ABSTRACT

TEAM LEADERSHIP: CORE COMPETENCIES IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

by

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Children's ministries can be challenging because those overseeing it are often expected to provide pastoral and administrative care for children, their parents and relatives, and volunteers. Additionally, the ministries are expected to give children the opportunity to see their church working together like the Trinity through parental and nonparental models as well as participate relationally within it. One way to address these challenges is to develop Team Leaders (TLs).

Thus, the purpose of this dissertation was to discover valued core competencies of TLs in children's ministries through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well as from the perspectives of Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and their volunteers. A survey (volunteer survey) was used to determine the perspectives of volunteers. The viewpoints of DCMs were discovered through Director Focus Group discussions (DFGs). Churches from the Ohio Valley District (OVD) of the Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA) denomination participated. Eleven DCMs each joined one of four DFGs, and 100 unpaid children's ministry workers from these 11 churches participated in the volunteer survey.

While Directors (DCMs) valued the skills and characteristics particularly needed for shared leadership, volunteers tended to value more foundational leadership competencies. Both DCMs and volunteers valued a team as a way to show children an

example of shared (or interdependent), Trinity-like leadership. Additionally, participants

valued Team Leaders who empowered rest and sacrifice.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

This chapter presents the dissertation rationale. A personal connection, between the need for competent Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministry and this research, exists. The chapter introduces the purpose of the study and the scope of the research—the literature reviewed, and the themes presented. A methodology for discovering the core competencies of TLs will be explained, including key terms and study delimitations.

Personal Introduction

As the Director of Children's Ministry (DCM) at a growing church, I experienced tension. I was overseeing a ministry with 200 children, about the same number of parents, and around 150 volunteers. Because I was unable to provide proper care and leadership on my own for that many people, I began to develop lay leaders to assist in caring for and leading other volunteers.

Later, when looking for a new position as a children's director, I found that many of the churches with which I interviewed had similar issues. It seems most DCMs are hired because they are "good with children," but, when the ministries begin to grow, an ability to care and provide leadership for leading adults is lacking.

Soon, I began ministering in smaller churches and found that leadership in children's ministries was often lacking no matter how large the congregation. If churches employ a rotational scheme for scheduling volunteers, the number of workers needed can be almost 25% of the total church attendance. Recruiting that many people is difficult. Spreading out this responsibility could make finding more volunteers an easier task, but authorizing others to build teams is not usually done in ministry with young people.

When it does happen, it is not usually something volunteers themselves are empowered to do.

Additionally, my experience with ministries that do use rotational scheduling often involves a lack of relational consistency between children and those on the schedule. However, having others–Team Leaders–who were there often but not actually in classes with children, could create ways for boys and girls to relate to a single adult rather than many. As a paid ministry leader for children, I have discovered that lack of relational connectedness and direct leadership causes confusion, isolation, and burnout among volunteers, lay leaders, and staff. It stunts the growth of lay leadership within children's ministries. Because of how challenging it is to communicate with many leaders in ways that connect with each of them, the frustration from unclear communication prevents moving forward in a unified way.

The pressures that accompany ministry to children are vast. As a DCM, I needed to know how to involve youth volunteers, lead young and older adults, and care for the vastly different needs of babies, preschoolers, young grade schoolers, and preteens. Background and reference checks and check-in software and hardware had to be used for safety, adding paperwork and skill with technology to my job description. I administered vacation Bible schools, camps, special outings, outreaches, and other programs on top of regular Sunday morning ministry. Parents and volunteers were often in need of pastoral care—not to mention the children! If these pressures are not shared, burnout or lack of healthy leadership can result. In my experience, most lead pastors have never been children's pastors and therefore compound the issues with a general lack of understanding.

Churches often look for programs or systems to invest in parents as the primary spiritual leaders of their children. However, many churches discover that parents do not have the time or inclination to attend a class, lecture, seminar, or even small group related to parenting or spiritual development. Having additional leaders to guide parents can create organic connection points for learning and growing outside of formal classes or groups.

I have known very talented parents (and others) who desired to engage in ministry with their children but were gifted in leadership rather than teaching. Being a teacher in a class did not appeal to or fit their God-given skills. Often the only opportunities for volunteering within children's ministries are teaching, infant care, and check-in. Those who want to support ministry with children, but are gifted in leadership, are often left to find ministry elsewhere.

My struggles as a DCM with the vastness of ministry, the need for relational connectedness, huge administrative responsibilities, the misuse of parents' spiritual gifts, and the need for volunteer care have led me to address these issues to create stronger pathways for ministry to children.

Statement of the Problem

Children's ministries frequently lack healthy leadership. Sometimes children's pastors do not know how to develop leadership. A seemingly chronic problem is that churches cannot keep up with growth in children's ministries. This is often compounded by the need to have at least two adults in each classroom or with each small group. Discovering a way for churches to build leadership without paying additional staff could be a solution, but in reviewing recent literature, there seems to be very little substantial

work in how leadership with children in the church should, or even could, be done. Therefore, those in ministry with young people have no theological or practical frameworks to follow when attempting to care for children and their families. This project will begin to answer that need by creating a framework for recruitment of those who could lead well in children's ministries.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to discover valued core competencies of Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministries through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well as from the perspectives of DCMs and their volunteers.

