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Regards,

Ken and Julie Moser

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Sunday School Program for children

It is important that the children's program and the youth ministry in your church have some overlap in content so that the transition between these groups is smooth.

There are many ideas and activities in the Effective Youth Ministry youth group programs that are adaptable for ministry to younger children. This program is an example of how you can adapt these ideas for your children's ministry.

All ideas are from *Creative Christian Ideas for youth groups, Programs 2 Go* and free resources at www.effectiveyouthministry.com

By Julie Moser

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

1. Welcome/pray. The welcome brings us together as a group and prayer sends the signal that we are a Christian group and we are here for Christian fellowship. The activity should be a simple, non-threatening activity designed to get to know each other as a large group. NOTE: it is also good to have the opportunity to interact and respond.

-Ask everyone to stand in a circle.

-Have the group members show what kind of week they have had by their height position (Standing on tip toes and reaching high is the best week ever; getting as low to the ground as possible is the worst week ever). Ask some volunteers to share reasons for their answer.

-Tell the group that no matter what kind of week they have had, God is in control of all things and today we are going to get to know him better in Sunday School.

-Say a short prayer to kick off Sunday school. (As time goes by and the kids become more comfortable and familiar with this you can ask if a volunteer wants to kick off the time with a prayer)

2. Mixer: the golden rule for a mixer is that it must mix. In other words, at the end of the activity the young people should know each other better (know each other's names, know new things about others etc). A mixer assists young people to talk to each other (it is like a creative, extended and directed version of how we say hi to each other during a church service).

Here is a simple mixer that works well with all ages. Place four signs around the room. Each sign has a big letter for each point of the compass (N S E W). If you can, place them in the actual directions they refer to.

Under the letter 'N' write the word 'Never'.

Under the letter 'S' write 'Sometimes'.

Under 'E' write 'Everyday'.

Under 'W' write 'Whatever' (meaning "I don't really know or really care.")

Have everyone stand in the middle of the room. You read out a statement that can be answered by choosing one of the four categories and the kids simply walk to the appropriate corner. You then give them a 'get to know you' question that they answer with the person(s) next to them. Move on to the next statement followed by the next 'get to know you question'.

Please note:

- This should be run fairly quickly with a younger group. Don't give them a lot of time to answer the questions. (The older the group is, the longer you can give them.)

Suggested Statements and Questions for this mixer:

The 1st line is the statement that moves people to various corners. The 2nd is the question they answer with the person next to them.

Statement: I love corn on the cob...

Sharing question: What was your favorite part of the week so far?

Statement: I go skiing...

Sharing Question: What was the best thing you've had to eat this week?

Statement: I listen to the radio...

Sharing question: One thing I love about Sunday School is...

Statement: I go to the beach...

Sharing question: One thing I look forward to about this week is...

Statement: I clean my room...

Sharing question: One thing I've learned at Sunday School is...

3. Spotlight: this is an opportunity to get to know a someone a bit better. It also gives positive attention to young people. NOTE that questions should not be embarrassing, demeaning or unhelpful. Make sure the whole experience is positive and enjoyable for the person "in the spotlight".

[A fun way to introduce someone is to make a choice of whom you would like to spotlight then ask everyone to stand up. Slowly ask people to sit down using elimination statements. Some example of elimination statements are: sit down if you are wearing jeans, sit down if you have brown hair, sit down if you are the youngest in your family etc. NOTE: you must choose the person first and then choose questions that eliminate the rest of the group. Your questions should leave only your chosen person standing and so you then invite them to join you at the front.]

a. Ask the chosen person to stand on a chair next to you.

b. Start with the question "what is your full name are you named after anyone?"

c. Next, "age and school"

d. Ask two more questions: example, favorite animal, favorite activity in your spare time.

[e. Once the group is able to cope with this activity you could ask for questions from the floor.]

f. Finish with a prayer for them.

4. Memory Verse: designed to be a fun way to learn the Bible. Make sure the leaders learn it too! Use a Bible version that is easy to understand and uses natural, everyday language and expression. (For example, NIV)

Stand and Shout. Write the memory verse including reference on the whiteboard but write words using three different colors. Then divide the group into three sections (for example: Ages 5-8; Ages 9-12; Leaders)

Allocate a color to each age group. For example:

- Ages 5-8 (when it is their turn recite blue words)
- Ages 9-12 (when it is their turn recite red words)
- Leaders (when it is their turn recite green words)

Have the group sitting in chairs (or on the ground if you don't usually sit in chairs). To recite the memory verse each group stands and shouts their word/s when it is their color and quickly sits down for the next group to stand and shout their word/s etc. After the first round have a stopwatch and time them. Then do it again but ask them to do it faster than their last time. You could also have each group change colors and do it again. The goal is LOUD and FAST!

When you have repeated the verse a few times you could ask if any volunteer can close their eyes and say the memory verse.

For young people to learn a memory verse you will need to teach the same verse in a variety of ways over at least 3 weeks. It is also helpful to give the memory verse to the parents and for the whole family to learn it together.

5. Prayer: just as Jesus taught the disciples to pray we need to teach the young people to pray. Note that no young person should be put on the spot and asked to share or to pray – it must all be voluntary.

Divide the whiteboard into two sections. Write “thanks” on one side of the board and “Ask” on the other side. Collect prayer points for each category and then pray as a big group. Designate a leader to start and a leader to finish with time in between for kids to pray.

5. Bible study/teaching time: the Bible study will generally start with 1-2 easy icebreaker questions to give everyone a positive experience to speaking in the group. This is followed by the Bible teaching time. The key to the Bible study time is that our teaching comes from the Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17). For a wide age range, divide into age appropriate groups. A simple pattern could be:

- in a large group have a leader give a 1 minute introduction to the study.
- read the Bible passage as a large group.
- split into smaller age groups each with a leader or two. The study should be adjusted to be age appropriate for each group.