

Creating a Buzz

By: Carmen Kamrath [Children's Ministry Magazine](#) on January 9, 2013

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NEVER FORGET YOUR MISSION

Have you ever watched 5-year-olds play soccer? They look so cute in their uniforms and mini cleats; no one can herd a soccer ball like a bunch of 5-year-olds. Watch these youngsters long enough, and you'll see it; there's nothing quite like it. It may be a blade of grass, a butterfly passing by, or just plain boredom, but it'll happen—the ever-present soccer distraction. And while it can be quite humorous at a peewee soccer game, it can be devastating to a ministry.

Keep your eye on the ball! I mean, never forget your mission. "Your mission statement is everything. It's the rudder that guides the ship. It shapes everything your church does. It provides the grid whereby effectiveness is measured and decisions are made," says Tim Wright. And distractions are numerous in ministry.

Joy's children's ministries team has the mission and vision for our ministry posted throughout our building. Our mission is "To impact the children of our community with the message of Christ's unconditional love; encouraging children to grow in a personal relationship with Christ and to foster growth through biblical teaching, role modeling, and self-esteem building." We set goals by our mission and we measure effectiveness by it. We evaluate every event and program, using our mission as a guide. We survey our volunteers, kids, and parents to assure that we're in line with the mission. Finally, we ask visitors what they think—especially if they don't return. Most of all, though, our staff lives, believes, and is excited by our mission.

There are many things that could distract our team from our mission, but knowing who we are and what we're about helps our ministry stay focused and accountable. In turn, the people we reach know what we are and who we represent.

CREATE AN IDENTITY

Our children's ministry is called Kid Kountry. Okay, so we spelled part of it wrong, but ask someone in Community Church of Joy's neighborhood what Kid Kountry is and most people can tell you something about it. We have it "branded" on our Christian education building in big, bright letters. It's in our literature, our nametags, our T-shirts, and on everything that's distributed to our community.

We seek to create a living identity for the name of our ministry. When people see Kid Kountry anywhere, we want them to understand who we serve and what's important to us. Articles in our church newspaper let people in the congregation know what kids are doing at Community Church of Joy. Pictures speak a thousand words, so we use them! We take kids' pictures and interview them about what they like about Sunday school, what they're thankful for, or what a special holiday means to them. We post kids' photos and interviews on bulletin boards. It's a great way to show how God is working in our ministry.

We highlight our volunteers and let them speak through our church newspaper. It's an awesome way to honor them and tell others about what's happening. We also have our kids serve in roles throughout our church and in outreach projects in the community.

Publicity without follow through, though, will get you nowhere! You have to deliver what you promise. We've designed our children's ministries building to be inviting and to fit everything that people have heard about us. Throughout the building we have pictures of kids participating in programs we offer at Joy. Tables, chairs, and hands-on manipulatives such as Lego tables are not only in the classroom, but also in the lobby areas where kids get their first glimpse of our programs while parents chat. On Sunday mornings we have a snack bar with a variety of foods that kids enjoy. This has been an incredible opportunity for families to hang around after services and get to know each other while their kids enjoy being in our building.

We know that safety and security are highly valued, so we take every precaution possible to make sure kids are safe and secure in our programs. The fence that surrounds our building has alarms on the gates to sound if an intruder enters — and to bust little escapees! Pagers for nursery parents provide them the comfort of knowing they'll be reached if there's a problem. We also have strict sign-in/sign-out procedures that volunteers are trained to follow, and all volunteers and adult visitors have special name badges to assure that their presence has been cleared by staff.

Our identity is that Kid Kountry is kid-friendly, family-friendly, and Christ-centered. And we deliver on all three points! Parents and kids have a lot of choices today. We want to create an environment where kids and families have fun together, learn together, and form lasting relationships with Christ and others. We've created a place where kids are celebrated every day, where fun is always close by, and where love encompasses all that we do. Our children's ministry is a place where people want to be involved and want to serve. So the circle is complete; the people we once were reaching out to are now partnering with us to minister to others.

Recently at the end of a weekday, I closed my office door behind me. A dad rushed in the front door, "Oh! I'm glad I caught you! Our neighbor told us you have something for kids here this Friday night. Is it too late to sign up?"

I opened my door again and invited him in. I smiled. It's the buzz again.