Research Questions

To determine what competencies might be needed, the instruments used provided the answers to three research questions regarding Team Leaders (TLs).

Research Question 1

What are the biblical, theological, and pragmatic characteristics and skills of volunteer TLs in children's ministry?

Research Question 2

What TL characteristics and skills are valued by DCMs from selected churches in the Ohio Valley District (OVD) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA)?

Research Question 3

What TL characteristics and skills are valued by children's ministry volunteers from selected churches in the OVD of the C&MA?

Rationale for the Project

The rationale for this project was broad. There are biblical, theological, and sociological reasons for discovering the core competencies of Team Leaders (TLs) and how TLs lead in children's ministries.

Biblically, leadership within children's ministries is important because of Christ's imperative to his apostles to "Let the little children come." Jesus was uncharacteristically angry when his chosen leaders did not allow children to be blessed by him. He therefore specifically called on church leadership to allow the coming and bringing of children to him.

Moses, one of the key Old Testament leaders, used a team leadership model to direct the Israelites. Not only did God institute the priesthood in addition to Moses's leadership, but also Moses built up levels of judges to take care of the people's disputes and needs. In the book of Ezra, Zerubbabel and Jeshua built a large team to rebuild the temple.

Team leadership can be seen in the early church. When the church's first organizational challenge arose, the solution was the distribution of leadership. In his letters to the churches, Paul defined a diverse type of leadership model, saying that those who had certain gifts ought to use them for the church. He quickly left the churches he planted in the hands of new leaders, helping to establish a worldwide network of TLs now called the clergy. Team leadership models may be a biblical answer to the burnout and lack of health found within children's ministries. They also provide an overview of good characteristics, skills, and structures.

Theologically, there are Trinitarian and Christological reasons for a model of team leadership in children's ministries. Certainly, the Trinity works together to both serve and lead one another in a unified and equal manner. If the Trinity does not depend on just one member or person to lead, why should children's ministries? The Godhead also provides an example of the characteristics and structure demonstrated by team leadership.

Leadership within children's ministries ought to be centered Christologically. As the incarnate connection between the Trinity and humanity, Christ came to serve, providing a look at some of the characteristics and skills every leader needs. His sacrificial service ought to be the model for particularly Christian leadership. He also built a leadership team with a certain type of structure. His model of passing on and sharing leadership can be the basis for a team leadership model in children's ministries.

Sociologically, the rate of burnout of volunteers and DCMs calls for a better way to sustain healthy leadership in children's ministries, but this has seldom been studied. A team leadership model could create health and sustainability for volunteers and paid leaders while managing the issue of growth by allowing leadership to expand with the congregation.

The rationale for a study of this kind has biblical, theological, and sociological support. Biblically, Jesus commanded his first leaders, the Apostles, to let children come to him. Additionally, Moses, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua developed clear models of team leadership. The leaders of the early church, including Paul, instigated models of Team Leadership and set examples of certain skills and character traits of team leaders. Theologically, the Trinity depends on mutual leadership and the example of Christ shows

that he did not shy away from developing leaders. Sociologically, health of leadership and children, as well as the need to grow, were compelling reasons for the study.

Definition of Key Terms

Team Leaders (TLs)— those leading or capable of leading other volunteers in children's ministry. Particularly, the term, along with the term "leader," was used for individuals guiding other volunteers rather than children.

Volunteers—unpaid people ministering directly to children.

Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs)— those in main leadership roles, overseeing all children's ministry for their churches. They may have been paid or unpaid.

Children—people between birth and grade 5.

Interdependent Leadership—used synonymously with "shared leadership" and "team leadership" within this dissertation.

Delimitations

The main limitation of this study was its focus on Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministry. Churches that do not have children's ministries may not benefit from the project. Since the churches, ministries, and leaders being studied used the Bible as a main source of direction, the model needed to meet biblical and theological Christian requirements for leadership. Therefore, the findings of this study may not apply to non-Christian institutions.

Because churches with between 30 and 130 children were selected, this study may not apply to very large churches. It certainly does not apply to churches with no or very few children attending. Because of the study's scope, nonchurch organizations, larger

churches, or churches that are not within the OVD of the C&MA may not benefit from the results.

I chose the OVD of the C&MA because of my relationship to it and because the district has a healthy diversity of churches to study. The study may not be helpful across denominational or even district lines. Moreover, it may not be applicable to churches in other cultures, ethnicities, or countries.

Review of Relevant Literature

The resources used in the literature review were of a scholarly nature: dissertations, peer-reviewed work, and research articles. Because of its relevance, some literature from the field of popular writing was included for comparison. Standby writings in children's ministry were also used, such as George Barna's *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, *The Child in the Bible* by Marcia J Bunge, Terence E. Fretheim and Beverly R. Gaventa, and John Westerhoff's *Will Our Children Have Faith?* Current research was also engaged, such as articles regarding children by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain. Most notable in the area of theology were Michael Davis, Jim Horsthuis, Augustine, and John Wesley. Major themes included biblical and theological bases for team leadership as well as understandings from the field of leadership. The literature included biblical accounts of the team leadership of Moses, Jesus, and Paul as well as of team leadership of children in particular. Theologically, the perichoretic, or the movement of the Trinity, emerged as the foundation for sharing leadership, especially with and for children. In the field of leadership, skills related to TLs (Team Leaders) and directors as well as DCMs (Directors of Children's Ministries) were uncovered. These

were synthesized to discover some of the core competencies for leaders of children within the church—as well as how children could participate in leadership and be led.

