



ADOPT-A-SCHOOL

HANDBOOK



Because Children Matter
reaching children... serving the Church and the family

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INTRODUCTION

“Is your community blessed and filled with joy because of your church’s presence?” What a thought-provoking question! How can your church begin to demonstrate Christ’s love and connect with the surrounding neighbourhood? Adopt-A-School may be just what you need to make a difference in your community.

WHAT IS ADOPT-A-SCHOOL?

Adopt-A-School is a program designed to assist churches to reach the children in the community surrounding their building by connecting with the local school in an intentional and meaningful way in order to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ. It involves learning to think of the neighbourhood around the church as a mission field.

WHY ADOPT-A-SCHOOL?

It can no longer be assumed that Canadian families value God, the Bible or the church. Statistically speaking, many children in Canada are now the third or fourth generation of families who have not attended any church.

Religion Changes in Canada	1991	2001	2011	2021
Christian	83%	77%	67%	53.3%
No Religion	13%	17%	24%	34.6%
Other	4%	6%	9%	12.1%

Churches who have been actively reaching out to children in their communities have discovered that 75-90% of them come from families who do not, and possibly never have, attended a church. The children may be taught constructive values and life skills, but have very little if any knowledge of God or the Bible. This means that the local church needs:

- To think of its neighbourhood as a “mission field” where its members can share the love of Jesus Christ in relevant ways.
- To be creative in the methods it uses to reach those not familiar with the church or its message.
- To minister to children and families in its neighbourhood through practical and interesting methods.

Based on the need for the church to reach beyond its doors to children in the local community, this manual will serve as a guide to help you establish an effective Adopt-A-School ministry program. Specific **step-by-step** planning guides, ideas and actual examples of existing Adopt-A-School programs are included to present a clear picture of how to develop and maintain the program. Each Adopt-A-School program will reflect the individual nature of the church and its goals in reaching out to its community.

GETTING STARTED



STEP 1 - PURPOSE

1. What is PURPOSE?

The first step in initiating an effective Adopt-A-School program is to decide what the desired outcome will be. The purpose is the foundation upon which all the parts of the program are designed and built. This guide will give direction to the planning process and help to keep the focus clear and planning on target.

2. Write out the PURPOSE statement.

It is important to have a clear, concise PURPOSE statement written in 1 or 2 simple sentences. Brainstorm the answers to the following questions to create a PURPOSE statement that “fits” your church and the needs of your community:

a) Does the program fit with the overall mission and direction of your church?

It is important to check this out thoroughly at the start.

Example: A few people in a church wanted to begin a community outreach to children. The overall direction of this church with an aging congregation was focused on ministering to the elderly. Since that was the church’s focus, this new children’s ministry met with resistance. It would take much prayer and ministry education before such an outreach would be a good “fit” for that particular church.

b) What need is there for this type of program? (Give specific answers)

c) Why should the church attempt this program? (Give specific reasons)

3. Sample PURPOSE Statements:

Remember: the PURPOSE does not include the specifics of HOW things will be done; it is simply a guide as to what you wish to achieve. The details will be planned later.

- **Kids’ Company Purpose Statement** - *A free after-school program that will help children to become comfortable walking through the doors of our church.*
- **St. John’s Community Family Night Purpose Statement** – *By providing wholesome family entertainment, we will create a bridge from our church to the people in our local school community.*

STEP 2 – PRAYER

The most important step in planning any new ministry is PRAYER. If God puts a burden on the heart of someone to begin an Adopt-A-School ministry, it is crucial to invite a small group of believers to actively spend time in prayer about the idea. Talk to your pastor and/or children's ministry leader and pray together for God's wisdom and guidance.

Schedule regular times for the prayer group to meet and pray throughout the entire process, even after the planning has begun. Ask God to make clear what the purpose should be, how to proceed and who should be involved.

Pray specifically for the tasks that need to be accomplished, for the right personnel to serve in the program and any other related needs. As you move ahead with your plans, keep the prayer group informed and up-to-date on your progress and any answers to prayer.

Note: Some of those in this group may also become part of the initial planning team but that will not necessarily be the case for all.

STEP 3 - PLAN

The next step is to create the PLAN or design that will *put feet* to the purpose; a plan that will make the purpose a reality. If a group is not already in place to move into the planning, seek God's choice of several people who have a heart to serve in this capacity. These will not necessarily be the people who will implement the plan, but should be people of vision who are familiar with the needs in your community.

There are several questions for the planning committee to address.

- **“WHAT will the program look like?”**

Each Adopt-A-School program will be unique to its church, its neighborhood and its resources. Once a clear PURPOSE is established, the next step is to consider several basic questions which will guide the planning. Brainstorm the answers to the following questions with the understanding that answers may change, be tweaked or even be eliminated as thoughts and plans progress over time.

Keep referring back to your PURPOSE statement making sure that each answer fits with the desired outcome for the program. Allow all ideas a place on the table at the start and then refine them as each question is thoughtfully and prayerfully answered. This step is very important and will probably take several sessions to accomplish.

Note: The ideas suggested in this handbook are merely provided to help stimulate your thinking.

