



Vision

Come up with a clear vision for your children's and families' ministry, and don't be afraid to start small, with a vision to grow. Any children's and families' ministry should complement other ministry in the church, and be part of the overall vision and mission strategy, so make sure you consider how they might weave together.

This guide will help you to think through a few things as you prepare to set up ministry for children and families in your church. As with any new ministry, we recommend you spend a focused period of time in prayer, so God can speak into your plans.

How to set up children's and families' ministry in your church

Key questions to ask

- Why do you want this ministry in your church?
- What are your hopes for children and families in your church?
- What are the expectations?
- Who have you spoken to?
- What permissions might you need?
- What needs to be in place to allow it to run safely?
- What will you do and what resources might you need?
- What team will you need?
- How will you evaluate your progress?
- What additional help is out there?

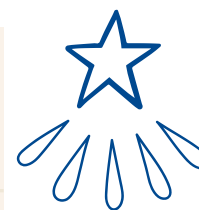
What will you do?

The list of what can be done is endless, and you may consider more than one approach. Whatever you decide to do, it should be based on local needs and what the church can realistically provide. Allow plenty of time for preparation, planning and promotion. This will allow you to prepare properly, build a team and take into account any additional needs/requirements. See page 3 for some ideas on what your children's and families' ministry could look like.

Who you need to speak to

- Church leadership and PCC
- Parents
- Children
- The congregation and potential volunteers
- Others who may be affected or want to input (schools, other local groups)





Keeping everyone safe

- Safeguarding and Safe Recruitment (find Diocesan policies on our [website](#))
- Health and Safety (including Risk Assessment, First Aid, photography/videography policies)
- Inclusion and diversity policy
- Code of conduct/behaviour
- Anti-bullying policy
- Social Media and Electronic Communication policy

Evaluating your ministry

After each session, or regularly throughout the year, evaluate as a team. These simple questions may help:

- How was the session? How has the term/year been?
- What was good about the session? What were the highlights?
- Did anything go wrong? What has been learnt?
- What can we do better next time? Do we need to change anything for next year?

Staff ratios

Recommended ratios for different age groups:

- 0-2 years: 1 adult to 3 children
- 2-3 years: 1 adult to 4 children
- 4-8 years: 1 adult to 6 children
- 9-12 years: 1 adult to 8 children

A minimum of 3 adult leaders should be present at each session.

If under 18s volunteer as junior leaders, they count towards the number of children in the ratio.

Mixed gender groups should include both male and female adult leaders wherever possible. In certain situations, it will be necessary to have more adults, for example when you are going off site, doing an unusual activity, or if there are children with additional support needs.

Start by seeking
God's plan for your
ministry



How to set up children's and families' ministry in your church

Permissions you might need

Before starting anything new in the church, it will need the backing of the PCC and the church leadership. Depending on who else is involved and where the children's and families' ministry takes place, you may need additional permissions. For example, if the children's ministry is an after-school club held in school, you will need permission from key people in school to allow it to happen. If you use a village hall or public space, you will need permission from the village hall committee or Parish Council to use that space.



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Ideas for children's ministry activities/groups

- Involving children in serving in church services
- Holiday clubs
- Mid-week before or after school clubs
- Leading collective worship in a primary school
- Sunday children's club during church services
- Midweek Bible study/youth group
- Open the Book in local primary schools
- Godly Play
- Puppet ministry involving children performing
- A children's choir/orchestra/band
- Alternative Halloween party
- Church visits for your local schools
- Pupil Chaplaincy in your local schools
- Residentials/Weekends away
- Outdoor Activities
- Eco Church Club

Potential activities for families and children's ministry may have different levels of engagement with Christian content and worship. Some may be very little, such as a drop in cafe or toddler group, some may be evangelistic, such as an after school club, and some may be an act of worship like a family service or Messy church.

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Budget

You will need a budget to cover running costs for things such as:

- Hire of premises
- Equipment
- Resources
- Refreshments or tuck
- Volunteer expenses
- Advertising

Be realistic about what the church can offer and honest about your limitations.

Ideas for all age/family ministry activities

- Seasonal one-off craft days/sessions linked to Christian festivals
- Halloween drop in cafe
- Messy Church
- Muddy Church (outdoor church)
- Family Service
- Sunday afternoon tea service
- Family Fun days, teddy bears picnic, easter egg hunt, scavenger trail.
- All age worship services
- Parent and toddler group
- Baptism parties to celebrate all those baptised in a particular year/season
- Baptism prep sessions
- Special services at Christian festivals such as Good Friday or Christmas Eve

