry and the person—square pegs in round holes don’t work; give them the most joy by helping them work within their gifts.
- b) See the spark:
  - i. Find out what they like to do and what they are good at:
    - ◆ References might be helpful here.
    - ◆ Not everybody who tells you they are gifted in an area is truly gifted in that area.
- c) Close the gap:
  - i. What about the gap between the people’s gifts and the needs?
  - ii. Look at a person’s potential and help them develop.

- d) Take some risks:
  - i. Do this with those who are teachable.
  - ii. Has anyone ever encouraged you and then taken a risk with you? What did that do for you? How did you do? Did you rise to the occasion? Weren't you glad that person encouraged you, took a risk, challenged you, supported you, mentored you?
- e) Make some space:
  - i. Make sure you have more than one role in each classroom.
  - ii. Lay out our classroom structure with explanations (see job descriptions in the manual).
- f) Support them in gifting:
  - i. Come up with new ministry roles—think outside the box.
  - ii. Support them even if it means they serve in another area ministry.

## 8. **Recruit Men**

Why? Children need good male role models (many kids don't have them at home). About half our children are boys! Children need to see older men in leadership and excited about Jesus.

Must-haves for recruiting men:

- a) Good role models:
  - i. This models male leadership in the church.
  - ii. Men leading in children's ministry encourage other men to lead in children's ministry.
- b) Find Champions (read Dan's testimony if time):
  - i. Does not happen naturally—must be fostered.
  - ii. Champions (other than you).
- c) Elders/pastoral support—there will be varying levels:
  - i. Upper leadership supporting your cause from the pulpit
  - ii. In their overall ministry plans
  - iii. In their casual conversation
  - iv. In their prayers
  - v. Ask: Which one of you (elders/pastors) will serve as an example of male leadership in children's ministry?

Another note: Strength of couples in ministry together

## **Keeping God's People Involved in the Ministry**

### 9. **Help People Stay**

- a) Begin to develop or foster long-term mind-set in ministry:
  - i. Be an example.
  - ii. Encourage your examples (those who have served many years).
  - iii. Put forward examples.
- b) Develop investment mind-set
- c) Build strength of the vision "trickle down"—really important in a fast-growing church.

- d) Long-term investment mindset within the same ministry—talk about it:
- i. Team camaraderie and unity grow from year to year and out of this fellowship is fostered amongst the team members.
  - ii. Familiarity with the curriculum increases and thus provides stronger leadership in teaching and application of lessons.
  - iii. Persons involved get used to working with a particular age group, and the ability to communicate on an appropriate level grows and becomes more effective.
  - iv. A sense of confidence increases over the years as a person works with a particular age group.
  - v. It takes less time to prepare from year to year since much of the prep work is already there from previous years (adjustments and additions assumed). This potentially makes it more feasible to take on a full position.
  - vi. There is much to be said for considering your ministry as a long-term investment strategy. Usually there is more return over the long haul, right?
  - vii. There is a joy in seeing your investment “pay off” in the long run.
  - viii. There is joy in God as you experience the growth that comes in your personal life and in the preparedness and proficiency that increases over time in long-term ministry.
  - ix. It makes decision-making concerning where to serve less complicated, applying the idea of staying put until God moves me on to something else.
- e) Recruit inward and upward—**Present 4Ps or LAAF** (talking to the leaders who are in the classroom—working with other classroom volunteers):

### **4Ps or “LAAF”:** multiplying yourself within your team

1. **Perceive Potential:** Did I catch you...?
  - Living out an authentic walk with / love for Jesus
  - Showing care and concern for the children and team
  - Being well prepared and organized
  - Interacting well with parents
2. **Pose the Question:** Would you be open to...? w / help
  - Email with blanket offer: Any takers?
  - Prepare them for your question: I’ll be asking you to...
  - Ask: Would you like / be open to trying... with help?
  - Help: Discern why not / overcome their fears
3. **Piece-off your Position:** I’d like you to take a “piece” of what I do.
  - Lead the opening time with the children
  - Learn how to get the children checked-in
  - Greet the parents as they drop off their children
  - Make sure the small groups have the materials they need
4. **Promote their Growth:** (where you say) I think you...
  - Did a wonderful job at \_\_\_\_\_ (beg. and end)
  - How do you think it went? (general)
  - What is something you think you did well? (encourage)
  - What is something you think you could have done better? How?

