

CHURCH COMMUNITY BUILDER

Leader of Children's Ministry: Your Orientation Guide

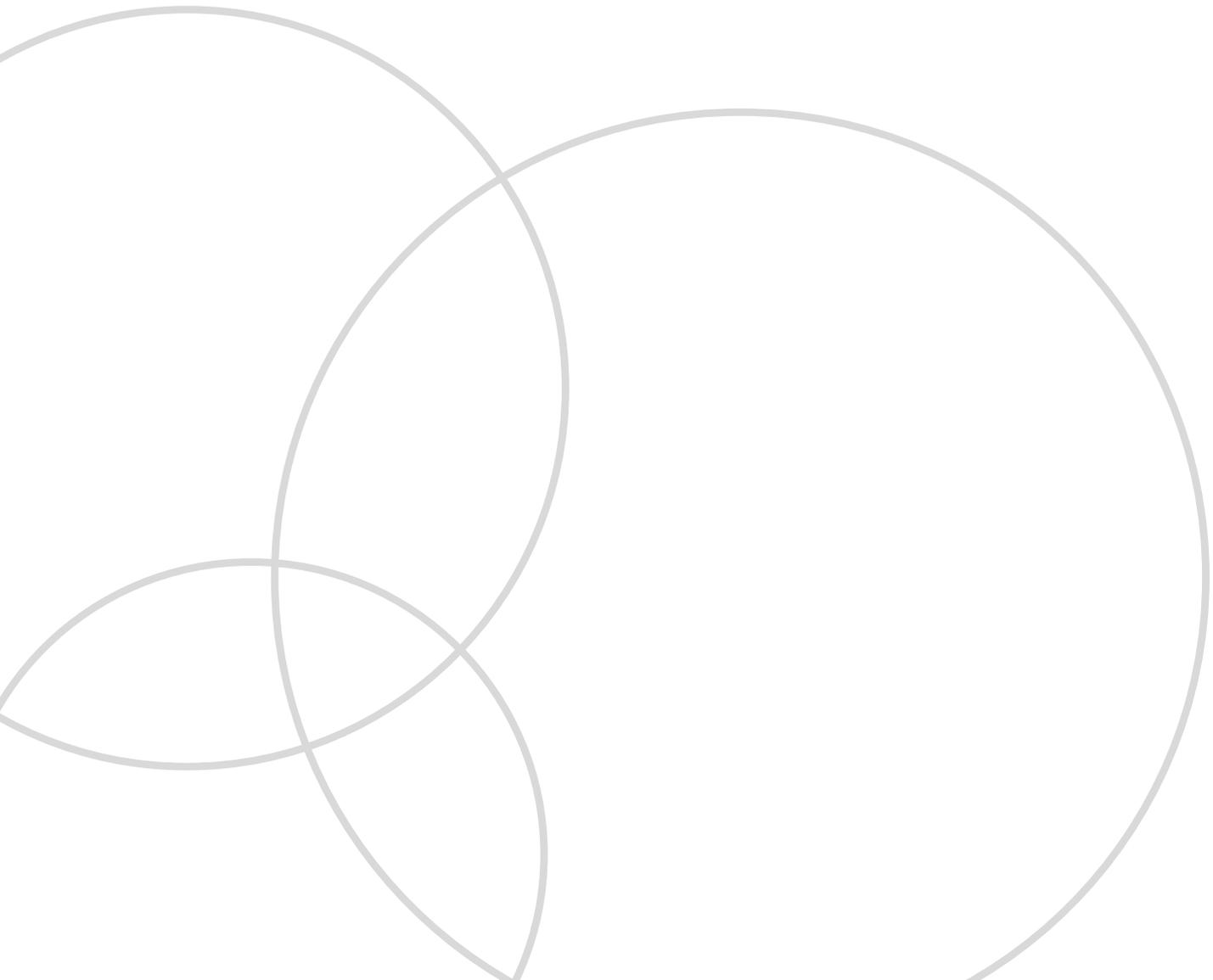


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I. Welcome!

Welcome to the Church Community Builder family! To assist you with the onboarding process, we're providing you with two key documents. First, this document provides a broad overview to help you become oriented with Church Community Builder software and services as the leader of children's ministry. Second, we're providing a Software Setup Guide specially designed to help leaders of children's ministry configure and use the software, in collaboration and coordination with your church's Master Administrator.