- **WHO is the key target group?**

- School children?
- The school staff?
- The community families?

▪ **WHAT type of program will best accomplish the purpose?**

There are 2 phases or types of program that can be used in beginning an Adopt-A-School outreach. **Phase 1** is an entry type of program to foster a relationship with the school, one that continues to build and can lead to a **Phase 2** program. Each phase will depend on the church's situation and the purpose of the program. *(See examples on p. 5)*

▪ **WHERE will the program take place?**

The type of program chosen and the facilities available will determine WHERE the program should be held.

- the school
- the church
- a community centre

• **WHEN will the program happen?**

The answer should include a day of the week, time of day, and a target start date. Plan how often the program will happen (weekly, one or two times a month, daily, etc.) The type of program chosen will help to determine this.

▪ **HOW LONG will the program be?**

The type of program you choose will influence the timeline.

▪ **What is the estimated COST to the program?**

Begin to think of possible costs related to the program. The figures may change, but it is important to have at least a preliminary idea of costs. It will be helpful to have this information available when presenting this new ministry idea to the church leadership and for ongoing planning.

Note: It would also be good to discuss some ideas for how this project could be financed in order to prepare for the meeting with the church board.

▪ **What RESOURCES are available to implement the program?**

This question, in some situations, may need to be considered earlier in the planning, since it may have an impact on the type, place and time of the program chosen.

Some important items to consider in answering this question:

- Financial resources
- Facilities suitable and available – in church, school, community
- Personnel to lead and serve in the program
- Gifts and abilities of people in the church who might help, even occasionally
- Training for program staff

Be sure to list any other ideas that may be generated from the above questions. Take the time to rework your ideas, as needed, in light of these answers. Spend time in prayer and discussion to design and plan a program that will “best fit” your purpose and resources.

EXAMPLES OF *PHASES ONE AND TWO*

- **Phase 1:** Members of the church volunteer their services to assist the local school. This is based on the felt needs of the school as expressed by the principal and is a good initial connection with the school.

EXAMPLES OF PHASE 1 - AT THE SCHOOL
Tutoring in various subjects.
Help with special events: Field Day, Bake Sale, Hot Dog Day, School Fair
Electives Day: teach/assist in a skill
Join the Home and School Assoc. or School Council
Adopt a classroom – help with events, homework
Coach or assist with sports teams
Breakfast program assistance
Fill breakfast/snack bins
Listen to children read

- **Phase 2:** As the church is establishing a healthy connection with the school, the planning committee can be moving ahead developing a future ministry vision.

EXAMPLES OF PHASE 2 - AT THE CHURCH OR A COMMUNITY CENTRE
Breakfast Club
Skills Club – gardening, board games, cooking, sewing, art, sport stacks...
Active Games Club
Homework Club
Bible Activities Club
Family Movie Night
Community Sports Club
Reading Club/Story Time
P.A. Day Activities

For descriptions of several types of programs being conducted by churches, see Appendix 1, pp. 17-22. These may help to give you further ideas about what can be done in an Adopt-A-School program. The possibilities are endless, limited only by imagination and the church's resources.

STEP 4 - PRESENTATION OF THE IDEA



➤ ***To the Pastor/Children's Ministry leader/Church Board:***

Once the general plan is established, the next step is to confirm the idea with the pastor and/or children's ministry leader to be certain they understand what is involved and are still "on board". In an ideal situation, one of them would be involved with the planning committee. If not, be sure to keep them up to date as you move ahead with your planning.

It is now time to move forward by presenting the idea and plan to the church board or whoever is in the position to give permission to move ahead with the new ministry. Have all the information available to make a thorough presentation and to answer any questions that might arise. Members of the committee may choose to do this, or the pastor/children's worker may feel more comfortable presenting it themselves. It depends on each individual church situation.

Once permission is granted, the full-scale planning step (*See Step 5*) can be taken. Keep the church leadership fully informed as the plans and program develop.



➤ ***To the school:***

A connection now needs to be made with the school. Contact the school principal to set up an appointment. Ask this key question of the principal, "*We are from _____ church and have been wondering if there is anything we could do to be of assistance to you and the school?*" Make note of suggestions given and/or be ready to offer some from the plan that has been made. Discuss the roles the volunteers would play and clarify timelines and other necessary information to get the plan in motion.



➤ ***To the Church:***

It is important to inform the entire church congregation about this new ministry in order to get people excited and involved in prayer support. It will also serve to inspire others to consider and pray about how they can become involved. Ideally when introducing the idea, a brief presentation of the concept should be made during a regular worship service when most people are in attendance. That, however, will be at the discretion of the appropriate church leadership.

Prepare this presentation carefully along with an information flier to be handed out or put into the church bulletin. A response page can be added on the reverse side of the flier for people to respond to as part of the service or to take home as a reminder of how they can help and who they can contact. (*See sample inserts on following two pages.*) Be sure to give regular updates to the church.

SAMPLE: *Insert/Information Flier*

COMING SOON!

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL

PURPOSE: to tear down walls and build bridges to the children in our community.