## IN OTHER WORDS...

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- ❖ **Look for those who seem to engage their small groups well:**
  - Give specifics: Using the Word, children are engaged, manage well, enjoy themselves.
- ❖ **Ask others if they would be open to learn how to do the introduction (walk with them—some need more help than others—discern)**
- ❖ **Assign:** Call up the teacher and talk it over. Give a small group leader a piece of the teacher's presentation (e.g., intro, illustration, one teaching pt. – not scripture).
- ❖ **Follow-up:** Use questions above (and, what would your mentor teacher say?) mainly encourage

### 10. **Help People Go**

Hold people with an open hand, but it's NOT "Na Na Na Na, hey hey hey, good-bye!"

- a) Good reasons to let go—(of course, extending mercy and grace, and opportunities for teaching and growth)
  - i. Unique gifting in another area
  - ii. Not fulfilling expectations—go back to expectations
  - iii. Straying too far from the curriculum put in place
  - iv. Attitude issue
  - v. Safety issue
  - vi. Church-discipline issue
- b) Give examples (e.g., curriculum, no-show, baby, women's, men's ministry, Sr. High ministry, sin issue, marital problems, etc.)
- c) How is this helpful in 'keeping' people!? This has an affect on the people who continue in ministry.
- d) One way to keep God's people involved in ministry is to help those who should not be involved or who should be serving somewhere else to move on. It's a way of loving God's people and not using them.

### 11. **Give Them a Term of Service**

- a) Not "until you die"... but close
  - i. For us: nursery, year-round, with a month-to-month schedule
  - ii. Everyone else: the school year
- b) Helps them to see light
- c) Fosters more intense service
- d) Cleaner in-coming and out-going
- e) Encourages long-term service (which leads me to...).

## 12. **Give Them a Break**

For Us:

- a) No rest for the... Nursery: (different month-to-month schedule; different ways for people to find rest, many are not weekly workers)
- b) We take the summer; you'll have to decide what you can do—one month in the summer (families serve and volunteers off?)

Why Break?

- c) Retention goes up.
- d) Want people to be refreshed—rest and come back strong.
- e) We want opportunity to retool.
  - i. Room changes are easier
  - ii. Change in roles of some people

## 13. **Advocate for God's People**

- a) Mediate between them and church leadership.
- b) Be their champion.
- c) Foster their faith—we want our people to be faith-full to the end!
- d) Encourage godly passions in their lives.

## 14. **Resource God's People**

- a) Provide Training—formal and casual
- b) Provide resources:
  - i. Resource room
  - ii. Books connected to curriculum
  - iii. Equipment and materials needed for classrooms
- c) Meet known needs ASAP.
- d) Ask “What do you need?”

## 15. **Appreciate God's People**

Diversify—mix it up a little—use the means God has given you

- a) Use words in person or over the phone.
  - i. Do not patronize—no inordinate stroking.
  - ii. Show honor and respect as members of the body of Christ.
  - iii. Be specific.
  - iv. Be abundant.
- b) Use words in print
  - i. Birthday cards
  - ii. A personal note of thank you and recognition really makes a difference

- iii. Texting (if you must)
- c) Use events
  - i. Training and programs
  - ii. Coffees and desserts
  - iii. Dinners and banquets
  - iv. Appreciation dinner—give a mug—after several years we give them a mug rack!
  - v. Home visits
- d) Use your noggin
  - i. Know how they will feel appreciated—study them or ask them
  - ii. Don't fall into a rut
- e) Use creativity
  - i. A little gift for responding to your emails
  - ii. You fill in the blank!

## 16. **Pray for God's People**

Prayer: “What is both surprising and depressing is the sheer prayerlessness that characterizes so much of the Western church. It is surprising, because it is out of step with the Bible that portrays what Christian living should be; it is depressing, because it frequently coexists with abounding Christian activity that somehow seems hollow, frivolous, and superficial” (Carson, *Call to Spiritual Reformation*, page 9).

- a) The Prayers of Jesus (**John 17:20-21**)
- b) The prayers of Paul (**Phil. 1:9, 1 Thess. 3:12-13, and Eph. 3:14-21**)
- c) Before their ministry begins (when your looking at an empty roster)
- d) During their ministry
- e) After their ministry
- f) With fervency
- g) With persistence and consistency

Alexander Strauch gives a penetrating question. He says, “Ask yourself, If those I lead were dependent on my prayers, how would they do?”

## Closing Thoughts

- ❖ Let your vision of God drive your recruiting.
- ❖ Call people to the vision of our Glorious God.
- ❖ Call them to impart a vision of our Glorious God to the next generation.
- ❖ With God's help—look at the heart—pray that God would help you to see it. (**1 Sam 16:7**)
- ❖ Remember that it is a Spiritual transaction—a covenant relationship.
- ❖ Pray for what you need—God will provide what you need.
- ❖ Rest in God's provision—God gives the vision; God gives the provision.