As the leader of children's ministry, you are in a key leadership role, and we understand your responsibility not only to be led, but also to lead well. We're here to help you do exactly that! At Church Community Builder, we care about church leaders and want to support the vital work you do. While we are known for our web-based software, helping you do ministry is what fires us up! We are committed to offering objective advice to aid you in your quest of how you do church better. We will work hard to help you and your church leaders discover what is working, what is not, and how technology can be leveraged to make more disciples. Because you've partnered with us, we are committed to walking alongside you to:

- Challenge the status quo to revisit and revitalize strategies, processes, and procedures
- Help you simplify and streamline those processes and procedures
- Assist in combining our software with those processes to enhance your ministry

Effective process will, in large part, be driven by the DNA of your church. To help you, we created a comprehensive support model consisting of 1) an onboarding process for new church partners, 2) online resources available 24/7, and 3) a dynamic support team with Basic and Premier Support. Our experience with churches of all sizes and denominations has identified a number of best practices to enhance your operations and amplify the success of your transition to new church management software. We've also established deep and trusted relationships with a number of strategic partners to help you navigate opportunities and challenges that will increase your effectiveness. Furthermore, we collaborate with Preferred Service Providers who provide a tool or service which complements or integrates with our software to increase the impact of your church. Finally, Church Community Builder provides additional resources, such as Tribes, Coaching, Training, and content to round out our tools and services.

II. Document Themes

Throughout the document, there are two themes to be aware of:

Tasks

You will see these checkmarks (✓) throughout the implementation guide. They denote a task. These may be appropriate next steps or links to Help Desk articles providing you more information regarding the topic at hand.

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are easily identified by black italicized text. For example, click on the following hyperlink to take you to the Church Community Builder's online *Help Desk*, available 24/7.

III. Our Support Model

At Church Community Builder, you'll find a comprehensive suite of resources carefully designed to help you not only effectively implement the financial tools in the software, but also become more effective in your leadership role as the leader of children's ministry. In fact, our passion is 'Guiding Church Leaders to a Better How' in order to assist leaders, such as yourself, in living out the calling God has placed on their lives.

a. Onboarding

We know you want to begin using the software and its products to support the work you do every day, so let's get you started. Our onboarding process is relational, functional, and accessible. It's relational because our Onboarding Team is your single point of contact throughout the entire process, and if you have purchased any additional services, such as Data Migration or Implementation Coaching, we will connect you with the appropriate teams. It's functional because we'll assist you in getting up to speed quickly through a number of resources. It's accessible because of our dynamic support model.

b. Online Resources

Church Community Builder is a web-based software, so it only makes sense to offer an online Help Desk available 24/7. Trying to figure out how to create or communicate with a group? Want to use reports for giving to the church, volunteers serving in various capacities and ministries, or attendance at church services, small groups, or special events? Our Help Desk is well organized and easy to use, with over 300 articles and videos on almost any topic you can think up. To access the Help Desk, all logged-in users can click 'Help' under the settings gear in the software. In addition, individuals may access the Help Desk without being logged in by visiting support.churchcommunitybuilder.com.

Videos and articles are arranged in the Help Desk by topic. You can also search by keywords to find any of these resources. To make sure you know exactly what's going on, we even have an article on how to use the Help Desk.

- ✓ Read *Using the Help Desk*

c. Our Support Team

Our Support Team is made up of people who have lived and worked in the local church. We understand your world and are inspired to make it better. Most importantly, our Support Team has dedicated Guides specifically focused on assisting leaders of children's ministry with unique issues that extend well beyond 'how do I do this in the software'. Our Guides are prepared to assist you with updating existing processes and defining new ones to maximize your impact as the leader of children's ministry.

Basic Support

Our goal is to give you the best support possible. But what happens if the Help Desk doesn't answer your question or you need tailored support to help you become more effective as the leader of children's ministry? You can submit an email support ticket and we'll help answer your questions through our email support system. One of our Guides will get back to you within one business day, and many times they're even faster. Basic Support is available to the Master Admin and one other designated Support Contact; perhaps that will be you. If not, you should direct your questions to the Master Admin or a designated Support Contact who can forward the question to our Support Team if necessary.

✓ Read *Support and Using the Help Desk*

Premier Support

Church leaders desiring quicker response times can access our Support Team through an upgraded level of support called Premier Support. With Premier Support, you'll receive an initial response through our normal email support system within one business hour. In addition, Premier Support expands your Support Contacts from two to three while providing the ability to contact one of our Guides through a phone call or online chat during regular business hours.

No matter what support option you have selected, Basic or Premier, our Guides are prepared to assist you with more than implementing the software, defining new processes, and optimizing existing ones to maximize your impact as the leader of children's ministry. We can help identify best practices to more effectively support you, your church leadership, and your church's members and guests.

