

Think Creatively to Maximize Your Children's Ministry Activities

How do you explain social distancing to children?

Are our youngsters ready to see everyone wearing a mask at church?

These may be some of the challenges you're discussing, and you may find you are not quite ready to bring the children's ministry and activities back to your facility. You're not alone.

Many churches are rethinking this area of ministry as they review their state and community's recommendations regarding safely resuming kid's activities while continuing to flatten the curve of coronavirus. This has prompted some creative approaches to safely discipling children and youth. The following ideas may help you as you plan to engage kids and their families during this time of COVID-19.

Engage Virtually

Choosing to delay in-person gathering for kids' ministry doesn't mean you must put your children's outreach activities on hold. There are many ways to engage both children and families with the gospel message. During this time, some churches are continuing to use online resources for their children's activities even though the adults are beginning to meet in person. Consider the following alternatives to keep your kids engaged:

- Record or livestream special family services. This helps engage children and youth with age-appropriate messaging.
- Host online small groups for children's ministry. This helps engage smaller groups of kids to maximize participation.
- Offer children's ministry lessons and videos. Some free resources include:
- [Life.Kids](#) from Life.Church
- [LifeWay Kids](#) at Home
- [Mariners Church Kids Online](#)
- [Saddleback Kids](#)

Remember to research the online platforms you'll be using for children's ministry. If you are doing anything live, you will want to ask about using passwords, private invitations or links, and privacy/security issues in order to protect your youth, and you will need parent permission.

Gathering Game Plan

Even though your kids ministry may not be ready to meet in person yet, you'll want to be ready to move forward. The following questions can help you develop a plan for your children's ministry resuming on-site later:

- How will you encourage the use of hand washing, hand sanitizer, or face masks?.
- How will handle check in and check out to maximize distancing?
- Will you host special children's services for families?
- Will you phase in your kids' ministry, starting with older children who are more capable of maintaining distance?
- Depending on your ministry's facility, is there additional space you can use to reduce the number of kids in a room?
- Could you alternate Sundays, having half the number of kids attend one Sunday and the other half the following Sunday?
- If you're providing a service for families, will you provide children's activities to keep them engaged during worship?
- Could you keep kids in service for worship, then dismiss them during the sermon to a larger room, like a fellowship hall, where they can watch an age-appropriate bible message?
- Could your children's activities be held outside where social distancing could be more easily maintained?
- Will you offer a room where parents can feed and change babies? Will you encourage parents to wipe down changing areas and chairs before and after every use?

Vacation Bible School

Summer is VBS season. However, this year may look much different than previous years. As your ministry considers its approach to VBS, the following ideas can help you plan:

- Recruit families who would be willing to host small groups of kids in a backyard VBS. You'll need to consider best practices for supervision and screening of volunteers, as well as cleaning and disinfecting, and social distancing.
- Wait until the end of summer to host VBS.
- Offer a virtual, at-home VBS.
- Limit the number of participants to maintain distancing.
- Hold all VBS activities outdoors.
- Host activities one day per week for five weeks.
- Hold VBS in the fall, after school starts.

For more information and ideas about VBS, LifeWay offers 4 VBS strategies for this summer at www.Lifeway.com/4ways.

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