# NEXT GEN quick start guide



# IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT IF ONE WANTS TO FINISH WELL, THEY MUST START WELL.

This is also true with churches and the vital ministry of reaching the next generation. It is our hope, at Louisiana Baptists, that all of our churches will have a thriving and prosperous ministry to children and youth.

The importance of reaching the next generation with the life-giving power of the Gospel can never be overestimated. Whether you are planting a new church or revitalizing an existing one, creating a plan for ministry to children and youth from the very beginning will pay eternal dividends for years to come.

We hope that this booklet and the resources mentioned herein will be of great assistance for anyone starting a next gen ministry from scratch. At Louisiana Baptists, we stand ready to partner with anyone reaching the next generation.

# starting a CHILDREN'S ministry

# GREAT CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES DO NOT HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT.

All parents want the absolute best for their children and when they attend church, they do not make exceptions. With this in mind, churches need to think through and be intentional in their ministry to children and their families.

Providing high quality teaching and intentional activities will be a benchmark in a community for a church desiring to start a children's ministry from scratch or revitalize a dormant ministry.

May this guide help lay out a path for each church to be an anchor in their community, leading children and their families to our Savior. STARTING A CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



# DEVELOP A PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Decide what you want to achieve through this ministry. What do you want each child to know, to do, and to be when you send them to student ministry? Think of the end result.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				



# **CAST VISION**

Use your philosophy to form a vision for your ministry based on your church, your community, and your families. Then promote that vision!

- People will buy into a vision.
- People will not buy into a job list.
- Sell the vision and people will help implement it.
- Help your people to own the ministry themselves.

# SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT

To lead children and their families to know Jesus, Grow in Jesus, and Show Jesus to those around us.

\*or adapt a larger church's vision

# DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY



# ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

If safety procedures are not already in place, work with your church leaders to develop your policies.

Make them clear. Write them down and make sure that your volunteers know them well. Work to establish a safe and welcoming environment.

### **WELCOMING:**

- What areas of the church/rooms are available to use?
- How do these rooms need to be set up?
- Do you have access to ageappropriate furniture and supplies?

### SAFE:

- Consider looking into MinistrySafe guidelines.
- Discuss and implement policies such as the 2-person rule and background checks.
- Do you need a check in check out system or name tags?
- Establish policies so that there are no questions.
- Make the policies clear but not detailed.
- Let the policies serve as guidelines for what is best for the children.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				



# ESTABLISH A CALENDAR

Coordinate with the other ministries and leaders in your church. Think about school calendars and busy times of the year.

- Work to prevent silos from developing between ministry components.
- Set out a plan for the year so your families can plan ahead.
- Think in terms of "ones".
- One focus each week (service time or during the week).
- One simple family event per month (as simple as a picnic or fellowship party).
- One outreach event per quarter (think VBS, Backyard Clubs, Fall Festival, Easter event, etc.).

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				



# BUILD YOUR TEAM

Pray! Develop a recruiting plan. Be honest and positive. Train and be clear with your expectations. Don't forget to APPRECIATE your leaders!

- Look for people that share your ministry's vision.
- Recruit to the ministry, not the task.
- Speak to people one on one and not in passing.
- Set clear expectations.
- Empower team members to lead and share the vision with others.

# DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY



# CHOOSE CURRICULUM

Is it Biblical? Is it about Jesus? Is it age-appropriate? Does it consider the way that kids learn? Is it flexible?

- Be very careful what curriculum you choose for your children.
- Consult with others who have used the sought after curriculum.
- Research and look for samples.
- Evaluate the curriculum yearly with leader input.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:					



# **BUDGET**

Work with the finance team. Look at past years. Remember your philosophy/vision to help you prioritize. Keep track of spending for upcoming budgets.

- Consider all aspects of the ministry.
- Think of weekly, quarterly, and yearly expenses.
- Include safety protocols, refreshments, curriculum, supplies, etc. in your budget.
- Remember to attempt to plan for hidden or unforeseen circumstances.
- Get input from the leaders in the ministry.

# DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY



# BUILD AND NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

Don't let the tasks of your ministry distract you from building relationships and discipling leaders, kids, and parents.

- Building a team is really about building relationships.
- People committed to each other and the vision make long-term leaders.
- Remember to build relationships with the parents.
- Remember to help children build relationships with each other.
- Celebrate what is happening by letting each other know; not to brag but to encourage.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:					



# MELP EQUIP PARENTS TO BE SPIRITUAL LEADERS

You are partnering with parents to disciple and teach their children. Build a ministry that works together with parents and gives them the tools to lead at home.