IV. Best Practices

Church Community Builder has identified a number of best practices to amplify your success as the leader of children's ministry. Of course, best practices will be tempered by your church's DNA, culture, and size.

a. Ministry Philosophy for Children and Volunteers

Define the philosophy of your children's ministry in order to help outline your core values. In turn, these will help guide which projects and ministries you choose to take on. Consider the following questions as you begin to shape your children's ministry philosophy:

- Will you provide a Children's Ministry or Family Ministry concept?
- Will you provide parent trainings, and if so, how often? What content would build on your philosophy?
- Will you provide events to help build family ministry, and if so, will they be quarterly or annual events?
- What activities will you incorporate to build on your philosophy?
- Is there a church-wide philosophy of ministry that each individual ministry needs to adhere to?

b. Communication

Communicate clearly and often to children, parents, and volunteers. Oftentimes children do not convey messages to their parents. Additionally, your teams are usually volunteers, whom you may not see until their next scheduled service time. Maintaining accurate contact information (mobile numbers and carriers, emails, and addresses) will help you communicate effectively.

Here are a few suggestions on whom you might communicate with regularly:

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Children
- Parents
- Local ministries/outreach partners

c. Policies and Procedures

The purpose of your policies and procedures is to create a safe environment for the children as well as your leaders.

1. Mission statement

Your mission statement should be short yet describe the heart of what you believe about children's ministry. An example might be, "To partner with parents in training up children to glorify and enjoy God in such a way that people who are far from God are drawn to Him." Have your mission statement visible as a constant reminder of the purpose for ministry so your leaders, volunteers, and parents can be on board. Share what you and your team are committed to in children's ministry.

2. Vision statement

Express your vision for the future of children's ministry. When creating your vision statement, remove any restraints you may currently have today, such as a lack of volunteers or finances. If money, time, and the current number of volunteers were unlimited, what would your children's ministry look like?

3. Handbooks

Create handbooks for communicating important information to parents and volunteers. Your parent handbook may be in a brochure format, containing basic information about your children's ministry like your philosophy of ministry, mission statement, and/or vision statement. You should also include your wellness policy as well as your check-in/out policy. Consider the following additional ideas for your volunteer handbook:

- **Requirements for becoming and remaining a children's staff member:** These requirements should include having a personal relationship with Christ, being in agreement with the church's statement of faith, knowing how to honor and treat children, and meeting training/meeting requirements. Additionally, explain clearly how to develop and exhibit Christ-like behavior, how God values children as gifts, and anything else vital to your ministry.
- **Positions and duties of children and student volunteer staff:** Provide a description for every position within your children's ministry, such as Teacher, Assistant, Greeter, Small Group Leader, etc. You may have specific instructions for youth volunteers who work with children, such as restrictions with holding children or allowing their friends into the classroom, etc.

- **Background checks, interviews, reference checks, and name tags:** Explain the importance of this process and why background checks are run every two years (or however often you run them). Communicate that an interview is required for each volunteer, in addition to references (when possible, include one pastoral reference). Wearing name tags are important to show parents that your volunteer staff has been approved to work with children and students.
- **Dress code:** Provide examples of good clothing choices and bad clothing choices. When discussing proper footwear for areas such as your nursery, explain why it is important to wear socks or surgical booties over their shoes when working in the birth–crawling rooms.
- **Schedule guidelines:** Explain when to arrive and leave, and what is expected before and after children arrive. Explain the importance of being on time and serving on the scheduled day. Include instructions on what to do if volunteers are not able to serve due to illness or other unforeseen issues. If you require they phone or email you, provide your numbers and address.
- **Wellness policy and hand-washing policy for children and staff members:** To ensure the health of all children and volunteer staff, ask that children or volunteers stay home when they are sick. See this chart called *Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings*, which provides recommended periods of time to be kept away from school or nursery.
- **Accident/incident and emergency information:** Provide clear instructions of what to do in the case of an accident or emergency, including completing an Incident Report and handling upset parents. You may want staff or pastors to speak with parents rather than volunteers. Incident Reports should include the following:
 - Child's name
 - Date and time of accident/incident
 - Nature of injury
 - Location of injury
 - What the child was doing
 - How accident occurred — give details
 - Response and first aid given
 - Name of all volunteers present and who performed first aid
 - How and when the parent was contacted

