

What Does a Child See in Your Church?

Over the past four weeks I've visited four different churches. Each church dramatically different from the other in terms of environment, community, and worship style. And yet there were consistencies that were very helpful/impactful to my first-time attending family.

Here are some notables from a few of the churches:

- **Directional Signage!** Once we walked in the building it was obvious where to go to check in kids. The signage was eye-catching and the check-in space easily accessible.
- **Security!** It is obvious how much a kids ministry values security when they employ a name tag policy. Only allowing access to certain areas of the kids space to those wearing parent receipts or volunteer name tags.
- **Environments!** I've seen some spaces that look nothing like school, daycare or home. I love seeing the many ways creativity is employed to make a space unique for kids. Don't forget to get on your knees and look at your space from their perspective. What would you add ... or change?

And a few things to check into:

- **Human Signage** – In one church the layout was so odd that we walked down a hallway that wraps around the main auditorium. We walked for a few minutes without encountering a person or open kids room. I almost thought we were headed the wrong direction. Some 'Human Signage' would have been highly beneficial. A quick smile, friendly greeting, handshake or just general availability to assure us we're headed in the right direction. Many times we can't do anything about our

physical space. So we find creative ways to accommodate. Employing some of those volunteers that are natural “huggers and shakers” can go a long way toward resolving the quirky facility challenges.

- **Inviting Entries!** Wish I could come up with better verbage for this, but it’s late. It boils down to asking yourself: Are my rooms inviting from the threshold? What entices a kid to want to enter the room? What tells them that if they don’t cross that threshold, they’re missing something B-I-G? I think I’m guilty of assuming that the fun things in my elementary space would entice any kid. I’ve been reminded that if they can’t see it from where they stand on the other side of the door, they may never know what they’re missing. It doesn’t have to be boisterous, or loud, or obnoxious. In fact, it’s better if it isn’t. It just has to be enticing.
- **Opportune Moments!** One church we visited forced the parents to stand in the lobby while they’re child is called downstairs from the kids space. Though the process was fairly efficient, they missed an opportunity to communicate in a unique way. As the parents stood in line a flat screen television hanging on the wall in front of them sat completely blank. What information regarding your ministry would you love to communicate in that 2-3 minute time frame? Companies pay big bucks for a 30 second commercial before of a captive audience. This church had 180 seconds. Missed opportunity.

One of the best things to do for your ministry is to adjust your lens and view it from a completely different perspective—a new family perspective. Put it on your calendar and make it a priority at least two times a year. Walk through your space—entrance to exit—and ask yourself, “If I were a new family, would I know where to go, what to do, or what to say?”

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marriage to Kyle keeps her marginally sane, while their three kids (Keegan, Josie and Connor) keep her from taking herself too seriously. Visit her blog at [for more information about her ministry.](#)