Research Methodology

The methodologies of the project involved surveys and focus groups, which were used to discover the perspectives of Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and volunteers regarding the biblical, theological, and general competencies of Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministries.

Type of Research

Pre-intervention research, using mixed methods of qualitative focus groups and quantitative surveys, was completed in order to develop a biblically and theologically based understanding of the core competencies of children's ministry volunteer TLs and the practices of their directors, incorporating best practices and insights from the field of leadership.

Participants

Project participants were DCMs and ministry volunteers from churches in the Ohio Valley District (OVD) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). The directors and volunteers were selected from churches with an average weekly attendance of 10–130 children. Children's ministries of this size were chosen because it seemed they might need, or already needed, TLs. Altogether, 118 individuals (11 directors and 107 volunteers) participated in the study. Pseudonyms and codes were used to protect all participants' privacy.

Instrumentation

Surveys of volunteers at each church sought to discover volunteers' understandings of what skills and characteristics might be valued in TLs. A quantitative Likert scale and ranked questions were administered via SurveyMonkey. The survey also asked a small number of open-ended qualitative questions.

Director Focus Groups (DFGs) sought to understand the DCMs' views on the skills and character of TLs. Each DFG was conducted with five to seven DCMs in geographical relation to one another.

Data Collection

This project used Surveys and Focus Groups as instruments. Data gathering took place over a timespan of about three months. As the lead researcher, I conducted the surveys online and with hard copies. The researcher added the hard copies into the online system, and SurveyMonkey software aggregated the data. Notes taken during the groups and sessions for DFGs were recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

This study was a pre-intervention project. The methods were quantitative surveys for volunteers and qualitative focus groups for DCMs. These methods resulted in patterns and trends related to the core competencies of TLs in children's ministry. The methods were analyzed by looking at percentage-based trends in the surveys and by coding the focus groups with core competencies discovered through the surveys and the literature.

Generalizability

The purpose of this study was to discover valued core competencies of TLs in children's ministries through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well

as from the perspectives of DCMs and their volunteers. To improve the credibility of the

study's results, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The Volunteer

Surveys (VS) were quantitative and included both Likert scale and ranked questions

regarding each survey topic. To create complete triangulation, DCMs were invited to

participate in focus groups. The focus group results, and survey results were compared

with each other in order to discover credible results.

Dependability will be discussed in terms of consistency of the questions and

similarity of the focus groups. Every volunteer answered the exact same set of questions,

in the same order, with the same online survey tool. Each DCM participated in a focus

group where the exact same introductory script was read, and the same questions were

asked from a prepared questionnaire. The same researcher and assistant recorded all the

DFGs in the same way.

As a result, the study developed an understanding of the core competencies of

TLs in children's ministries and how these TLs might be led. Results from the study may

inform churches or ministries with similar contexts and may improve the ministries'

awareness of the importance of providing leadership for volunteers and children in the

church.

Project Overview

This dissertation was written for the purpose of discovering the skills and

character of Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministries. Therefore, the reader can

expect to discover core competencies based on focus groups and surveys conducted with

Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and volunteers in churches with 30–130

children in regular weekly attendance.

Chapter 2 gives a review of biblical and theological literature and of best practices in the field of leadership. Skills and characteristics of those in the Old and New Testament who shared leadership are researched. Regarding theology, the perichoretic nature of the Trinity is explored as a basis for teaming in the church. In the field of leadership, concepts having to do with skills and characteristics of TLs and DCMs are examined. Understandings of team leadership in connection with children's ministry are also discussed. Finally, a review of literature regarding surveys and focus groups is given.

Chapter 3 presents a detailed description of the methodology used for the project. The project utilized a Volunteer Survey (VS) and multiple Director Focus Groups (DFGs) based on the research questions. Participants were chosen from churches in the Ohio Valley District (OVD) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) from churches with between 30 and 130 children in attendance. An expert review was conducted for all the volunteer survey and DFG questions, and data was collected via SurveyMonkey and in person. The data was then analyzed.

Chapter 4 introduces the evidence for the project. Some of the demographic differences resulted from church size and length of tenure of the DCM. TLs and volunteers seemed to value different competencies in TLs. Evidence pointed to a high value of shared and foundational leadership skills, rather than team, conflict, and self-leadership skills.

Chapter 5 presents the learning gained and the results of the research. The research led to three conclusions. First, DCMs and volunteers value different types of leadership: DCMs value shared leadership while volunteers tend to value more foundational leadership characteristics. Second, volunteers and directors alike highly

value an example of leadership being set, particularly through TLs. Third, there are three

leadership characteristics of which, when one is valued, the other two are also valued:

empowerment, rest, and sacrifice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study was to discover valued core competencies of Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministries through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well as from the perspectives of Children's Directors (DCMs) and their volunteers. The biblical and theological literature reviewed examined key insights on the skills, characteristics, and practices of those engaged in shared leadership. Literature from the field of leadership was also reviewed in search of practices appropriate for those leading teams that minister to children. In addition, methods for the project were researched. Instruments including surveys and qualitative focus groups were investigated.