PHILOSOPHY:

- To offer assistance at the school as needed
- To begin an after-school club next fall where we can share the love of Jesus in a practical way, thus forming positive relationships and providing a springboard for them to enter church activities if they wish.
- Occasionally we will run special events to which parents will be invited.

How will YOU help???

Prayer Team: To pray regularly for the planners, volunteers, and children involved in this outreach and to encourage those involved.

Building Bridges Team: To be a positive Christian presence at the school serving as a volunteer once a week for the remainder of this school year.

- Hot Dog Day Helpers; once a month (usually Thurs) 11:00am - 1:00pm
- Reading Buddy; one hour to a half day, weekly.
- Help with teacher-led extracurricular activities

Action Team: To help with the after-school club in the fall.

- Lead or help with various aspects of the program.
- Teach a four-week course to a group of kids.
- Purchase snacks.
- Prepare and serve snacks

Yes, I would like to help. Please contact me at:

Phone # _____

Email: _____

SAMPLE: *Response Page*

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL SURVEY

Name _____

Phone number _____ Email: _____

*Please tick **all** sections that interest you.*

____ Prayer team

____ School volunteer: ____ reading buddy (weekly)

____ hot dog day (monthly)

____ help occasionally for special events or clubs.

____ Helper, leader or kitchen crew at after-school club in the fall

____ I haven't decided yet. Please tell me more.

____ I can help, but not all year. I will be away in _____
months

____ I will commit to pray regularly for this program.

STEP 5 – TAKING THE FIRST STEPS



The “PHASE 1” Plan

Once the idea of adopting the school has been approved and details set up with the school for volunteer help, it is time to “step into action”:

- Meet with volunteers who have responded to help with the Phase 1 program. Begin the process of getting police checks as needed. *(See p.23)*
- Line up volunteers for the tasks and times requested by the school.
- Prepare a list of names, phone numbers and email addresses of volunteers, what they will do and the times they are available. Give a copy to the school principal as well as keeping one for the Adopt-A School files.
- Arrange a meeting with all the volunteers and the school principal to have procedures explained and questions answered. Determine which volunteers will do what and when, and set up a schedule, making sure that the school and each volunteer receives one and that you have one for your files. This is something that the school may wish to do themselves. Just check out with the principal how he/she would like to handle this.
- Encourage the volunteers by keeping in contact with them and the school to be certain that things are going smoothly. Conduct any one-on-one training and/or help as needed.
- Update the church leadership and congregation regularly on the progress of the program and items for prayer and praise.

Be sure to list any other ideas that may be generated from the above question. Take the time to rework the ideas, as needed, in light of these answers. Spend time in prayer and discussion to design and plan a program that will “best fit” the purpose and resources.

STEP 6 - CONTINUE STEPPING



THE “PHASE 2” PLAN

This part of the plan will hinge upon the purpose of the Adopt-A-School program, the long range vision and the resources available to implement it. It can be run in conjunction with some of the activities being done in the school or as a distinct *next step* program once a connection has been established.

A. PLAN THE DETAILS

It is time to review the original purpose statement and choose a Phase 2 program that will enable the purpose to be achieved. (See *Phase 2 chart, p. 5 for ideas*) Use the following questions to guide the planning:

1. What is the purpose?
2. What activities will be involved?
3. Where will this event take place?
4. When will it take place? What is the target start date?
5. How will the cost be covered?
6. Who is in charge of the program and what is their role?
It is important to have one person to be the leader in discussing, planning and putting a team together in order to keep communication open and clear to everyone.
7. What equipment and supplies are needed?
8. What tasks must be done in preparation? Who will be responsible for each task?
9. What leaders, workers and helpers are needed? What instruction and/or training should you offer?
10. How will the event be advertised?

Other key questions will no doubt arise. Think through every possible area where planning and preparation may be necessary and write out the details.

Note: All the specifics of the plan (*who is in charge; who does what; what specific activities will be done; how will the program run; etc...*) DO NOT have to be in place at this point. Once the idea has been presented to the church leadership and been approved, then the details can be put into place.

Sample Phase 2 Plan: *CHURCH COMMUNITY FAMILY NIGHT*

Below is a sample planning sheet for church community family night. Their Phase 2 plan emerged from a two-year Phase 1 school tutoring program. Hopefully this example of their planning as they answered each question will give a clear illustration of how it can be done for any program. Of course, each program is unique and will require more or fewer details.

1. What is your Purpose?

By providing wholesome family entertainment, we will create a bridge from our church to the people in our community.

2. What activities will be involved?

- Family movies not yet released to the general public will be shown.
- Snacks – popcorn - regular and caramel, juice boxes, bottled water, pop, coffee.

3. Where will the event take place?

- In the church activity hall.

4. When will this take place? What is the target starting date?

- 1st Sat. night of each month, Oct – May, 7-9 PM.
- Saturday, October 4.

5. Who is in charge of the program and what is their role?

- The associate pastor, working with the outreach team to plan and lead the event.

6. How will the cost be covered?

- Church to cover movie and license cost.
- Church congregation to supply popcorn/drinks the first few times.
- Free-will offering to cover the cost of snacks.

