

## Prioritize Your Ministry Energy

based loosely on Young Life leadership training

*No matter what your title or gender, you are part shepherd. Take care of your flock!*

Read this 3 times.

Love every kid in your ministry but **throw your discretionary hours** into the lives of kids.

THESE ARE IN PRIORITY ORDER

#1 kids who are the most spiritually fertile soil

#2 kids with solid Christian homes

#3 kids with 2 parents at home [*Christian or not*] who are trying their best to help their own kids

#4 Christian kids

75%

#5 kids who have their heads on straight who have already developed some of the following:

kindness, respect for authority and for others, eagerness to learn, diligence, conscientious school students, friendship, compassion, leadership, willingness to follow, honest, and dependable.

These parents need to know there is someone who is willing to invest time in their kids' lives.

You are called to discipleship not just to help kids who will prey on your kindness with no intent in growing.

Give every kid **a piece of your life** until he proves that he is wasting the limited time God has given you. There is a time to cut the scoffer off. Jesus allowed the Pharisees to join His "large group time" and some did come to faith, but regarding His disciples, **"He chose them that they might be WITH Him."** *Mark 3.14*

15% for the group of kids who seem to be genuinely interested in what your ministry is all about

5% for new kids or those you know little about, single-parent homes, fringe kids

25%

5% for kids who have proven themselves untrustworthy.

This last group would suck up 85% of your ministry efforts if given the opportunity:

\* they are likely to be a divisive or negative factor, also likely to submarine your goals

\* likely to intentionally draw others away from allegiance to you

\* they can be parasites getting only what benefits them out of your ministry

*BUT be aware that you may have drawn a leader onto your staff who has a craving to touch the lives of these kinds of kids.*

*This type of staff member is still under your direction and must see his/her role as one which promotes the overall goals of the present ministry. If his/her efforts begin to conflict with the ministry you have been called to lead, encourage and give them the freedom to serve somewhere else. Send him/her off to join another ministry which targets kids you don't know how to reach and which fits his passion.*

Some of this last group of kids will blossom far beyond your wildest dreams [*but not many*]. Invest the sand in your hourglass for the greatest harvest. Plant, water, fertilize, cultivate, and protect the seeds in the good soil. Just make sure the kids with the strongest homes [*Christian or not*] get the benefit of your passion. These will be the kids who lead your ministry after you are gone.

I had nine children and can identify only 3 teachers [*one teacher of 3-year olds, one teacher of 4 and 5-year olds, and a teenage Indonesian teacher of my 3rd graders*] who ever walked into any of my kids' lives, and then only briefly. I even went to a number of my kids' teen leaders, Sunday School teachers, Ranch directors and Youth Pastors to ask them to do me a favor and take special interest in my kids. Nobody ever showed up at the house.

Although some of my kids did get pretty involved in the youth programs as teens, my kids barely remember the names of any teacher or leader from their youth. Response, almost negative.

Salaried leaders invested much time in the "program" but the trickle-down results weren't perceived by the parents. At home, my kids didn't talk about youth activities or leaders or even kids getting saved at youth meetings. And I didn't hear them pray for their youth leaders, either.

Love the saprophytic families who send their kids to a "wholesome" place hoping they will get inoculated against the "evil infections" of the bad things out there. But give your energy to people, not events.

P.S. Don't treasure time in your office more than you do spending time with the kids. If you're only getting paid for 15 hours a week, spend 3-6 of those hours hanging out with kids, skateboarding, eating pizza, planning with your kids for the next meeting, inviting them to your office [*male shepherds can minister to teen girls 2-at-a-time*], witnessing together, setting up the meeting room, finding kids to invite to come out.