- **Check-in/out process and welcoming new families:** Briefly explain why you use check-in/out and some key things to remember in order to make families feel welcome and safe. If you are using an electronic check-in solution, include instructions on how to use it with any visuals and password if needed.
- **Crying/hurt child:** Explain your paging system, including when and why to call a parent. Explain how to calm an upset or hurt child and the steps to take. You may want to provide a time limit of how long a child can cry before contacting a parent.
- **Food policy and food allergies:** Let volunteer staff know if food or drinks are allowed in class and if so, explain any specifics such as lids on drink cups. Remind them to check all ingredients listed on snacks and drinks before bringing them into class or giving to any children with allergies.
- **Diaper-changing policy:** Put step-by-step instructions for changing diapers in the handbook and up in your nursery. Example instructions might be:
 - Wash hands, then put gloves on.
 - Place wax paper sheet on the diaper changer. (You will need one wax paper liner and one pair of gloves for each child.)
 - Never leave a child unattended on the table at any time.
 - Have a toy ready for the child to hold. If the child is too active for one person, have someone available to engage the child.
 - Smile and speak the scriptures posted on the wall over the child.
 - Wipe the child with baby wipes.
 - Wrap each soiled diaper in the wax paper and remove gloves after each changing.
 - You may want to place an “I’ve been changed” sticker on the diaper so parents are aware. (These can be purchased online at www.churchnursery.com.)
 - Wipe hands and diaper changing table with a baby wipe and repeat all steps before changing the next child.
- **Restroom policy:** Provide specifics, such as no adults allowed alone in the restroom with children, door should be open at all times, and let the child do as much as they can by themselves and assist only when necessary. You may have a female-only rule.

- **Special needs:** 'Special needs' is an umbrella underneath which a staggering array of diagnoses can be wedged. Children with special needs may have mild learning disabilities or profound cognitive impairment; food allergies or terminal illness; developmental delays that are quickly overcome or long entrenched; occasional panic attacks or serious psychiatric problems. The designation is useful for getting needed services, setting appropriate goals, and gaining understanding for a child and stressed family. List the names and contact information of those who have experience and training with special needs children. Provide a list of common diagnoses, with instructions on how to interact with such children. For example, a child with autism may not like to be touched and may need assistance with interacting with other children appropriately. See the following link for the *Center for the Improvement of Child Caring*, which lists types of childhood disabilities and other special needs. You may want to provide this document to your volunteers so they can better understand a child's needs.
- **Discipline policy:** Provide your discipline policy, such as using redirection and the importance of consistency. Whatever your policy is, communicate it clearly and ask all volunteers and staff follow your policy consistently. You may also want to include when a parent should be contacted.
- **Behavioral issues:** Provide examples of when to call staff or the parent. Possible behavioral issues could include biting, fighting, hitting, kicking, spitting, hair-pulling, verbal abuse, tantrums, and repeated disobedience that does not improve with verbal instruction.
- **Pick-up time:** Check every parent's security tag to make sure it matches the security number on their child's tag. If you use Room Roster Reports, have parent initial their child's box. If you use Check-Out, use the barcode scanner and select the person who has picked up the child. Have activities for children to be engaged in during pick-up time, especially for younger children.

d. Volunteers

1. Positions and schedules

Create serving positions with clear descriptions for each, including spiritual gifts, passions, abilities, etc. Communicate important requirements such as if they need to be a member of your church, attend a membership class before serving, have attended your church for a certain period of time, etc. See the following five examples of what you may want to include in your Positions:

- Summary of job responsibilities including spiritual gifts, passions and abilities

- Clear reporting structure
- Specific responsibilities and tasks to be accomplished
- List of skills and talents needed
- Serving schedule and time commitment (e.g., serve once a month and commit to a year, etc.)

Once volunteers have let you know when they are available to serve, provide a way for them to adjust which weeks, service times, and positions they would like to serve in.

When using the Church Community Builder software, you can create Positions and Schedules and offer a way for each volunteer to adjust their availability to serve. The Block Out feature is also available for volunteers to mark days they are unavailable to serve. The My Fit feature allows volunteers to search and be notified for Positions which may best fit their spiritual gifts.

2. Recruiting, developing, and keeping volunteers

As leaders, we are instructed to know those who labor among us. One way to do this is by building relationships with each volunteer the Lord entrusts to you. Look around your church to see who you want to spend time with and who you would like to develop as leaders. Investing in people takes time, patience, and some sacrifice. Look for people who show leadership and passion. Do not place people on your teams who are negative, or whom others do not care to be around. Never say that you *need* volunteers; as a leader of children's ministry, you want people who are looking for an opportunity to use their gifts. Find out each volunteer's passions, abilities, spiritual gifts, and personality styles. Get to know them as individuals and take interest in their family.

Over the past decade many churches have begun paying their volunteers. This seems to be prevalent when children's ministry leaders do not see the value in building relationships with people. Children are precious to the Lord, and so are those who help mold the lives of children. The best way to create an effective and faithful team is by creating an environment where volunteers know they are honored and cared for. This helps create a culture where volunteers understand what a privilege it is to serve in children's ministry.

An interview with a volunteer is the beginning of not only the volunteer process, but hopefully a life-long friendship and mentorship. It is vital to build relationships through personal time together and ongoing mentoring.

Create a mentor program where you can place new volunteers with those who are serving effectively in your ministry. Connect with volunteers on a regular basis to see how they are doing and if the position is a great fit for them. Always allow feedback so volunteers feel valued and heard.

