

**Children's Ministry Graduation Plan**  
*Connecting children to the youth ministry before graduation*  
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It has been proven that there is a “drop off” of teens’ church attendance (or interest in Christian growth) after “graduating” from the children’s ministry (CM). This “drop off” can be damaging to a teen’s spiritual growth.

The Barna Research Group conducted a 5-year study about teens’ perceptions of the Church. Read their findings in their report entitled “*Six Reasons Young Christians Leave Church*” at <https://www.barna.com/research/six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church/>

The Barna study, and others, identifies the lack of significant relationships as being a major contributor to this “drop off.” Teens, who have had a good experience in CM, are asked, “Are you excited about going to the youth ministry (YM)?” They often respond, “No, I don’t know anyone there.” Teens judge the value of an event or organization based on who they know at the event or organization! Connecting upper elementary children to the YM before graduation is an excellent way to combat this problem. Here is a process to use in building a “bridge” between the YM and the CM.

This plan assumes that the CM graduation is in June. June is an excellent month to graduate in the CM because it matches the school system, and it is a natural “invitation” to join the YM summer activities! This plan also assumes that the sixth graders will “graduate” into the YM. This plan matches the public school system of including sixth graders into the “middle school” environment.

Make sure to “advertise” this plan with the parents of the fifth graders. The parents will enjoy knowing what you are doing to make sure their children are connected to the YM!

1. **Sunday, April 28** – YM representatives visit the fifth graders in their class during both Sunday morning services to give a fun introduction to the YM, and to answer any questions the children may have. (If fourth and fifth grades are combined, the fourth graders will get an early "taste" of the YM.)
2. **Midweek, May 2** – (A midweek repeat of the YM introduction that was done on Sunday.) YM representatives visit the fifth graders in their class to give a fun introduction to the YM, and to answer any questions the children may have.
3. **Sunday, May 5** - Fifth graders visit the YM. The fifth graders are checked into their classes, then they are escorted by CM or YM team members to and from the YM area. They return for check-out at their classes. This happens during all services.
4. **Midweek, May 9** - (A midweek repeat of the YM visit that was done on Sunday.) Fifth graders visit the YM. The fifth graders are checked into their classes, then they are escorted by CM or YM team members to and from the YM area. They return for check-out at their classes.
5. **Sunday, May 12** - Fifth graders send their prayer requests to the YM.
6. **Midweek, May 16** - Fifth graders will their prayer requests to Crux.
7. **Sunday, May 19** - Fifth graders go to the YM for a party. The fifth graders are checked into their CM classes, then they are escorted by CM or YM team members to the YM area. Parents check them out at the YM area. (This gives the parents an opportunity to visit the YM.)
8. **Midweek, May 23** - Fifth graders go to the YM for a party. The fifth graders are checked into their CM classes, then they are escorted by CM or YM team members to the YM area. Parents check them out at the YM area. (This gives the parents an opportunity to visit the YM.)
9. **Graduation on June 2** - All grade levels go to new classes. Fifth graders (now sixth graders) go to the YM area. (Your church policy determines if parents need to check them in.)