7. What equipment and supplies are needed?

- Digital projector, computer and/or TV, projections/Screen/extension cord, table as needed.
- Movie DVD.
- Chairs, cushions for floor.
- Serving table, popcorn (regular, caramel), juice boxes, bottled water, pop, coffee.
- Napkins, containers for popcorn, container for offering – large glass jar or basket

8. What tasks must be done in preparation?

- Publicity.
- Set up the hall.
- LCD projector-computer and/or TV, projection screen and sound equip set up.
- Purchase of snacks, paper products.
- Obtaining viewing license and movie DVD.
- Preview the movie to be sure the equipment works properly.
- Prepare snacks and set up serving table; place offering jar on table.
- Check on washrooms for supplies.
- Greeter(s) – welcome families and seat them.
- Clean up after the event.

9. What leaders, workers and helpers are needed? Who might be responsible for each area?

- Crew to set up movie and sound equipment and run the movie – AV guys
- Supply movie – get viewing license – Assoc. Pastor
- Set up crew – John
- Clean up crew – John and others
- Food crew – Jean
- Greeter(s) – Kathy
- Publicity – Sue

10. How will the event be advertised?

- Decide specific dates when the advertising will begin.
- Posters around town and large banner in front of church.
- Flier/bulletin inserts prepared to promote event.
- Who will create posters, banners and fliers?
- Several planned promotion blitz events with fliers distributed throughout the community by volunteers.
- Bulletin inserts and announcements at church to encourage members to publicize the event in their neighbourhoods.
- Notice to be included in local school newsletter.

B. RECRUIT THE TEAM

Once the details of the program have been determined, it is time to begin to recruit the team who will actually prepare and conduct the program. *(See question #9 above as a start)*

Steps To Successful Recruitment:

1. **Prepare a list of the jobs** and a description and expectations for each. People need to know exactly what they are signing up for and what is expected of them. Be sure to advertise that there will be training and direction given for each area of responsibility. This gives people a chance to look over what is needed, to pray and consider where they would best be able to help.

Job description examples from the church's plan:

➤ Greeters:

- Meet and converse with people/families as they arrive and at the end of the evening.
- Assist with coats, backpacks, etc.
- Help seat people in the hall.

➤ Set Up Crew/AV Crew:

- Set up hall with chairs, cushions, blankets, etc.
- Set up snack table.
- Set up AV equipment for movie.
- One person to run equipment.

➤ Publicity:

- Create the posters – distribute around the community on dates decided.
- Prepare the ad for the school newsletter.
- Produce a large banner for church front.
- Produce a "Family Movie Night" flier for distribution.
- Work with leaders of the program to coordinate a neighbourhood blitz with fliers for the start of the event. Flier should include all planned dates.
- Create bulletin insert – be sure inserts are placed in the church bulletins on the dates decided.

➤ And so on... for each job needed.

2. **Prepare a brief, enthusiastic presentation** of the projected program, its purpose and the need for specific volunteer help. Be sure to emphasize that there will be “job training” and team meetings. Prepare a list of job descriptions and time commitment expectations prepared to distribute.
3. **Present the challenge** and need within the church:
 - To individuals one on one.
 - To the entire congregation.
 - To various church ministry groups. Decide which groups (ladies, teens, adult Bible study, seniors, men, etc.) would be best suited to being involved in this program. Set up a time to challenge them to get involved.
 - Other venues...
4. **Set up a short meeting for all interested volunteers** to discuss the idea in more detail, answer questions and get a list of those willing to help in the various roles.

C. PREPARE THE TEAM

Now is the time to plan instruction and training for the volunteers in order to make the program excellent and to ensure that the workers feel confident and excited about participating.

Train and instruct the volunteers in:

- *Individual job/responsibilities within the program.*
- *All aspects of the program:*
 - How their part fits into the whole.
 - Timetable for the program.
 - Responsibilities throughout the program/event when not assigned to an activity.
- *Child protection procedures (p. 23)*
 - Follow the church’s policy.
 - Police check requirement
- *Management and Discipline (pp. 23-26)*
- *Pray regularly together as a team:*
 - At training/instruction meetings.
 - Schedule regular times for staff meetings and prayer through the year.

STEP 7 – “STEP INTO” THE PROGRAM



The final step in the planning and preparation process is to step into the first day of the program and put all the pieces together. This step will reveal any parts that need to be strengthened, modified or adapted.

Be sure to get feedback from the people who are actually working in the program and be alert to comments by the participants.

Be prepared to make changes in the early days as all the kinks are worked out – things that were not anticipated on paper may become evident as things progress.

STEP 8 – REVIEW THE STEPS

Plan for regular team meetings, either with the group or individually, to:

- Allow team members to share progress and evidences of God working in lives.
- Discuss needed adjustments to make the program more effective and to solve problems that arise.
- Share feedback about the program.
- Spend time in prayer. This is the powerhouse of the program.

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL



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APPENDIX 1 – Sample Programs

Kids' Company Program

It began in the fall of 2005 with a vision to build bridges to the community surrounding our church by linking with the local school and providing life skills education for the children.