Provide clear descriptions for each position in children's ministry and make them available so others can see what the best position for them would be and where they can serve. Have a quarterly or yearly recruiting event in your adult service where specific ministries can be highlighted and opportunities to serve provided. Make it fun! Decorate your sanctuary and entryway with balloons, banners, pictures of children, testimonies, and live feed of volunteers sharing great experiences and parents sharing the impact your team has made on their family.

3. Volunteer application process

Create a volunteer application process each volunteer must go through before their orientation. Ministries such as children's, students, and security should have a stricter process, such as background and reference checks. Consider these steps for your volunteer application process:

- a. Application with all pertinent information, including legal name, social security number, driver's license number, previous addresses, and questions which identify any child abuse or felonies charges/instances
- b. Background checks are a must, even if you have known the volunteers for years
- c. Interview
- d. References should be called whenever possible, rather than received in written form; many times a tone or even a pause after you ask a question about a potential volunteer can raise a red flag
- e. Orientation
- f. Photo for ID: Take a picture of each volunteer and place it in their volunteer file as well as on their name badge. Let parents know in your handbook that each volunteer who has a name tag with a photo has gone through your application process and has been approved to work with children.
- g. Input volunteer information into their profile
- h. Connect volunteer with a mentor for at least 30 days
- i. Schedule

- j. Place in volunteer appreciation process
- k. 30-day followup
- l. Ongoing training process

When using Church Community Builder software, you can create a a volunteer application using a Form, and have it automated to a Process Queue. Each application step can be set up as a Queue. Each Queue can be automated into the next to keep track of every step. Additionally, completion of a step can automatically add volunteers into groups and positions.

4. Defined roles

Define leadership and volunteer roles to provide a clear explanation of what is expected for specific positions. Some positions to consider for children’s ministry are:

- Department Leaders
- Group and Assistant Group Leaders
- Teachers and Assistant Teachers
- Room Leads
- Greeters
- Check-In/Guest Services
- Worship Team Leader and Team
- Creative Arts — Drama/Puppets, etc.
- Security
- Hall Monitors

5. Volunteer appreciation

Determine how often you want to connect in some personal way with each volunteer. You might send a personal email or card, schedule one-on-one time, etc. Connect with volunteers beyond just when you have meetings.

Highlight a new volunteer on their birthday in the church communication. Email your volunteer teams when someone new joins your team, including their picture and other information about them. Always include the reasons why you think they will be a valuable addition to the team.

If using Church Community Builder software, you can run a Birthday Report which will provide the volunteer's name, birth date, age, and contact information.

6. Training

In addition to partnering with parents to train children, it is vital that proper training is provided to all volunteers and staff. Begin with an orientation that explains the history of your church, staff highlights, and any other important information they will need. This is a great time to pass out volunteer handbooks and take photos for their volunteer badges.

After a volunteer has gone through their orientation, you may want to pair them with a mentor in the same position they will be serving. If you haven't created a mentor program, we highly recommend it. This allows those who are doing a great job serving to be given a position of leadership and help train new volunteers. Mentoring programs can last thirty, sixty, or ninety days depending on the level of responsibility.

Decide how often you would like to have volunteer meetings/trainings. You may consider quarterly trainings, focusing on different topics while also building in time to have fun. This is a great time to celebrate birthdays, recognize volunteers for their anniversary of serving, praise jobs done with excellence, etc. If you have a way for others to provide a written 'Job Well Done' regarding volunteers, you can read those and give gift cards, flowers, etc. Volunteers are the backbone of ministry, so always provide some type of thank you, such as lunch, snacks, gifts, etc. at your volunteer meetings/trainings.

When using Church Community Builder, you may consider creating a Process for each of your mentors with Queues as the steps you would like them to take. They can then add new volunteers to their process. You can also use the software to upload your volunteer handbook into a group for immediate access, or create an Event within your volunteer groups to invite volunteers to your meetings/trainings, allowing them to RSVP.

e. Safety

Safety should be one of the top priorities in every children's ministry. While there is no 100% guarantee all children can be kept safe every single moment, you can help prevent injuries or abuse by implementing and following guidelines. Consider the following suggestions for safety guidelines:

- Room setup and environment should be safe and age appropriate. The *ECERS* (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) is a great book to use for classroom setup and equipment. While the information in the book is written for Early Education Centers, the classroom section has great safety and setup information.
- First Aid is a must in every church. If possible, purchase a small first aid kit for every classroom in your church. If your budget does not allow this, have at least one available where staff and volunteers can access it quickly. Check the kits regularly to make sure they are properly stocked with the necessary items.
- Allergy reports should be available in each classroom to make sure children are not given food or items that would cause a reaction. When purchasing snacks, check the labels for ingredients which could harm a child. The report should list the child's name, parent's name, child's age, contact number, allergy name, and any special instructions. When using the Church Community Builder software, you can run an Allergy Report to include this information. Check-In Room Roster Reports will also provide this information.
- Security teams are important to have in your children's area. Make sure to run a background check and obtain references for each person who will serve on this team. Ask your church who has experience serving in the police, medicine, first response, security, or military. Many times retired police officers and doctors enjoy serving in this way.

f. Groups: Communicating with Children and Parents

Creating groups in your software allows you to communicate efficiently, upload files, send text messages, and create events, positions, and schedules.

