

Small Group Workshop – Aaron Reynolds
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****Overall formula for effective kids' ministry:**

Transformational Teaching (large group time)
+
Transformational Relationships (small group time)

Small group ministry is NOT:

- **Reteaching what we just did in large group**
- **Activity management**
- **A huge time commitment**

Small group ministry IS:

- **Knowing one another and being known**
- **All about relationship**
- **Using the game/activity/craft as an on-ramp to the relational stuff like discussion about the kids' lives and prayer requests – the activity itself is not central ... it's there for us to use as a vehicle**
- **Celebrating life together!**
- **Shepherding/discipling the kids in your group ... not formal TEACHING**

Powerful Practices in Great Shepherding

1. Consistency

- One teacher with one group of kids ...if at all possible
- Create something they don't want to miss – THEIR group
- This casts a vision to the parents as well
- Play with the kids during activity time
- For team teaching situations, keep in weekly contact with your teaching partner for consistency

2. Parental Handoff

- At dismissal time, let the parents get a glimpse of what really happens in small group – ie. Relationships happening...
- "Hand off" the opportunity to the parent to run with the ball of what you've started in group ... just a quick 20 second chat about something positive their child did/something he/she shared/something the group prayed for their child
- Let the parents know "I'm here to support you and your kids. I'm praying for your child..."

3. Preparation

- Look the lesson over ahead of time
- Plan your own personal "stories" or contributions that you can bring to the lesson – make it personal so the kids can think of ways to apply the truth to their own personal situations, too
- Don't get caught up in "getting the activity done" – it's just there to open the door for relationships to grow (discussions, prayer time, etc)

Shepherding 202 – Take it to the next level!

1. *Apprenticing* – You grow a ministry by multiplying the "core" from the centre out. Choose someone who loves kids and is relationship-oriented and ask them to shadow you for a while. No commitment necessary! If we all had an apprentice and even half of them decided to come on board, that would up our volunteers by 50%.
2. *Monday through Saturday shepherding* – This does not have to take a lot of time! Just a little note/call/text regarding things that are important to them – especially things they've mentioned or asked for prayer for on Sundays. **Be more than just a familiar face on Sundays – let's send the message that our ministry to kids extends beyond the four walls of the church. Make regular little entries into their lives.** Let parents know that you'd like to contact their child occasionally throughout the year and be sure it's alright with them.

Other ideas and tidbits:

- Take what the kids say seriously. Care about what they're telling you and look them in the eye when they're talking to you.
- Know their world. Watch some of their shows so you can refer to them. Get familiar with what's happening in kid life around you. What toys are in, what books/movies/music is popular.
- Remember we want them to leave church on Sundays armed with something that will make a difference on Monday!