



YM LABS

LEARN, EXPERIMENT, AND EMPOWER YOUR TEAM

6 HACKS FOR PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

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STEP ONE: EVALUATE

INSTRUCTIONS: Get together with a few members of your team who can help you evaluate your current efforts and strategies for partnering with parents. Then walk through this evaluation form together.

WHAT'S WORKING? Make a list of everything you currently do to partner with parents. Then, after each item, rate how well you are executing each of those efforts, maybe on a scale of 1-5.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK? Make a list of everything you've tried in the past to partner with parents that you are no longer doing. Then, after each item, specify the difficulties or failures of that effort or strategy.

WHAT NEEDS A SECOND CHANCE? Look at your list in the box above. Which of those items, if any, deserve a second chance, maybe with new leadership or a few tweaks?

WHAT DO WE NEED TO TRY? What are some brand new efforts or strategies for partnering with parents that you'd like to try next?

STEP TWO: LISTEN

THE OVERVIEW

For this part of the Experiment, you're going to organize a small Focus Group of parents who can help you better understand what the parents in your ministry need from you. Keep in mind, though, that this is just a Focus Group. It will probably give you some interesting insights and guidance, but it will always be limited by the perspectives and opinions of the people in the room. Listen carefully and ask great questions, knowing that ultimately, you'll need to decide the best solutions and strategies for your ministry.

THE SUPPLIES

To prepare for this Experiment, you'll need...

- A **handful of parents** (plus anyone from your team who might benefit from being there).
- A **place to hang out** for a few hours.
- A **creative board** for brainstorming ideas.
- Colorful **note cards** (maybe one color for each topic you'll be covering).
- **Push pins.**
- **Sharpies.**
- Coffee. Also snacks.

THE INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. IDENTIFY YOUR FOCUS GROUP.** Who will you invite to be a part of this conversation? Think about parents whose opinions you trust, but also try to choose parents who represent families in a variety of family situations. As you work on your parent partnering strategy, you'll want to be sure that what you're doing has the potential to reach as many families as possible - not just one kind of family. Jot down their names and then invite them.
- 2. IDENTIFY YOUR PLACE.** Where will you meet and for how long? Write it down.
- 3. ASK QUESTIONS AND LISTEN WELL.** Set up your creative, note cards, pins, and Sharpies. Oh, and the coffee and snacks, of course. Ask your parents key questions and put their ideas and suggestions on your board. Try...
 - What's the most helpful thing our ministry has ever done for you or your family, if anything?
 - What is your biggest need or struggle as a parent?
 - If our ministry could do anything for you and your family, what would it be?
 - What do you think our ministry's philosophy is when it comes to partnering with parents and families?
 - How would you describe your relationship with our ministry? With your child's small group leader?
 - What are your preferred means of communication? (Email, Facebook, texting, snail mail?)
 - What kind of information would you like to receive from our ministry?
 - What kinds of events would be interesting or helpful to you as a parent?
- 4. SAY THANKS!** Thank your Focus Group parents with a small gift card or other token of appreciation.

STEP THREE: MAKE IT HAPPEN

INSTRUCTIONS: Decide what you'll do, and when you'll do it, to better partner with parents in the coming year.

TO DO: _____ **DUE:** _____

PERSON IN CHARGE: _____

TO DO: _____ **DUE:** _____

PERSON IN CHARGE: _____

TO DO: _____ **DUE:** _____

PERSON IN CHARGE: _____

TO DO: _____ **DUE:** _____

PERSON IN CHARGE: _____