When setting up your Children's Groups, determine age ranges that are best for their environment. You can create groups for children based on Early Education (birth through age 4 or 5) and Elementary, by individual age or grade, or by placing all children in one group. Determine if you want volunteers in their own group or in the groups with the children.

When considering how to set up your groups, here are some things to consider:

- Do you want to communicate the same information to all ages?
- Will you be uploading files for specific age groups or parents?
- Will you be using a scheduling feature for your volunteers?
- Do you want an adult-to-child ratio or room limit for your groups?
- Do you want children's volunteers in the same groups with children or in their own groups?

g. Check-In

Having a check-in system provides efficiency when checking children in to their classes. Most churches are using some type of computer system with parent security tags to help check children into services and events.

1. Visitors/guests

When new visitors check in, consider the following:

- Will they complete a connection card?
- Will you provide guest bags for children? If so, what items will be included?
- Will you provide a guest brochure? If so, what information will you include?
- Do you have a guest/visitor process for assimilating new children?
- How will you notify parents if they have a child who was upset but is now doing well in their class?

When using the Church Community Builder software, you can create ministry- and service time-specific saved setups for every service and ministry within your church. We also provide additional features such as text message paging, pager usage, child and adult security labels, barcode check-in, and four different reports including Check-In Status Report, Room Roster Report, Attendance Summary, and Check-Out Report.

2. Following up with new families

Create a followup process so you can connect with new families on a consistent basis. This could be a phone call, email, mail, or visit to each family that comes.

Relieve the apprehension of visiting parents by sending a text message to let them know their child is doing great and having fun (give an example), especially if their child was crying when they were dropped off.

3. Classroom ministry time

Children are bombarded with the influences of the world every day. While some churches have video games and other activities available to ‘wow’ children, pray about the value of everything you do with children. Give serious consideration to how your teams can impact children in a big way with the small amount of time you have with them each week. Each time children are entrusted to you, consider allotting time for the following:

- Worship
- Lesson — open the Bible so children can see you are teaching from God’s word
- Prayer
- Art/creative ministry/hands-on activities
- Small groups (when possible)

4. Reports

Attendance reports: These reports are a great way to track how many children are attending your services, how many new families are attending, and how many children have not attended over a certain period of time, so you can follow up with them. Reports can be the best indicator of growth within children’s ministry so you know when you will need more staff, volunteers, or classrooms, or when to increase your budget.

When using Church Community Builder software, you can run quick and easy Attendance Reports by group name, group type, attendance grouping, or department.

Room roster reports: These reports are printed after children check in to their classes and can be used for parents to check their children out. In case of an emergency, especially when an evacuation is needed, this can be a great tool to identify the number and names of children currently in your care. Print the Room Rosters, place them on clip boards, and hang inside each classroom by the door for easy accessibility.

Allergy reports: These reports should be run on a regular basis, preferably weekly, to prevent any issues with children.

Birthday reports: These reports provide the child's contact information, birthdate, and age, and are valuable because sending children birthday cards is a great way to recognize them.

h. Promoting Children's Ministry

There are many ways to promote children's ministry. Here are a few suggestions:

- Emails sent to all church members or just parents
- Video captured moments in children's ministry with all ages
- Community outreach
- Family fun nights
- Children's musical/theatre productions
- Highlighting children for accomplishments in school or in the community
- Having children sing and play instruments on the adult worship teams
- Fundraisers for missions projects
- Special events such as an all-church harvest party or Mother's Day tea

i. Birthdays

Children LOVE to receive mail, and parents love that you remembered their child's birthday. Celebrating birthdays makes children feel special! Print birthday lists a week before the start of each month. You can create a birthday postcard that is bright and fun with your children's ministry logo; postcards are fun and a little cheaper to mail than cards. By running your birthday report the month prior, you can print mailing labels, place them on the postcards, then write the birthdate and age where the stamp will go. Throughout the month you can address a quick birthday wish including their age to each child a few days before their birthday then place a postcard stamp over the date and age and drop it off at a mailbox.