Team Characteristics in Scripture

Scripture introduces the foundations for team leadership and leadership with children. The Bible also informs the skills, character, and practice of shared leadership, especially through the examples of Moses, Jesus, and Paul. Additionally, God's word invites the Christian community to share leadership between children and adults. Within this understanding seems to lie a connection between teaming and working with young girls and boys.

Biblical Examples of Team Leadership Characteristics

Moses, Jesus, and Paul each practiced forms of team leadership (Akerlund 30; Collier 117; Cooper 53). Moses taught the entire community of Israel, which would have included children. Jesus involved little ones in his ministry. While not often used as an

example in relation to children's ministry, Paul often talked about the family, and his development of teams gave insights for shared leadership as well. These leaders displayed a personal relationship with God, commitment, vision, and specific interpersonal skills that placed value on teams.

Moses.

The characteristics Moses and his Team Leaders (TLs) displayed included a relationship with God, trustworthiness, and creating and carrying vision. These few but needed competencies had been listed by Jethro for his son-in-law. Moses insisted on these characteristics because he attempted to counterbalance the harsh treatment and compulsory injustice imposed under Egyptian slavery (Exod. 18:21-3, New Revised Standard Edition) by building justice through teams.

After a dramatic encounter with God, Moses reluctantly chose to lead the enslaved Israelites toward peace (Exod. 2-4). At first, he attempted to lead the huge nation of Israel without human help. In a conversation with his father-in-law, however, Moses was convinced to move from solitary leadership to shared leadership for the Israeli judiciary system (Exod. 18). Not only would teaming help Moses with leadership, but because leadership was shared, it became more just. More people could contribute to leadership, in contrast to their former voicelessness as Egyptian slaves. Because of this renewed participation, qualifications were required of those who would become judges.

The first qualification given by Jethro was that the judges must be "God fearing" (Walter Brueggemann and Walter C. Kaiser 828; Exodus 18:21). Scripture notes that Moses "spoke with God face to face" as if speaking to "a friend" (Exod. 33:11). Moses knew God; Jethro defined closeness to the Almighty as a determining factor for those

who would be chosen to lead. Later, in the book of Judges, which gives an even greater understanding of this judicial system, the reason for closeness to God as a qualification is described fleshed out. By the time of Deborah, Gideon, and Samson, the Israelites had begun following the gods of other people groups. Time after time, judges were chosen to bring the people back to God. This structure of shared judiciary leadership (intertwined with that of priests and prophets) carried Israel until they sinned by asking for a break in this system of peace . Thus, kings, who were often not connected to God, began to rule in a system that was less and less shared and more often led by a single sovereign who was not the Almighty. Based on this, a relationship with and respect for God may be characteristics that a TL or DCM ought to possess as the foundation for sharing leadership. They also may need to engage in justice.

Jethro mentioned trustworthiness as the second characteristic. Moses certainly displayed that he was worthy of trust during the many times he practiced faithfulness stayed the course when confronted by challenging people and circumstances (Exod. 14:10-14, 15:24, 16:2, 17:2-4, 32). For instance, after the Israelites had seen God provide safety, manna, and water, they once again complained that they were stuck outside of Egypt without anything to drink. Therefore, Moses "cried out to the LORD, 'What shall I do with this people?'" Once again, God provided. The Israelite leader continued to take the concerns of the people to God and led them through the desert until his death (Dt. 34). Moses could have chosen to go back and live with his father-in-law or to use his shepherding skills to start a new life. However, like a good Director of Children's Ministries (DCM) or TL, as a leader of leaders, Moses remained steadfast stayed the course.

Additionally, when Moses began sharing leadership, he teamed with his father-in-law in a visionary role while other judges carried out the vision. Moses chose to sit as judge in the first place and Jethro gave the vision for allowing others to help him judge (Ex. 18:13-17). Moses was a visionary who accepted help in visioning and judging.

Moses trusted God *and* submitted to Jethro's vision. On the other hand, while his judges did not participate in casting vision, they did carry the vision. Therefore, if the story of Moses is a guide to shared leadership, TLs may help carry plans out, but may not always assist in casting vision. However, both the Director of Children's Ministries (DCM) and TLs need to practice submission and listening to learn how to move forward.

Last, instead of demanding conformity by continuing a caste system, Moses chose to develop peace by allowing the Israelites a voice through becoming judges. He allocated some of the ruling role to others, showing an ability to share command (Stuart 416). In other words, the reason Moses chose to have TLs was because he already practiced peace and justice. At first, he did this by freeing the Israelites and judging them. However, as peace and justice developed, shared leadership resulted—allowing the Israelites to participate not only as non-slaves but as leaders who carried out justice. In this way, Moses condemned slavery while upholding the law.

Through a model of team leadership and the insights of his father-in-law, Moses showcased TL competencies. His respectful relationship with God was the paramount and leading characteristic in how he led his own life and his team. Moses was committed and visionary. He listened to others and gave them a voice by practicing peace and justice. Moses's leadership shared power as a way to exit slavery and enter God's economy. For the leader of leaders, the DCM, practicing peace and justice seems to be

the impetus for sharing leadership and could lead to empowering others by sharing

power, practicing trust, and offering rest.

Jesus.