Vision Statement: to show the love of God in a practical way to the children, their families and the school staff. In the future, as the families become comfortable with us, they might choose to attend other programs in the church. Our **Adopt-A-School** timeline of development looked something like this.

Oct. 2005	A small committee began visioning and planning.
Mar. 2006	Church members began volunteering in the school.
Oct. 2006	We launched Kids' Company – our after-school life skills program.
2006 - 2013	Our Kids' Company program was very popular and well received by the children, their families and the school. The school noticed positive changes in the children and the school community itself, e.g. less fighting on the yard. Volunteers continued to help at the school.
2008	Kids from the program began to also attend Sunday School. By 2012 almost half of our Sunday School were children who came to us via Kids' Company. Many have also attended VBS, our summer Day Camp, and several have gone to Christian camps in the area.
Oct. 2008	We began a community Hallowe'en outreach, providing candy bags for the kids and hot chocolate and conversation for parents on the front lawn of the church.
Dec. 2008 - 2009	We sponsored a Christmas outreach to the school staff, inviting them as our guests to our church's Christmas banquet.
Oct. 2009	We began a Junior Leadership Program for grade 7 & 8 graduates from Kids' Company.
Fall 2010	A small group began a practical outreach to the nearby subsidized housing development, helping with painting and cleaning units for new tenants, providing morning coffee times once a month, etc.
Jan. - Mar. 2012 & 13	We introduced Kids' Chorus, instead of our regular Kids' Company format during the winter. Over a 9 week period, we produced a Christian musical. In 2012 – The Runaway – the story of Jonah In 2013 – The Story-Tellin' Man – the story of Jesus and several of his Parables
Fall 2012	Kids' Company graduates began attending our Junior High program.



The Kids' Company Mission Statement – *a free after-school program making Christ relevant to our community by teaching the children skills that will enhance their lives.*

Over the years we have taught the children cooking, sewing, woodworking, computers, board games, many different crafts, bicycle maintenance, pastels and water colours, crocheting, gardening, photography, quilting, cross stitch, simple science experiments, camp skills, sport stacks, hand chimes, drama, sports and active games. We also tried a homework club and lending library of children's books. The electives that we offered are based on the skills that people in the church were willing to teach.

Breakfast Club & Adopt-A-Child Ministry

BREAKFAST CLUB

The pastor's wife approached the principal at the public school, which is right behind our church, to ask if we could do a special "gift-giving" at Christmas time. She had had previous experience with "Adopting-A-Child-For-Christmas" at a former church. When she explained the idea, the principal was receptive to the offer.

During the conversation, the principal mentioned to her that the school had applied for the government-funded Breakfast Program, but that their facilities were 'limited' as to what they could prepare. She wondered whether the school kids might come to the church building and have breakfast there. In September, volunteers from our church began serving breakfast to the children who chose to come on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week. We serve a variety of cereals, toast with jam, and juices, and provide table games to play. Fruits & vegetables, cheese, yogurt, breakfast bars, hot chocolate, etc. are part of the menu when funding allows it or if they are donated. Each Wednesday, a hot breakfast is served, usually pancakes, grilled cheese or French toast.

Seven years later, we are still serving the Lord and the children of our community with this important ministry. Because of the breakfast program, we are feeding those who are physically hungry or alone in the morning. In the beginning the Breakfast program served an average of 75 to 100 children each day. When drop-off points and school buses were re-scheduled, enrollment dropped to an average of 45 to 75 children.

ADOPT-A CHILD FOR CHRISTMAS

Before Christmas, our church congregation was invited by the school to Adopt-A-Child for Christmas, purchasing gifts for the child as if they “were our own”. This proved so successful that it has become an ongoing Christmas ministry. The Public school gives us a list of children indicating sex and age. On a sheet of paper the child requests what they would like for Christmas. People from the congregation choose one of the children and get the list of articles suggested by the child.

A date is set in mid-December to bring the gifts to the church. We are to place all the presents in a bag with wrapping paper, bows and scotch tape. Next, the organizer from the school and volunteers from the church, organize the gift bags. When the parents or guardians come to the church to get the gifts, they just have to pick up their gift bag with all the wrapping supplies provided. They can then wrap the parcels after they have seen what's been purchased.

Note: Last year, several gift bags broke in the parking lot when trying to get them over to the school building, so this year the gift bags were kept at the church. It worked out beautifully. Having the parents come to the church also saved transporting everything twice. Since the two buildings are so close together, no one was the wiser. These families don't know that they are adopted by the church; they just know that the church is open for this event and that they are in partnership with a generous community.

God has certainly blessed the people involved in these “outreach” ministries and because of our willingness and desire to reach out to those around us with Christ's Love and example, more opportunities for service have developed:

- Our pastor is available as the “chaplain” at the school and is asked to give the prayer and blessing at graduation ceremonies, etc.
- The school verbally announces or includes in their newsletter certain events at the church.
- An OPP officer from town comes to the breakfast program at times in order to mingle and talk with the kids.
- Donations allow the Adopt-A-Child families to also receive grocery gift cards at Easter and Christmas.
- Contacts have been made and meaningful relationships developed.
- We have received requests for prayer.
- Children have come to our Vacation Bible School and Youth group activities.
- Families or individuals from the school and community have attended Sunday morning services and/ or have come to special events.

