

Building “Bridges” Between The Youth And Children’s Ministries

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Premise

The children’s ministry (CM) and youth ministry (YM) are strong ministries; but they only “connect” with each other through the “bridge” related to graduation or “promotion” in June. We have seen significant results from this “bridge” in the attitude of our fifth graders regarding the “Crux.” It is now time to build more “bridges” connecting the CM and the YM.

Goals

1. To create events, programs, or plans for the children to interact with the youth.
2. To invite or challenge the youth to become role models for the children.
3. To develop cross-age ministry opportunities within the CM for qualified youth.

Possible Options

1. **Youth involvement in the large group CM program** to “legitimize” it as a cross-age ministry – testimonies, evaluation, interaction within classes, etc.
2. **“Stump The Youth” challenges** – visiting pairs or groups of youth would come to the CM class to address specific topics (bullies, homework, parents, temptations, social networking, etc.). The youth would share what they’ve learned over the years with the children. The “experts” must be recommended for this, and connect all they say to scriptural foundations.
3. **Topic-based collaboration meetings** between CM and YM leaders to discuss plans to address the issues within the CM and YM. Topics for these meetings might include: social networking, gender identity, pornography, sexuality, homosexuality, honesty, self-centeredness, laziness, morality, racial prejudice, etc.
4. **All-day blended CM and YM events** with unified goals (beach trips, camps, field trips, laser tag in building, snow day at church, etc.).
5. **“Big brother / big sister” connections** – Each fifth grader would be connected to a “big brother or sister” from the YM. These “big brothers or sisters” connect with the fifth graders at the “bridge” planned events. They would also correspond with each other via email, letter, text, etc. (you would have to decide the appropriateness of this). These connections could grow into a “mentorship” or “discipleship” relationship!
6. **After service fun or social events** – These would be either held on the church campus, or at an off-campus location. The fifth graders are taken to the event by their parents, and the parents are welcomed to join in the fun or fellowship. The events could include: an ice cream party, a talent show, “minute to win it” games, picnic in the park with games, etc.
7. **YM, CM and family service projects** – These are either on campus or off campus projects. It would be more effective if the service project is off campus. During these service projects, the youth and children would serve together and share the enjoyment. There would be delicious food afterward with some shared “debriefing” conversations.