One of Jesus's first actions after entering ministry as an adult was to develop a

team—the Twelve apostles. Jesus and his team had a relationship with the Father and

with each other. Jesus also set an example of sacrificial living by sharing leadership.

Jesus's relationship with his Father.

Jesus regarded his relationship with the Father as key to his leadership. In fact, he

did nothing other than what the first person of the Trinity commanded (John 5:19). He

also encouraged his apostles to build a relationship with God through prayer (Matt. 6:9.

Luke 11:2). When working together with his apostles, as vine and branches, Jesus stated

that his relationship to the Father was one of growth—Son as vine and Father as vine

grower. The Father allowed Jesus to be the leader sustaining the branches. The Father

grew the vine, Jesus. In turn, Jesus sustained his followers (John 15:1). Discipleship was,

therefore, one of the results of teaming for Jesus.

Without a relationship with the Father, a ministry team cannot begin—the Father

was the one who gave Jesus his team within their parent-child relationship. Because of

this relationship, Jesus asked the Father to protect the leaders chosen to begin the church.

In John 17:6–11, Jesus noted his relationship with the Father as one of communication.

He then passed that communication on to the team. It was his connectedness to God that

allowed him to have, communicate with, and protect his team. Since Jesus regarded

relatedness to the Father as the impetus and sustenance for shared leadership, this seems

to be an imperative for children's ministry team members as well.

Jesus's relationship with his TLs.

Christ was rarely apart from his apostles except during prayer or rest (Matt. 14:23, 22:34; Mark. 6:46). Examples of Jesus building relationships with the apostles included teaching them as a small group and taking them with him to pray. For instance, when Jesus taught his Twelve about caring for the insignificant, he was found walking with them, engaging with them in a home, and pulling them aside to offer additional teaching (Mark 10). Jesus invited leaders into a missionally diverse and authentic group who valued risk, rest, and teaming.

Missional Relationship. Jesus spent purposeful time empowering the apostles for the mission—he encouraged, prepared, and supported them for leadership. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and he passed this mission on to the apostles (Luke. 9:1-6). For instance, after Jesus chose his Twelve apostles, he called them together to give them power and authority for the mission (Luke. 9:1-6, & 10). In building relationships with his disciples, Jesus spent not only time, but purposeful time to support them in relation to this mission. In Mark's gospel, Jesus encouraged the disciples to move beyond their own strength in order to fight spiritual powers for the cause of Christ (Mark 9:29). Jesus focused his band of apostles on the Missio Dei.

Jesus's Invitational Leadership. Jesus intentionally asked others to follow him, especially when choosing his TLs, the apostles (Matt 4:19, 8:22, 9:9). He did not command them to follow, or recruit them, based *only* on mission. In each setting where Jesus asked leaders to become apostles, he called them in ways that connected with their life situations. The fishers Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee were engaged by a fishing metaphor. When he called Matthew, he did so in the context of being with others

who were like the tax collector (Matt 9:9-13). Jesus did not recruit TLs by mass communication, through vision, or by command; instead he asked them to join him through personal invitation.

Christ also asked his leaders, like him, to display commitment even when the life became very challenging (John17:14). He said they would be hated, persecuted, and rejected, and would experience pain. However, he expected them to remain faithful until joy would come. Of course, Jesus also promised that he and the Holy Spirit would abide with them through challenges, offering peace. In this way, Jesus welcomed the Twelve into altruistic commitment, but not without going through it alongside them.

Inviting Diversity. Jesus accepted disciples from all levels of society, from fishers and tax collectors to doctors and CPAs (Judas). Some of his apostles had little leadership experience. Some of the Twelve disciples may have been very young—teenagers or even younger (Bunge, Fretheim, and Gaventa et al. 371). Luke and Matthew may have had formal education, but it is unclear if they had any leadership experience (Gangel 60–61). In comparison, although Peter, John, and Mark were fishers and possibly uneducated, they may have had more leadership experience than Luke and Matthew, since they could have led dayworkers and family businesses (Bond and Hurtado 19; Mark 1:20). In fact, they often worked in teams to catch and haul fish to shore (Troche 283). Jesus's TLs were a mixed group of men. The Son of Man was able to invite them all into a team that would build the expansive church—including coming generations.

Inviting Authenticity. Jesus Christ valued and encouraged connectedness that was real, or authentic. For instance, the sons of Zebedee felt comfortable asking Jesus to let them sit next to him in his glory (Matt 20:20-28), questioning and denying his prophesy

regarding his death (Mark 8:31-32; 9:30-31), and asking for and expecting miracles (Matt. 14:28-31). Jesus accepted these confrontations without expelling anyone from the group, continuing to build relationships with them. Even in the end, though he knew Judas would betray him and Peter would deny him, he did not forbid them membership in his leadership team.

Jesus taught his apostles and was open to their questions within their relationship. At the end of Jesus's short but significant teaching on greatness, John asked a question regarding who could lead in Jesus's name. Jesus answered with more teaching, saying that anyone who taught or served in his name would be rewarded (Mark 9:30-50). Open to John's question, Jesus answered it respectfully. Discussing Jesus's development of teams, Robert E. Coleman wrote that Jesus relationally assessed the disciples along with teaching them. For instance, he helped them deal with and understand the problem of the demon they could not cast out (Coleman and Fish 89–93; Mt. 17:14-20). He also had a conversation with Peter after his betrayal in order to reinstate him as a builder of the church (John 21). These stories show that Jesus was willing to hear from his apostles, engaging with them in ways that would help them see him as open to their authenticity.

