



Developing Disciples • Energizing Churches

GenOn Ministries VISIONING TOOL FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

GenOn Ministries believes that the ultimate statement of effectiveness is an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ for each child, thus ministry solutions are effective when they help children to become active disciples of Christ, living in that abundant life-giving relationship.

GenOn Ministries has identified and defined 21 factors to represent the tangible ministry characteristics that underlie a ministry's ability to consistently build young disciples. This tool uses these factors to take a picture of a church's current ministry with children and create a plan for moving forward.

Instructions for completing the Visioning Tool for Children's Ministry

This process involves 2 equally important steps: 1) participants complete the evaluation, and 2) participants attend a gathering to discuss their ratings and formulate a plan.

Complete the Evaluation

1. Choose and download the tool from <http://www.genonministries.org/collections/visioning-tools>.
2. Determine who will participate in this visioning process. Copy and distribute pages 2-4 to each person, inviting each person to:
 - a. Complete the evaluation **and**
 - b. Plan to attend the gathering

Discuss the Ratings and Formulate a Plan

1. Organize a gathering of everyone who has received the evaluation. Invite participants to attend the gathering with their completed evaluation. If some evaluations are not complete, allow time before starting the gathering for all evaluations to be completed. It is important for participants to bring their own completed evaluation to the gathering.
2. At the gathering, using their completed evaluations, participants, together:
 - a. Consider Impactful factors. Celebrate green ratings. Agree on 3-4 factors that rated red. Repeat for Purposeful and Practical factors.
 - b. Discuss how joys (green) from Purposeful and Practical sections might influence joys from the Impactful section. Repeat for concerns (red).
 - c. Decide on steps to take to address concerns. Create a timeline. Assign specific tasks. Set a date to revisit the Visioning Tool.

LOGOS INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY is a proven model for achieving strong ratings for every factor. Contact us at 877.937.2572 or info@genonministries.org to learn more about LOGOS, or to invite us to lead your Ratings Discussion and formulate your step-by-step

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INSTRUCTIONS

Review factors in each section (PURPOSEFUL, PRACTICAL, IMPACTFUL). For each factor, indicate your personal assessment of where your church currently stands. Using crayons or colored pens or pencils, color each factor using this key:

-  GREEN: GO! Great! This factor is strong at our church.
-  YELLOW: Caution. Sometimes true at our church, but there is room for improvement.
-  RED: Stop. This is generally not true at our church.

Bring your completed evaluation to the gathering.

PURPOSEFUL: Is the congregation intentional about why children's ministry is vital for the church?

The church demonstrates an intentional commitment to children.

- Church budget includes adequate funding for children's ministry.
 - Person(s) on staff are dedicated to children's ministry.
 - Worship planning team purposely plans for child-friendly worship services.
 - Planning congregational programs and events is always inclusive of children.

The congregation treats children's ministry as an integral ministry of the whole church.

- Children's ministry has equal priority with other ministries of the church.
 - Children's ministry is more than "babysitting," serving the spiritual development of young people.
 - A significant number of adults of all ages serve in children's ministry.

The church's children's ministry is based upon a strong foundation of Christian relationships.

- Congregation-wide policies with clear rules and boundaries exist to protect and empower children.
 - Children feel valued and important in the life of the congregation.
 - Learning includes purposeful opportunities to form healthy friendships guided by Christ's example.

The children's ministry is a balanced approach to nurturing the mind, body, and soul of children.

- Christian education includes cognitive learning, practical opportunities to apply that learning, and experiences of the mystery of God.
 - Teaching methods address various learning styles of children.
 - Children learn about Christian faith and have opportunities to practice putting it into action.

Clergy are clearly "on board" and engaged with the ministry, advocating for the integration of children's ministry into the life of the church.

- Clergy hold up the importance of children's ministry and lead the way.
 - Preaching and worship planning model the priority of inclusion of children.
 - Clergy are supportive of adults serving in children's ministry.

PRACTICAL: Does the congregation have an effective plan and approach for implementing and sustaining the children's ministry?

Many adults with a variety of gifts are involved in children's ministry through an intentional call process.

- The congregation understands that the need for high ratios of adults: children goes beyond safety and provides more opportunities for relationship-building.
- There is a regular process by which adults are invited to discover their spiritual gifts and talents and use those gifts in ministry.
- The church avoids "asking for volunteers" and "recruiting bodies to fill jobs."

