

Why consider a Network?

God did not intend for us to work alone.

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken
Ecclesiastes 4:12 NIV

What is a "Network"?

- A group of people engaged in similar work or with a common area of interest, who regularly meet or communicate to share encouragement, information, and support one another
- Networks can be small, local, regional, national or international
- Strong networks already exist in many fields
- Networks can exist "on the internet" or in person
- There is a great worldwide need for local networks focused on ministry to children

What are the benefits of a children's ministry network?

MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

- Pray together and for one another
- Help one another not to feel isolated

NEW INFORMATION

- Share resource ideas and program ideas
- Learn "what's new" (locally, regionally and internationally)
- Share "best practices" (Learn what is working well in your area)
- Present teacher training topics

HELP TO FACE BIG PROBLEMS

- Think together about your children and their needs
- Consider issues and many possible solutions
- Learn to solve your own local problems together
- Pray together for God's guidance and direction

COLLABORATION/COOPERATION

- Possibly consider working together on common projects
- Outreach Events
- Lending libraries with specialized resources

What should children's ministry networks NOT be used for?

- A place to complain about your church, your children, or leadership (Unity and love must still be the goal)
- A place to ask for funding, resources, or for others to take your responsibilities
- A place to come and only receive
- All network participants must contribute in some way, over time (share ideas, share prayer, share encouragement, facilities, etc.)
- A place to compare your ministry to others and grow in envy or jealousy
- A place to criticize or judge other believers

Keys to a Successful Network

- Prayer (before, during and after)
- A Clear Focus
 - What is your group's focus?
 - What are your needs?
 - How will you help one another?
 - What will you NOT do?
- Careful Planning and Organization
 - Select a small committee to help you organize
 - Set up a system for committee changes over time
 - When, where and how often will you meet?
 - Who will host meetings? How will meeting costs be shared?
 - Who will be responsible for different parts of the program?
 - Determine your basic schedule for each meeting
- Focus on Serving the Needs of Your People
 - Invite everyone possible within your network's focus
 - Welcome and accept a variety of members
 - Find ways to get acquainted with each other (you may notice strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and joys)
 - Learn from one another