Sometimes, the Twelve disciples were unwilling to ask questions, which led to their argument regarding who was the greatest (Brooks 149; Mark. 9:32). If the apostles had asked Jesus what he meant by his prophesy regarding his death and resurrection, their argument over who was the greatest would have been irrelevant. They would have discovered that Jesus was not going to be out of the picture for long, since he was going to rise from the dead.

Relational Invitation to Risk and Rest. Jesus valued risk taking among his

disciples (Collier 118). As the leader of his developing apostles, Jesus not only allowed

them to take risks but asked them to do so as part of developing a relationship with them.

He did not go with them on their first mission: "See I am sending you out as sheep into

the midst of wolves," he said (Matt. 10:5-15, Mark 6:6-13). Jesus gave them power and

authority, told them they would face beatings and imprisonment, and sent them on their

way (Matt. 10:17-19). He shared the challenges of leadership with his disciples from the

beginning of his time with them. Additionally, Jesus invited Peter to walk on water rather

than stay in the safety of the boat. He asked John and James to share in his suffering

(Luke 9:1-6; Matt. 14:29).

Christ invited and gave permission for risk taking. However, the risk taking took

place within a relationship that was already being built. Jesus did not invite the Twelve to

embark on a mission outside of his leadership and care. The second person of the Trinity

used risky mission as a way of continuing to build relationships with the apostles. This

led to a better understanding of their mission. Relationships, not mission, led to healthy

risk taking.

When they returned from the mission to the Israelites, Jesus listened to the

disciples' experiences and then took them away from the crowd to rest (Coleman and

Fish 89–90; Mark 6:31). Jesus's choosing to wash the disciple's feet was also a part of

their rest. While Jesus taught them by this act that service was important, he also allowed

the disciples to rest instead of work, since he was the one doing the washing. According

to Jey J. Kanagaraj, the kind of rest that allows Christ to serve also allows leaders to

experience Jesus's love and forgiveness as a groundwork of rest for coming work

(Kanagaraj 23). Christ listened to the experiences of the apostles, relaxed with them, had meals with them, and served them so they could rest.

Jesus's relational leadership allowed followers to experience risk prepared for, and then followed by rest. Jesus rested with his disciples, allowing for preparative teaching and debriefing to take place within relationship. This led to shared leadership which grew relationship through risk and rest. As a diagram, then, relationship and risk/rest dwell on either side of a circle, each leading the other to create better interdependent leadership.

Valuing Team. Because Jesus created a team, it seems obvious that he valued shared leadership. Because he had authentic relationships with the disciples, it seems he also valued his team members. Jesus did not minister without a team; he intentionally chose individuals with whom to share leadership—he valued the institution of the team. He also did not just develop a team and walk away; he cared about being a part of the team and thus showed that he valued his team members.

Summative Application. Considering this, relational connectedness should be a main characteristic for TLs and DCMs because it leads to and enhances shared leadership. However, the other practices that Jesus showed in his relationship with his apostles are also applicable: authenticity, diversity, risk, rest, discipleship, and value placed on shared leadership.

Jesus's sacrificial example.

Jesus lived in a way that set an example for his team (Tilstra, Freed and Baumgartner 67). Within the context of washing the disciples' feet, Jesus told them to do as he did and that he was their example of sacrificial service (John 13:12-20). Jesus often

engaged with outcasts with whom the Twelve did not want to interact, such as children, to show them how to live sacrificially (Mark 9-10). All this was done as he ate and drank, argued and prayed, taught and slept in plain view of his team of Twelve. In these ways, Jesus used his life as an example of how the apostles ought to behave on a team.

Jesus also set the ultimate example of surrender by his very visible death (pt. Col. 1:19-20). His death and resurrection were the very things that allowed the Twelve to solidify as a team—giving them the message Jesus wanted to convey to the world and releasing them to build their own teams. The Son of Man also gave sacrificially throughout his life, saving his disciples when he could have been sleeping, choosing to engage with crowds when he was tired, and taking time with outcasts instead of aligning himself with the religious leaders of his time (Mark 4:35-41; Matt. 14:13-4; John 12:42-3). He sacrificed his time, status, and life for others, showing the cost of team leadership in his service to the Twelve.

Jack Niewold wrote that truly biblical leadership has a public witness of soteriology, or salvation, through habit and suffering (Niewold 128). Living as an example that leads to the saving power of Jesus requires the regular practice of sacrifice because it shows Jesus's character of sacrifice. Self-giving is rooted in the witness of Christ as an exemplar of leadership. Therefore, living soteriologically, or in a saving way, is especially important for the Christian leader. Jesus did this as part of a team. Believers, and therefore Christian leaders, should join this calling of sacrifice as a way to exemplify Christ, paving a way toward salvation.

While Jesus mainly *set an example* of a life of suffering for others, he also invited his apostles to participate in sacrifice. When James and John asked to sit on the left and

right of Jesus in his glory, Jesus challenged them by saying that they would "drink the cup" that he was to drink; they would engage in sacrifice. When he talked with the rest of the apostles on this topic, he asked them to become slaves in order to be true TLs (Mark 10:35-44). Jesus wanted his leaders to live in a sacrificial manner that mirrored his own salvific sacrifice.