What a blessing it is to serve our Lord through these two ministries.

Movie Night and More!!

“How Can We Help?”

It all began with one mother when her child began preschool. As the moms helped one another in the early days of the school year, relationships began to form. This mom soon became involved as a volunteer in the Home & School group. As she became more aware of the needs at the school, she wondered, “How can our church help to meet these needs?” Since the church had a children’s program with games equipment, ideas and people who knew how to lead, when the school wanted to host a Fun Fair, the church volunteered to run the games, a project which involved several church members. This positive experience led the church to continue asking, “What can we do to help?” They began looking for intentional ways to serve the school.

At a Home & School fundraiser planning meeting, a “movie night” was proposed. Once again, this mom brought the idea back to the church and they decided to get involved. The church volunteered its facility to host and present the movie as a family event with no charge to the school, but setting a \$2.50 fee for each person attending in order to cover the cost of the movie license fee. The school was able to raise funds by running a food concession during the movie. What a successful partnership this proved to be! “Movie Night” is now held several times during the year. It has provided a way for the church to provide a friendly and safe place to those who might otherwise never enter its doors, as well as giving an opportunity to expose people to what is happening in the church.

The results? Over the years the school has often expressed how the kindness and generosity of the church has overwhelmed them. Tangibly, a number of children from school families have begun attending the church Awana program and hearing about Jesus – maybe for the first time. All because one mom and her church got involved!

'Becoming A Blessing' School Program

"God convicted our church that we were not displaying the generosity of the gospel toward our community... so we resolved that with God's help we would become a blessing in our city – to demonstrate Christ's love to them and to bring healing to the places in our city that needed Him most.

Shortly thereafter, God brought to our attention an underperforming public elementary school in our inner city. It was the worst ranked school in our county and was on track to be shut down within two years.

At the invitation of the principal, we led several innovative projects for that school over the next several years. Our people started tutoring children and some of our small groups adopted classrooms and teachers and met physical needs of families in the school. One soon-to-be married couple in our church asked that any gifts for their marriage be redirected to a family in the school whose house had been destroyed by fire.

By the fourth year of our involvement, the school had the highest percentage of kids pass their end-of-year exams of any school in the county. The principal officially credited the church's efforts with helping to improve the school's academic performance. At a subsequent teacher's banquet one of the teachers said, 'I have always known you Christians believed you should love your neighbor, but I've never known what it looked like until now.'

...this experience galvanized our church in such a way that serving in our city is part of our church's DNA now, with a significant amount of our church body involved."

From article "Plumb lines for Community Engagement" by J.D. Greear

A Breakfast Club Becomes Much More!

Each school day from October and to the end of May, 20 to 25 school children sit down for breakfast at the local church. They arrive as early as 7:30, eat between 8:00 and 8:25, and are off to their nearby elementary school by 8:35. Those who come early have crafts and games to pass the time, or they can work up an appetite with the gym equipment. Before leaving they are encouraged to brush their teeth with brushes and toothpaste provided through the Regional Public Health.

Volunteers cook and serve breakfast, clean up, sit and visit at the tables, supervise and help with activities. They try to keep an eye out for everything from making sure there is enough food to prevention of problems "Can this grade-one child balance both a full plate of pancakes with slippery banana slices and a full glass of cranapple juice?"

The volunteers enjoy being together in a positive, friendly and focused environment. They are offered classes in such areas as first aid and food handling. They also receive police checks. Regular and on-call volunteers include members of the church congregation, parents and neighbours, as well as staff and teachers from the school. Currently there are 27 volunteers to run the program. Most come one or two days per week.

The menu follows set guidelines covering all food groups. On Mondays scrambled eggs are served. On Wednesdays and Fridays cooked meals of pancakes, waffles, grilled cheese sandwiches, French toast, eggs-in-the-nest, or mini-pizzas on English muffins are served. Tuesdays and Thursdays feature bagels donated by a local Tim Horton's and toasted to order. *(The regional office of Tim Horton's will advise which store(s) can be approached about this.)* Every day the children can also have cut-up fruit, cheese, juice, milk, yogurt cups and cold and hot cereal.

There is no cost to families, nor is there any means test. Everyone is welcome. An attendance list is maintained compiled from returned permission slips. The program aims to promote good health and performance for the students through nourishing meals. While the predominant obstacle in families is economic, others can include scheduling and health issues at home. If parents of young children must be at work at 7 o'clock in the morning, we might assume it is up to family and neighbours to step in and help. Jesus assumes that we, the church, see ourselves as family and neighbours. Our church is honoured to serve as Jesus' hands in our community, helping our neighbours overcome issues of money and time.

