

Crazy Enough to Run a Kids' Ministry?

By Pastor Al Gaither

To give credit where it is due, this article is inspired by an article by Geoff Surratt entitled "You Might Be Crazy Enough to Plant a Church If...". But as I was reading the article, I saw ways it was applicable to leading a children's ministry. So, put on your knee boots, and let's wade in..

There are all kinds of articles on line, and software packages to help you LEAD a ministry... but the questions is: are you just crazy enough to do the job? Let's list a few signposts that will help you determine if you are ready for them.

Signpost #1: **Are you as crazy as Noah:** Noah did not know how to build an ark... herd animals? Every type? No skills! How about running a floating zoo? Unskilled to say the least. BUT: Noah did have NECESSARY skills: a. he trusted the One who called him. Noah knew if God was directing the construction, and He was ordering the herding, that things would work out. Did Noah know the direction the ark was going? Nope. He trusted God's direction. Oh, sometimes, while he and his family was busy building, or keeping the "zoo" running smoothly, it got messy. But..Noah persevered!

Signpost #2: **Are you crazy enough to trust God like Joseph:** In the story of Joseph, we see a man who continued to trust God REGARDLESS of the way things looked. Sold into slavery? Ok, it was God's will. (A note here: working in children's ministry is NOT slavery!). Thrown in jail for something he didn't do? God's plan AGAIN. Listen, friend, you weren't picked because there was no one else. God eliminated all other choices because He wanted YOU there! You are God's chosen children's leader!

Signpost #3: **Are you as positive as Nehemiah:** Nehemiah believed that a bunch of misfits and rejects could be turned into a top-notch building crew. And do it in a matter of weeks. There is a peace in knowing you are doing God's work. See, we positive thinkers don't look at numbers, or find excuses why things aren't going at some pace we've set. We know Whom will add daily to our children's church. If we look at Acts, where it says God added daily to the church, it occurred as the apostles were doing their part: "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the church those who were to be saved." Acts 2: 46-47. So, we need to do our part. Plan the BEST service we can for whomever will attend. Leave the numbers to God, and work on the quality! AND Thank God ahead of time for each service bringing JUST the right number of kids!

Signpost #4: **Are you determined like Paul:** Let's see...Paul was given 39 lashes 5 different times...3 times beaten with rods...stoned once...3 times shipwrecked...bitten by a snake...hmm. Think he had a reason to quit? Yet he wrote:

Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Paul was **determined**. Determined to do the work God had given him. Determined to not take his hand from the plow. I paraphrase Geoff Surratt: The ability to continue to work and change and adapt until you find a way to reach kids far from God and mold them into children of God determines your success as a children's pastor or worker. We don't DO the same things over and over and hope the end result will change. We are determined and adaptable!

Signpost #5: **Are you willing to party like Matthew:** When Matthew had an encounter with Jesus, and realized He was the Messiah, he partied! Not go into his closet and pray... Not say to Jesus, "Well, let me PRAY about whether I am the one for this job..". No He threw a party, and invited sinners! And took Jesus WITH him to the party. When is the last time you took your kids into a local park or mall, or shopping center, and offered some type of outreach to those "out there". Go to Walmart, buy a snow cone machine, get some ice, and give away snow cones with a church business card to every kid in the park. Take a football or a basketball there and get a bunch of kids NOT in your church to play with the kids from your church. Get involved in your community! Throw a party. Expect the lost to come, and take Jesus with you!

Signpost #6: **Are you passionate like Peter:** Jesus tells Peter about foot washing, and Peter says, "Wash my whole body". Jesus says all the disciples will leave Him, and Peter cries, "I will never deny you!" Of the twelve, it is Peter who steps out of the boat onto the water. He cuts off a guy's ear, he sobs when he realizes Jesus was right about betraying His Lord. It is Peter, who, upon seeing the resurrected Jesus on the shore, JUMPS off the boat and swims.

Does your heart break for those kids you see every week in the stores and do you wonder are they going to church somewhere? Are you BRAVE enough to give the Mom your business card and invite them to YOUR church? Do you leap for joy if one of your kids gets baptized? Does a tear come into your eyes when one of them does even the smallest thing for the kingdom? Do you hurt when your kids hurt? Peter was PASSIONATE! Are you? Do your friends read your excitement because you're so proud of your kids in your ministry you post it on Twitter or Facebook? Ahh, passion!

Signpost #6: **Can you lead a band of misfits like Moses:** Moses had to shepherd a bunch of wild and crazy followers. Yet, he constantly went to God and talked to Him about them. He was protective of them, and when the load became too much, was willing to delegate to underlings and empower them to do the work! How about you? Do you talk to God about your kids... all the time? Are you willing to intercede for them when they are driving you crazy? Have discipline problems? Really? At least your kids haven't built any golden idols..yet. Seek help when your kids are starting to wear you down.. ask a parent a week to come in. and be determined. If a parent says no, take it as "not right now.. ask me later". If a Dad says he can't, take it he doesn't get the vision...so pray. Keep focused on "you are God's candidate." He has help out there. And He wants you to talk to Him about these kids.

Signpost #7: **You Love Kids (ALL kids, lost or saved) Like Jesus Loved:** How many things can be said here! Jesus loved so much, He was available night and day. When they interrupted His rest time by tearing off a roof, He blessed those He was called to minister to. He let kids come to Him, when others would have hindered them. He wept over a city... look at the kids you minister. Look at the kids around you. Fellow workers in the fields, we are God's harvesters. ***God chose us.*** You. Me. There are children all around us who need us to be "crazy". Crazy in love with our Savior, crazy in love with them. Take a look at what we do. What God has entrusted us with: the future pastors, Sunday school teachers, missionaries, and, yes, future children's church workers. Thank you God, for Your trust! Let's refocus our love, our desires, and our faith!