If you don't want to create postcards, you can make or purchase birthday cards at discounted prices when purchasing in bulk or online.

j. Outreach and Missions

Many children are not given opportunities to go on overseas missions trips, which is understandable considering their age. However, you can provide missions opportunities through family missions trips and/or training children on Sunday mornings. Consider inviting a missionary to kid's church to share about their experiences overseas. You may want to consider designating the fifth Sunday of the month for your Missions Sunday. By teaching children about missions, you are not only teaching the Great Commission, but also helping children develop empathy and compassion for those less fortunate — especially if teaching about the countries in the 10/40 window (which is the region of the world with the greatest human suffering combined with the least exposure to Christianity).

You can transform kid's church by having a flag of that country, displaying pictures of families from that culture, playing music, showing clothing, and buying food from that country. It is always best to provide hands-on experiences. You can prepare a dish from that country at home and bring it to kid's church; however, if at all possible, have the children make the dish during your time together. This provides a great opportunity to talk about the ingredients and how they are used.

Another way to prepare children for missions is to plan local outreaches in your city. As with any ministry, make sure to have parents complete release forms with information about their child including special needs, allergies, fears, etc. for the safety of the children and success of your outreach. Local missions can start by collecting coats, shoes, or school supplies for a school for underprivileged children. Another local mission could be a nursing home where children do arts and crafts with seniors, sing, read the Bible, or anything where else which allows them to visit with seniors. Prepare children in advance before going to local missions. For example, if going to a Nursing Home, explain that some people may be in wheelchairs, disabled, unable to speak well, etc. Teach them proper etiquette so they don't say things that may be hurtful to others or embarrassing.

If you have all elementary grades in your kid's church, you may want to give your older children an opportunity to take ownership. Ask them to talk with people from other countries and research a country they are really interested in learning about. You may even want them to share on missions Sunday.

Remember to pray before any outreach or missions trip. Prayer will soften the hearts of children and help them understand this is a ministry opportunity where God can use them to impact lives. Reading about how Paul encouraged Timothy that his age did not limit his ministry is a great lesson for children.

When using the Church Community Builder software, you can use Needs so children and parents can select which dates they are available and/or items they can bring for your outreaches. You might create a need for, say, donating baby items, such as diapers, formula, blankets, baby wipes, etc., and have children take the items to a pregnancy center in your area. If transportation is an issue, invite the director of the center to come and speak, and possibly bring young mothers with them to share their testimony. Also, you can create a Release of Liability document through Forms.

k. Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School can be a great outreach in your community. Before considering if it is right for your church, you may want to consider the following:

- Define the purpose
- How will you promote VBS?
- Are there enough volunteers to staff a VBS?
- What is your budget?
- Should you partner with other churches?
- How will you incorporate community involvement?
- Will you use a form and online registration for VBS?

When using the Church Community Builder software, you can create a Form that will automate children into specific events or groups along with other great features to help make your VBS successful.

l. Grade Promotion

Whether promoting children at the beginning or end of the school year, keeping your children's groups updated is valuable for communication, check-in, searches, and reporting. Group promotion can be used to move everyone from one group to another, to keep all children in one group and add them to another, or to

just move selected people from one group to another (when you have mixed grades where you want to move just the older kids up a grade).

When using the Church Community Builder software, you can run a group promotion by selecting Settings then Group Promotion.

m. Milestones/Rights of Passage

Milestones and/or rights of passage are a great way to celebrate a child's growth in the church. Consider these suggestions:

- Baby dedication
- 5th grade graduation into middle school
- 8th grade graduation into high school
- 13th, 16th, and 18th birthdays
- Salvation
- Baptism
- Serving
- Missions
- Student Years

When using the Church Community Builder software, you can create a Process Queue, Significant Event, or Customizable Field to capture these dates and run reports.

n. Staying Passionate About Ministry

Children's ministry is a church within a church. As a leader in that ministry, you wear multiple hats with a variety of ministries including hospitality, security, mentoring, room management and safety, teaching, pastoring children and families and volunteers, and many other responsibilities. Balancing ministry, family, and fun is key to staying passionate about your calling. If you find it difficult to take time away from ministry, find people who help keep you accountable.

Stay fresh through reading the Word and praying daily. There is a reason the Lord told the children of Israel to not store up manna but to eat what they needed daily. We don't want to be stale in our personal lives or ministry.

Read blogs regularly; when time and finances permit, attend workshops or conferences. Many cities have created monthly luncheons for leaders of children's ministry to come together for an hour or so once a month for fresh ideas, discussions, lunch, and fun. If you don't have one in your area, consider starting one.

Schedule vacations on your calendar — even if it's staying in town — to just have some rest and relaxation. Times of refreshing will keep you strong!

