



part 1 of 2—

Promoting Your Ministry

by Dick Gruber

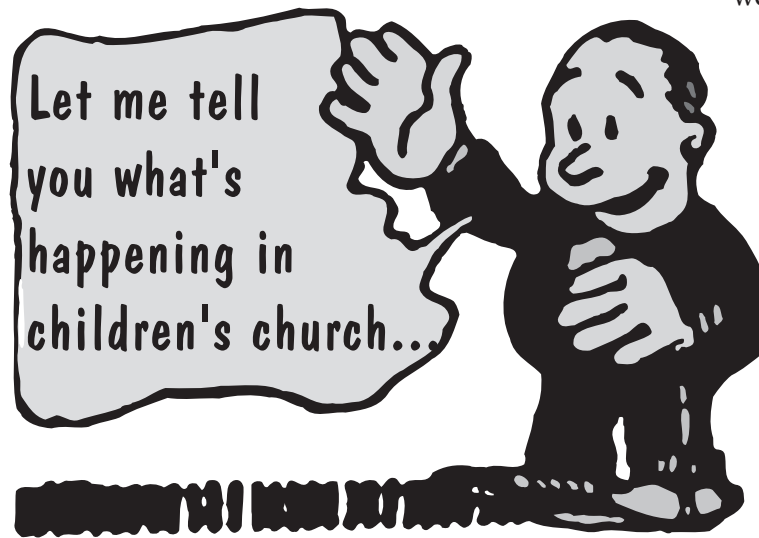
Promoting your ministry is a necessary part of serving as a children's pastor. Some may think it wrong or "unspiritual" to promote themselves to others, but survival of children's ministry in the local church is dependant on a solid approach to promotion.

Promotional strategy should be simple, yet well planned. Implementation of this strategy is foundational for those wishing to recruit more workers, gain more budgetary dollars, and achieve more visibility. Promotion in the local church should focus on three targets: the pastor, the people, and the public.

The Pastor

Your senior pastor is God's authority in the local church. As such, don't you think he is entitled to know all he can about your ministry? Get in the habit of testifying to your pastor. Many children's workers will only approach the pastor when problems occur. Negative reports are the last thing a pas-

tor wants to hear from you on a Sunday morning. Tell him about one great thing that happened in your ministry that morning. Eventually he will learn that the children's ministry at his church is a vibrant, growing, positive experience. He may even begin to repeat your testimonies from



the pulpit.

Do your homework. Be ready when approaching the pastor concerning annual budget proposals or projects that you wish to launch. Scripture says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed" (2 Timothy 2:15). I say

do your best to present yourself to God and to your senior pastor. Lay out specifics in your budget or project work. Attempt to answer all questions that your pastor may ask. Do this in a neat, logical order on paper. I have never been disappointed when approaching my pastor with a well-thought-out plan.

Drop notes of thanks and testimony to your pastor. Let him know what is happening in your life and ministry. Don't wait for the annual pastor appreciation day to thank your pastor. It is an honor to serve in the ministry. You are serving with a forward-thinking pastor who

had enough wisdom to know his church needed a children's pastor. Thank him regularly with honest, heartfelt thanks.

Remember, a little schmooz goes a long way. Do what you can to promote the pastor's vision and ministry. Love on him and his vision and you will receive a return. You are the



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The People

The life of your children's ministry is largely dependent on lay involvement. People's perception of your ministry will draw them in or drive them away. How many times have you heard horror stories about the worker who was coerced into service with the three-year-olds' class? Five years later this burned-out teacher is still serving and wondering why the children's pastor hasn't stopped for a visit.

The people of your church are your finest resource. Your children's ministry will succeed if the people are behind it. When I began my work as a children's pastor, I assumed most of my time would be spent with children. I quickly discovered that a majority of my time was spent ministering to and working side by side with the parents and adults who served the children.

Do all you can to love the people of your church. Remember the law of sowing and reaping. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7,8). Plant your life and your love into

the people and you will reap a harvest of life and love in return. Here are some things to remember in promoting your ministry to the people:

Be Genuine

Adults don't always see a phony right away, but kids will know it in a flash. Be yourself. If



you don't like yourself, work on who you are. Do all you can to become a personable, likeable, joy-filled believer. Your genuine joy, love, and concern for people cannot be hidden.

Be Alert

Scripture says, "Watch and

pray," (Matthew 26:41). There have been times when I was so intent on accomplishing my "job" that I failed to notice the needs of those around me. Watch and listen to people.

When I began my ministry in Bloomington, Minnesota, my Sunday School coordinator, Marcella, had a simple need.

She had been requesting new card tables for registration for several months. Apparently, no one had heard her cries. I went down to Wal-Mart and purchased those tables the first week. Marcella was happy and served faithfully the eight years I worked at that church.

Be Prayerful

Pray for the people. Pray for boys and girls and teens and moms and dads. Pray for grandparents. When a child or adult brings a prayer request to you, pray immediately. Let the people know that your ministry is built on the solid foundation of prayer.

Invite workers and children to join you in prayer often. Host all-church prayer meetings for the children. Assign children's names to your senior citizens so

they may pray for the boys and girls daily.

The Public

Organize quarterly events which will appeal to the unchurched of your community. Make these big, exciting, and child and/or family friendly. My friend Brian hosts a community-wide Easter egg hunt each year. This is one of the biggest events on his island. Hundreds of children and adults come out for the fun and the gospel message.

Utilize every avenue available in promoting your ministry to the community. Newspapers, radio, flyers, and cable television can be used in promotion. Do what you can to cooperate with local schools, libraries, and public service agencies. Cooperate with law enforcement and your community park and recreations department.

My church hosted a “We Love Kids Banquet” each February. This was done in cooperation with our community cam-

paign entitled, “Bloomington Loves Its Kids Month” (Bloomington, Minnesota, Parks and Recreation Department).

Remember, a great ministry can fail for lack of promotion. If you have something worth participating in, then it is worth promoting. Do all you can to build bridges of promotion with your pastor, your people, and your public.

Questions for Further Study—

1. What can you do to ensure that your volunteers do not feel used or burned out?

2. In what ways does your children’s ministry reach out to the community? List some new activities you can try.