The Children's Ministry Team is intentionally defined and members are rotated regularly.

- Members of the leadership team for children's ministry are called and given a position description with term limits.
- Using position descriptions and term limits is seen as part of a healthy process that encourages new ideas and prevents burnout.

The church regularly engages in training offered by outside resources.

- The church acknowledges that being trained, refreshed, and renewed by experts outside the congregation can bring new energy, new ideas, and new and renewed vision to ministry.
- The children's ministry team regularly seeks the best and most appropriate training for its volunteers.

The church offers regular in-house orientation, training, preparation and support for ministry volunteers.

- The church calendar includes regularly scheduled events that support volunteers.
- The church budget includes money for fellowship and relationship-building events and training.
- Children's ministry leaders understand that they have been called by God and are commissioned in worship.

The range of ages served by the children's ministry is driven by intent and strategy, not by happenstance.

- The children's ministry team understands basic child development, the stages of faith for children, and their ways and styles of learning.
- The children's ministry team intentionally plans its offerings in collaboration with the ministries to youth and adults and, if applicable, with its church-related school.

Bible Study curriculum is chosen and used in a purposeful manner supporting stated learning objectives.

- The children's ministry team, in conjunction with a church educator or other church professional, recommends Bible curriculum that reflects the beliefs and practices of its congregation and/or denomination.
- Bible curriculum for different purposes (Sunday morning, after-school ministry, VBS, nursery, children's church, etc.) is chosen so that each complements or builds on the other, and thus builds overall Bible competency.

Children regularly provide leadership in worship.

- Children are seen as an essential part of the worshipping congregation.
- Those who plan worship for the congregation find ways to incorporate the gifts and talents of children into worship leadership.
- Encouraging children to be part of worship is always under consideration.

Children learn and practice what it means to provide mission and service to others.

- Through a variety of learning opportunities, children are taught the importance of service to others.
- Projects and events are planned and implemented that involve children in ministry to others in the congregation and to those outside of the congregation.

The church offers opportunities to equip and support parents in their role as primary spiritual guide for their children.

- Parenting classes are offered regularly.
- Effective parenting skills are encouraged and affirmed.
- The church provides resources and support for at-home spiritual guidance for families.

IMPACTFUL: Is the effect of the children's ministry truly reflective of ministry and not programming?

The environment is positive, enthusiastic, energized, and uplifting.

- Visitors to congregational programs/events/activities and worship report a sense of celebration.
- Adults and children know who they are and whose they are, and convey the joy of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ in what they do and say.
- This joy spills over into every meeting or event and energizes the congregation.

Individuals involved in children's ministry demonstrate observable spiritual growth in their commitment to Christ.

- Children make a conscious and public decision to be more like Jesus, according to the practices of the congregation.
- The behavior of children demonstrates their relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Children's ministry nurtures relationships throughout where people treat each other based on Christ's example.

- All ministry leaders understand the foundational principle for effective ministry that relationships are everything to God.
- People of all ages strive to treat every person as a child of God.
- Systems/processes/support are in place to help adults and children build relationships and resolve conflict.

Healthy and active intergenerational relationships are observable during scheduled events and beyond.

- Children, youth and adults are encouraged, trained, and mentored in the art of building and maintaining relationships.
- Adults informally and regularly interact with children at church; children and adults know each other's names.

The children's ministry has a low turnover of children year after year, and the number of children involved in the ministry grows over time.

- Growing numbers that include returning participants indicate that relationships are being built, and that the program/event/activity has meaning for those involved.
- Children bring their friends to events, programs and/or worship.

The ministry is sustainable, maintaining its vitality through significant organizational and people changes.

- The purpose, goal and success of children's ministry has more impact than any specific personality or leader.
- There are effective plans for maintaining leadership and programs/events/activities during times of transition that ensure continuation of children's ministry.

Unchurched children and their families become involved in the children's ministry.

- Programs and events offered by children's ministry and, if applicable, church-related school, seek to be inclusive of families from outside the church.
- Newcomers are made to feel welcome and return because of the nurturing, healthy Christian relationships they experience, as well as the holy fun and warm fellowship of the program/event/activity.
- The church is relevant, supportive, and non-threatening.
- Some visitors and guests attend regularly and some become members of the church.

HAVE QUESTIONS? NEED HELP? Call GenOn Ministries staff at 877.937.2572.