DCMs should sacrifice for their TLs, and TLs should sacrifice for their teams. Additionally, engaging with outcasts ought to be regular practice for leaders of teams. This should be done alongside others to exemplify the salvation of Christ.

Summary of Jesus's shared leadership.

Jesus invited his leaders into relationship while living as one with his Father. He chose to live with the disciples rather than only for the disciples. He also invited them to join a team built on relationship and sacrifice. To be like Jesus, leaders on a team need to practice these characteristics.

Paul.

When Saul became Paul, he was forced to commit himself to a team. Without the apostles backing him, other believers were afraid of him (Acts. 9:26-27). His dramatic personal conversion also required an explanation by Ananias (Acts. 9:12). From the beginning Paul was driven toward interdependency as opposed to leading single-handedly. He worked with various church leaders through the entire book of Acts, and responded to their letters, 1 & and 2 Tim., Tit.).

Paul is not always the first church father who is thought of when discussing children's ministry. However, since early faith communities included families with children, Paul would have had some influence on them through his church planting and

the epistles he wrote. He also wrote about proper family structures and rules. In

Ephesians 6:2 and Colossians 3:20, Paul asked children to honor their fathers and

mothers. He gave Timothy specific instructions on how to assist widows with families (1

Tim. 5:1-8). He asked Titus to have older women encourage younger ones to love their

children (Tit. 2:4). In Col. 3 and Eph. 6, Paul commanded fathers not to exasperate or

provoke their children. He instructed church leaders to manage their children well (1

Tim. 3:4-12). He also commended Timothy's grandmother and mother for their role in

passing on the faith to their offspring (2 Tim. 1:5). Thus, how families functioned within

the church was important to Paul.

As far as Paul was concerned, the church not only contained families but was a

family. Over 40 times in his epistles, the least of the apostles noted God as Father of

those in the church—including children. Biological fathers, in contrast, were mentioned

only seven times in his writings. Paul referred to himself as a spiritual father of the

Corinthian and Thessalonian churches, encouraging them to follow his example and

instruction (1 Cor. 4:14-17, 1 Thess. 2:11). Paul also called himself Timothy's, Titus's,

and Onesimus's father in the faith (Murray*: , Paul's Corporate Witness in Philippians*

323; 1 Tit. 1:2, 2 Tit. 1:2, Tit. 1:4, Philem. 10). He wrote that widows should attempt to

care for their own children and the children of others, while noting that older or poor

widows should receive help from other Christians (1 Tim. 5:9-16). To Paul, the church

was family; children and adults were part of this interdependent intimacy.

Paul's relationship with Christ.

Michael Cooper wrote that an important characteristic Paul showed as a

transformational leader was having a committed and personal relationship with Jesus

(Cooper 54). In 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul wrote, "For I know the one in whom I have put my trust." Of course, Paul also had a harrowing and personal encounter with Christ (Acts 9:1-9). Additionally, he told his followers to make his relationship with Christ an example for their own lives (1 Cor. 11:1). As with Moses and Jesus, Paul showed that a relationship with God is important to a leadership role. Without unity with Christ, his leadership and assumed "fatherhood" of churches would have been impossible. Healthy teams are synonymous with familial unity in Christ.

Paul's vision.

Paul was a visionary leader—someone who set his plan according to God's designs (Bartchy 70; Cooper 53). He received a specific vision from God without the assistance of others (Gal. 1:15-17). However, the apostle used this God-given plan to invite and engage others in ministry—constantly developing teams of church leaders (Murray, *Paul's Corporate Evangelism* 190). Paul had various understandings of the church leaderships with which he was engaged, and he passed these on to his leaders. For example, Paul told Timothy to stay and honor the leadership where he was (1 Tim. 5:17). He asked Titus to develop leadership across churches in various towns (Tit. 1:5). In Pauline shared leadership, vision is received from God, developed within the team, and passed on to new leaders.

In developing God's vision, Jesus sent Paul to Ananias's home to be healed and baptized after his dramatic encounter on the road to Damascus. While praying and fasting with other leaders, Paul and Barnabas were sent to do God's work (Ac. 9:10-19). It seems that Paul's vision to take Christ to the Gentiles was personal at first but was later clarified and confirmed through others. This was similar to what happened with Jesus, who

entertained the thoughts of his disciples and submitted to the will of his Father when developing vision (Mark 9:30-4). Thus, in practicing shared leadership, visioning may be a singular task done by the main leader or a group task shared by all leaders.

Paul's valuing of teams and TLs.

George W. Murray of Dallas Seminary wrote that Paul developed teams from the beginning of his ministry, inviting others into ministry with him (191–94). The teams provided physical sustenance for other church families (Acts 11:30; 18:1-3;19; 20:4; 24:23; 27:3; 28:14) and mutual encouragement (Acts 11:25-26; 14:21-23; 15:35; 15:40-41; 16:4-5; 19:9; 20:6-38). Not only did Paul talk about being a father to other churches, he also acted as a father, providing for and encouraging them. The apostle valued his teams enough to care for and assist them in their lives and mission.