V. Strategic Ministry Partners

Our *Strategic Ministry Partners* represent deep and trusted relationships for us. They have huge hearts for ministry and have made a significant impact on churches we serve. Church Community Builder desires to be a resource to the churches we serve in a variety of ways. Because of our unique approach, we get to do this a lot! As we explore the processes that support your church, we often discover needs we do not address. We are not satisfied just telling you, “Figure it out and let us know how it goes.” We would much rather introduce you to a partner we trust and admire, who can help you navigate opportunities and challenges that will increase your effectiveness.

VI. Preferred Service Providers

Church Community Builder collaborates with other companies, our Preferred Service Providers, to help you do ministry even better. Each one of them provides a tool or service which complements or integrates with our software to increase the impact for your church. All of these *Preferred Service Providers* are approved, trusted partners in ministry with us, so you can count on a good experience and a high level of support and care.

VII. More Church Community Builder Resources

Church Community Builder believes that the church is called to equip people as they fulfill the mission of the Gospel. We are called to offer you a better *how*, and that is why we offer a variety of other services to support church leaders.

a. Tribes

Ministry is about transformation, but too many of us are locked into old patterns. Looking to the newest book or conference may provide helpful information, but we know that information alone is not enough. That is why we created Tribes. A tribe is a group of peers serving in similar ministry capacities at similar-sized churches, journeying together. These relationships help tribe members discover new and better ways to thrive in their role.

As a leader of children's ministry, you face unique challenges and opportunities. By connecting with others who can relate, you can explore, innovate, and implement new strategies to help you be more effective. Without a place to take your questions and people who can relate to the specifics of your role, ministry can feel isolating. It doesn't have to. The relationships you will build in your tribe will help you discover the answers to the questions you are asking and shape the impact you are making.

Interested?

✓ Read more about *Tribes*!

b. Implementation Coaching

Implementation Coaching starts you off on the right foot for using our software and improving your ministry processes for how you do church. The critical thinking required for effective change management can be overwhelming. The good news is our coaches will help you adjust your strategy, build leadership consensus, and create or refine your processes to support your overall vision. We understand the local church because many of us were previously, or are currently, in church leadership —and our coaches will guide you along your journey as we share the wisdom and experience of thousands of churches who have been through what you're going through now. Coaching streamlines the roll-out of Church Community Builder, helps you get the right people using the software, and increases long-term impact. Coaching gets you up to speed faster and with less stress!

Interested?

✓ Read more about *Coaching!*

c. Data Migration

Hit the ground running! Our Data Migration Team can help speed up the process of transitioning from another ChMS platform so you can start using the software to support your real ministry goals. Our one-time, cost-effective services are priced based on a tiered system with several migration options, including individual profiles, contributions, groups, pledges, pictures, events, attendance, and more. We'll take care of the data so you can take care of your people.

Interested?

✓ Read more about *Data Migration!*

d. Training

Virtual Training

We offer web-based sessions where a training specialist teaches your staff, key leaders, and volunteers the 'how-tos' of the software. Learn best practices for using the available features as your Trainer guides you through the concepts of each topic and provides your staff with quality question and answer time.

Interested?

✓ Read more about *Virtual Training!*

On-site Training

You set the schedule and let us come to you! We'll send a trainer to your location to work in a group setting or one-on-one with your staff and/or lay leadership. We'll work with you to determine the type of training and how much time you'll need, schedule a date, and prepare for the event. You can schedule two or three days of On-site Training, based on your unique needs.

Interested?

✓ Check out *On-site Training!*

If you have already purchased on-site or virtual training, our Training Team will contact you about 30 days after your purchase. To schedule or to reach our training team, click on Help in your Church Community Builder site and then Support on the top right corner of the Help Desk. We recommend scheduling your training during the first three months of purchase so we can help you implement your software.

e. Equipping Content

At Church Community Builder, our journey will always be about assisting you in multiplying your ministry by helping church leaders be more effective in their roles. We are so much more than a software company! We are committed to providing top-notch content that will inspire, encourage, and enhance your ministry. In addition to our content, we've built a library full of great content from thought leaders like Chris Mavity, Alex Absolom, Aaron Fortner, and Brad Leeper. We also want to hear and learn from you. Connect with us on social media to share your insights and best practices.

Interested?

- ✓ See our *Blog!*
- ✓ Connect with us on *Facebook!*
- ✓ Follow us on *Twitter!*

f. Church Leader Advancement

We know that implementing a church management software can be overwhelming, so we strive to make it as easy as possible. If you aren't sure you're getting the most from your partnership with Church Community Builder, or if you're feeling stalled, we want to help. Our Church Leader Advancement Team can point you in the right direction. That direction might be Training, Coaching, Tribes, Support Options, a Preferred Service Provider, upgrading or downgrading your software, free resources — or something else entirely. We would love to schedule a call to see how we can serve you better.

Interested?

- ✓ Schedule a video call with *Church Leader Advancement!*