APPENDIX 2 – Child and Worker Protection

Child Worker Policy

Any church with any type of programming for children should have a child worker policy in place for insurance purposes. Each church should check any existing policy to see if it is adequate for the programs being offered and the staff needed to conduct them. If the church does not have such a policy, one should be put into place either by:

- Designing one – see many good examples from churches on the web.
- Using the Plan to Protect Program – check on line at www.winningkids.ca

Police Check

Each person age 18 and up who works in a church program involving children must obtain a police check for protection and insurance purposes. *(This is for ON. Other provinces may differ in requirements.)* Check your local police station for the procedure and documents needed. A minimal fee is charged for volunteer workers which may require a letter from the church stating that the person applying will be volunteering at the church. Consideration could be given by the church to cover this fee in the Adopt-A-School budget.

APPENDIX 3 – Class “Management-Discipline” Plan

A successful children’s program of any design is one which provides an atmosphere of fun, learning and security. A good way to ensure this is to have a “Management-Discipline Plan” in place. This will ensure that everyone, children and adults, will feel secure in knowing what is expected of them in order to keep the program fun, friendly and safe for everyone. The plan will include some basic rules or guidelines as to how both children and adults are to conduct themselves in order to maintain a safe and respectful atmosphere. As discipline is “training” ideas are given to assist the child to correct misbehavior. It may also be a good idea to outline the consequences for misbehavior, as each situation warrants. If the church has such a plan in place, then the Adopt-A-School program automatically comes under those guidelines.

If the church has no officially stated guidelines, it is important to develop a plan that considers the culture of the children who will attend (*e.g. no church background, lack of respect for authority*) as well as the type of Adopt-A School program which you are proposing. Be sure the church leadership is aware of the plan to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that it is in line with the church standards.

Note: Bible Centered Ministries offers training on the topic of Classroom Management and Discipline and will assist a church in designing a plan suited to its specific situation if needed.

Sample: “Discipline Guidelines”

Below are some sample discipline guidelines taken from a number of church program plans and some “tried and tested” tips for managing a roomful of children. Permission is given to use any parts of these ideas that may be of help in developing a “Management-Discipline Plan”.

#1 R-E-S-P-E-C-T Model

- R Respect** for God, each other, your leaders, materials and the church building
- E Enter** politely, walking and keeping hands and feet to yourself
- S Stay** in your assigned area with your table group or in your elective room. You need permission to leave the area.
- P Be Polite** to leaders and each other. Follow leaders' directions.
- E Each** of You needs to keep your own name tag. We respect you and want to know your name.
- C Coats** and backpacks need to be neatly hung or placed along the edge of the assigned room. Toys need to be left in your backpack.
- T Try your best in everything you do!**

REMEMBER: “We really want you here, but we will not permit unsafe or defiant behaviour.”

#2 Discipline Plan and Consequences

Some suggested steps that can be taken to give the child an opportunity to correct misbehavior – and, as needed, dealing with persistent misbehavior.

- A look or quiet word from a leader.
- Child is moved away from friends. Distractions are removed until after the program.
- Time out for a chat with a leader and/or program director.
- Give child an opportunity to “redeem” the behavior and to improve.
- If misbehavior persists, director can speak with parents and/or the school.

#3 Basic “Cool Rules” for Everyone!

We want to honour and respect God . . . so we will:

1. Honour and respect one another in actions, words and attitudes.
2. Allow only one person to speak at a time.
3. Be good listeners both to our teacher and others.
4. Be obedient to our leaders.
5. Raise our hand to be heard and wait to be called on.
6. Speak politely to each other; use “please”, “thank you” and “excuse me” often.
7. Remain in our seats unless given permission to move.

#4 Tips for Good Classroom Discipline and Management

1. **Pray!** Ask God for His creativity and power to be a well-prepared, motivational teacher. Pray for your individual students and their needs.
2. **Speak softly but firmly!** Lower your voice and the students will quiet down to hear you. Speaking softly yet firmly is powerful. (You cannot shout them when there are more of them than you!)
3. **Watch the action!** Train yourself to “be aware” of all activity in the room while you are teaching. Many problems occur when students “think” you do not see them doing the little things that can disturb.
4. **Be a name dropper!** Be a “name dropper” by incorporating the name of the student who is disturbing or not paying attention into a statement as you teach. Or on the other hand, drop the name of students who are doing very well with following directions.
5. **Close in!** Be free to walk around the room and stand near the students as you teach. Just walking/standing by an inattentive student communicates that you are AWARE and CARE. A gentle pat on the shoulder also communicates the same message.
6. **Connect the eyes!** Look your students in the eyes as you teach. Catching the eye of a problem student with a look that says “That is not acceptable!” often stops the problem. It sends the message that you know what is happening even as you are teaching.
7. **Use that signal!** Develop a signal with your students which they know means they are to be QUIET. A raised hand, lights off and on, a bell or music are good for “ALL” to be quiet. Signals such as a firm shake of the head or a finger to the lips or a quick snap of the finger can also be used with individual students.

8. **Be quiet!** Train the students to know you will not speak (nor will anyone else, child or leader) until everyone is listening. STOP and WAIT till all talking stops after you have given the signal. SILENCE is a powerful tool. Let students know time is being wasted while you wait and it may mean a special activity might have to be cancelled or postponed for lack of time.
9. **Divide 'n' conquer!** Allow students (especially children) to choose where they will sit. Remind them that YOU will choose a seat for them if they disturb the group. Keep your word and separate any who disobey. Temporarily remove a disobedient student from the group for a short time – in a chair off to the side. Allow that student to CHOOSE when they are ready to do what is expected and return to the group.
10. **Keep laughin'!** Pick your battles. Sometimes some behaviours can best be remedied by a good laugh, even at your expense. Sometimes you need to laugh rather than pounce!