- Always remember that parents are the primary spiritual leaders of their children.
- Equip parents with resources and support.
- Remember that parents want to lead their children. They just don't know how in most cases.
- View parents as partners in reaching and teaching children and not as adversaries you are working to correct.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				

# starting a STUDENT ministry

# STARTING THE JOURNEY TO CREATE A NEXT GEN MINISTRY FOR STUDENTS IS A CHALLENGING UNDERTAKING. HOWEVER, THE REWARDS ARE GREAT!

There is nothing more exciting than ministering and investing in the spiritual development of teenagers. This section of the booklet acts as a guide, offering insights and questions to assist in starting a youth ministry.

It is designed to help you think through the process of developing a strategy as you create a vibrant and welcoming place for students and parents to grow spiritually, build lasting friendships, and become active participants in the local church.



# UNDERSTAND THE VISION AND MISSION OF YOUR CHURCH

- What is your church's purpose in the community?
- How does a student ministry fit in the big picture?
- What role will student ministry play as part of the body?

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				

# STARTING A STUDENT MINISTRY



# PRAY

Pray for guidance, wisdom, and support.

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# DEVELOP A PHILOSOPHY THAT MATCHES YOUR CHURCH'S VISION AND MISSION

- Create your intentional plan to make disciples of parents and students. While beginning, keep it simple!
  - What does your strategy look like?
  - What are some realistic goals?
  - What are some markers you can put in place to see if you have met your goals?
  - How will you evaluate your ministry?
- Spend some time thinking through this process. It will define your identity as you move forward.
- How will you promote your strategy?

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				



# RESEARCH, ESTABLISH, AND IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Ask what is in place and what isn't.
- Find ways to ensure that your environment is a safe place for students.
- Make sure your leadership approves.
- Put your policies and procedures in writing and make sure your volunteers and leaders know them and have access to them as well.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				



# COORDINATE YOUR SCHEDULE

- Will you use a strategy of small groups, large groups, or a combination of both?
- Determine when and where you will meet.
  - Will you meet in host homes or somewhere else?
  - What space will you use?
  - What time will you meet?
  - Will you meet once a week or twice?
- Set up an inviting and comfortable space.
  - Consider decorating the room with art, lighting, and other elements that create a positive atmosphere.

# DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY

STARTING A STUDENT MINISTRY



# DETERMINE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

Decide how you will use these resources as you recruit volunteers.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:					



# RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS AND ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

- Find passionate and committed individuals who are willing to invest their time and energy into youth ministry.
- Make sure they know your strategy, vision, expectations, etc.
- Look for opportunities to train leaders. Invest in them.
- Require background checks for all volunteers. (MinistrySafe is a great resource for this.)

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:				



# CREATE A CALENDAR

- Plan activities that are engaging and revelant to the youth. This can include worship services, Bible studies, social events, camps, retreats, mission trips, and community service projects.
- Coordinate with other church leaders.
- Consider the school calendar and make note of athletic events, music programs, and other events sponsored by the schools as you plan.
- Promote what you are doing in as many ways as possible.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:						



# CREATE A BUDGET

- Work with the finance team to think about ways to get what you need.
- Make sure parents and the community know when you have a need.
- Create lists on Amazon or Walmart for others to help make donations such as snacks and supplies.
- Don't be afraid to ask. Remember, you have not because you ask not.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:							



# BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Connect with students, parents, teachers, and coaches.
- Look for ways to help and volunteer where students/parents are to help establish your presence.
- Look for ways to minister to them.
- Reach out to other ministries in your area for ideas, support, and resources.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY:						

# RESOURCE LINKS

# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

# LOUISIANA BAPTISTS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

louisianabaptists.org/about/teams/evangelism-church-growth/kids/

# LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

kidsministry.lifeway.com/

# **SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES**

lifeway.com/en/shop/ministries/special-needs sandrapeoples.com/

# SEND NETWORK CHILDREN'S RESOURCES

newchurches.com/course/childrensministry/

### WMU CHILDREN'S MISSIONS RESOURCES

wmu.com/missions-discipleship/children/

# YOUTH/STUDENT MINISTRY

# **LIFEWAY STUDENTS**

studentministry.lifeway.com

### **YM360**

youthministry360.com

# LA. BAPTIST YOUTH (LOUISIANA BAPTISTS)

labaptistyouth.com

# TITHE.LY BLOG BY STEPHEN ALTROGGE

get.tithe.ly/blog/how-to-start-and-grow-a-church-youth-ministry

### CHURCHLEADERS.COM

churchleaders.com/youth/youth-leaders-how-tos/154252-how-to-start-your-youth-ministry.html

# SMALLCHURCHMINISTRY.COM

smallchurchministry.com/starting-a-youth-ministry/

# THELEADPASTOR.COM

theleadpastor.com/article/youth-ministry/



These resource links and more are available on our website. Want a digital version of this book? You'll find it there as well.

LouisianaBaptists.org/Quickstart