APPENDIX 4 – Building Team Spirit

One of the great things about taking on any new ministry is the growth of the team that will help to “make it happen”. It is important to take the time and energy needed to work on building the team at the same time the ministry is being developed. As you move further into the phases of the outreach, your team will become a valuable asset in developing their own ideas that will enhance the program, approaches to problems, etc.

Help the team to feel **a part of the process**:

1. Hold regular staff meetings

- A short meeting before the event each time (*or whenever is possible*) can be a time for outlining the day's program, sharing strategies for any potential problems, sharing praises and concerns, and spending time in prayer.

2. Publicly celebrate the team's successes.

- Bulletin board displays about your ministry with lots of photos helps the church to keep informed about the outreach.
- Make sure the registration form includes permission to take and post pictures of the children. (*Sample on pg. 30*)
- Have a volunteer take responsibility for keeping the board updated.
- Arrange to have a chance to recognize the volunteers with the church and to share about the ministry in a Sunday morning service.
- Occasionally put an update in the church bulletin or announcement screen.

3. Demonstrate volunteer appreciation.

- Affirm volunteers in front of the children.
- Be specific in ways that leaders help: *“Let’s give a cheer for Maggie. She did such a great job leading our games today.”*
- Write a “thank you” after an event, or for an individual’s ongoing service.
- Take a team member(s) out for coffee or a meal, individually or as a group.
- Express a “Thank you!” many, many times throughout the year,

4. Conduct an annual (or as needed) evaluation meeting.

- Evaluation form: Prepare one for each team member to fill out. *(Sample, pp. 28-29)*
Stress the importance of having their thoughts and ideas in order to improve and make the best God-honoring program for the children. Forms can be handed out in advance, or time taken at the beginning of the meeting to be filled out. Having a form can help those who don’t like to speak up in a meeting to still have input, and gives those who do like to speak a chance to think in advance. *(See sample on pg. 28-29)*
- Provide a special snack and fellowship time.
- Informal share time of praise for all that God has done during the year.
- Share the ideas that arise from the items on the form.
- Brainstorm plans for the future.
- Spend time in prayer.

5. Check for needed changes.

After the team evaluation, arrange for the planning group together to consider any problems that will need correcting or possible changes needed:

A. Review the Adopt-A-School goals.

- Have many of the initial goals been met? What are the present goals going forward?
- Are changes needed to be made due to . . . increasing numbers, timing issues, culture changes, staff changes...?
- Are there team member (s) who might be trained to take on more leadership?

B. Encourage the team members to share their concerns on an ongoing basis, and be available to meet with them and to help, where needed.

SAMPLE - *Evaluation Form*

(This form is designed for a large group program with a variety of activities. However, many of the basic questions are relevant for evaluating any size program.)

1. What did you enjoy the most this year?

2. Numbers – How many have been attending on a regular basis?

3. Timing

- Beginning and ending dates
- Schedule for workers – staggering weeks on and off
- Times for activities

4. Arrival and dismissal times

5. Crew time

- Activities -
- Crew to leader ratio – name tags for all?
- Room arrangement

6. Music

- Songs used - kids' response

7. Bible Time

- Content- *stories, drama, videos, talks*
- Kids' response
- Memory verses

8. Kids accepting Christ

- Follow-Up/Discipling Plan – this year – future?

9. Staff Meetings

- Content -Timing

10. Discipline

- Concerns – specific program areas – solutions – suggestions for next

11. Rooms – set up:

- Number of helpers needed - tables needed, etc. – ways to improve procedure.

12. Electives:

- Elective you taught or helped in:
 - Did the kids enjoy it?
 - Discuss ways to improve elective time.
 - Did you know what to do? Were the instructions clear to be effective in helping?
- Other elective ideas.

13. Special Parent Programs –

- Christmas - Year End – other ideas/times?

14. Church

- Communication (Do we keep them informed enough?) - Ideas to improve this.

15. Kitchen -Snacks: positives- problems – solutions?

16. Teen leaders

- Pick up plan; communication in area of rides needed – not attending, etc.
- Drivers – pick up locations/times/substitute drivers?
- How should we encourage grade 6's to come to youth events?

17. Visioning for the future

SAMPLE – *Registration Form*

Registration Form (one per family)

(If more than 2 children in family, please provide information on an additional sheet of paper.)

Child's Name _____ Birth Date _____ Grade _____
month/day/year

Parent/Guardian's Names _____

Address _____
_____ Postal Code _____

Parent/Guardian's Email _____

Phone (Home) _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

Allergies/Health Conditions _____

Dismissal (choose one): ☐ My child is to walk home or meet me outside
☐ My child is to be picked up by _____

_____ I give permission for my child's photo to be included in church promotional material including print materials, video and/or website.

My child has my permission to attend _____ (Name of Event here) _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