In his article on leadership and spiritual formation, Truls Akerlund pointed out that Paul continued to have a relationship with the churches he planted even when he was away from them (30). Paul valued shared leadership and those engaged in his teams enough to keep in touch with them (26). In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul noted that he had been listening to information about the church, and he encouraged them (Eph. 1:15-23). Even after he had left his churches, Paul kept communicating with them, continually engaging the teams.

As a leader of others, Paul valued his leaders. He said he was thankful for the churches in Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and Thessalonica in each of his letters to them (1 Cor. 1; Eph. 1; Phil. 1; Col. 1; 1 Thess. 1). Murray wrote that because Paul often asked TLs to join him as soon as they could, he "valued their presence" (197). Paul not only valued the concept of shared leadership, but also those he engaged on his teams.

Paul's example.

Paul and his companions were examples to the Thessalonians, wrote Akerlund. The Thessalonians then became examples to others (30). Paul asked that they become "imitators of us and of the Lord" and an example to other believers (1 Thess. 1:6-7). The apostle also told the people in the Thessalonian church to emulate the leaders who were placed over them. In this way, influence flowed from Paul to the church leadership and then to those in the church for the purpose of empowerment (Akerlund 26). Empowering others should thus be one of the goals of setting an example for a team. The leader does not set an example for the purpose of self-exaltation, but so that others can also lead.

Cooper contended that setting an example was one of the leadership characteristics Paul mentioned in his letter to Timothy (53). Paul gave instructions on how to lead by example: "in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). Paul not only exemplified Christ for other leaders but asked them to do the same. In this way, Paul invited others to join him in leadership—sharing the role and responsibilities.

One way Paul led by example was in his self-sacrifice (Wong and Page 8). He chose to journey to Rome even though he knew it would end with imprisonment. He also endured "afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger" (2 Cor. 6:5) He asked others to be like him in these sacrifices (Acts 21:11-14; 2 Cor. 6:3-13). It was also the reason he sent his TL, Timothy, to the Corinthians. Timothy was to remind the church to live in the sacrificial ways of Paul (1 Cor. 4:17). Paul asked TLs to guide others into self-sacrifice.

Like Jesus, Paul practiced sacrifice as a part of exemplifying proper leadership. He also understood that inviting others into leadership meant inviting them into a ministry of sacrificial living. However, this did not take place in isolation—it happened within a supportive team, within relationship.

Paul's commitment.

Certainly, Paul was committed to leading the churches he was in contact with (Cooper 57; 2 Tim. 1:2-5). He continued to send instructional letters to them after his departures (1 Tim. 1:12, 2 Tim. 2:2). He also had a single-minded commitment to the vision given him by Christ and other leaders—he often stated that he was sent to the Gentiles specifically (Rom. 11:13, Gal. 2:8, 1 Tim. 2:7). The apostle received and carried out his mission without wavering from it. To Paul, commitment was a part of team leadership and held within it the characteristics of constant connection and single-mindedness.

Paul's relationships.

The apostle Paul had the ability to develop and maintain a community, often inviting others into his work (Murray 191–93). Akerlund wrote:

> Paul aims at resocializing individuals into a group identity with shared behavioral norms and conduct in order to preserve the unity of the church.... Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a church to make a disciple. (Akerlund 31)

Paul used the structure of family to instill a high level of relationality into the early churches he planted. The apostle even began his ministry by surrounding himself with other Christians and maintaining fellowship with leaders. When he started his missionary

journeys, a community of prayer commissioned him (Acts 9:19; 13:1-3). For Paul, community was essential to the task of leading leaders.

Paul also kept in touch with the churches he planted through multiple epistles (i.e. 1 and 2 Cor., Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., 1 and 2 Thess.). In the book of Acts, he seemed to remain persistently connected to his leaders in Jerusalem through letters and personal communication. This communication helped him build community with the churches he planted. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 7:8, Paul spoke about how the church responded to his instruction. He used letter writing to keep himself and others informed and encouraged for the task of leading their teams. Persistent communication was a major characteristic of Paul's shared, relational leadership.

Summary of Paul's shared leadership.

Paul was able to use these characteristics to develop teams across the then known world. The last apostle's relationship with Christ, visioning, valuing of teams, example setting, committing, and creating and maintaining community were characteristics that defined his understanding of the church family. Because of his interaction with the church as family, Paul's character and ministry practices can inform shared leadership within children's ministries. Individuals who engage in shared leadership could be like Paul in his fatherliness toward the teams in which he invested. The team can act like an extended family in which the main leader lovingly directs and cares for each member. This loving team can be a place of care where leaders build, keep, and encourage shared leadership, resulting in a kind of extended family for children.

Summary of biblical examples of team leadership characteristics.

TLs in children's ministry can follow in Paul's footsteps though a personal relationship with Christ. They should also share in the characteristics of setting, sharing, and carrying vision. Biblical principles lead to valuing teams, identifying with and having concern for team members, and living sacrificially for and with them. All of this should lead to greater discipleship of, with, and for children.

A Biblical Basis for Shared Leadership with Children

When applying biblical characteristics of shared leadership to children's ministries, ways in which children can be engaged through teams become clear. Teams connect to the world of the children through familial relationship and exemplified sacrifice. Scripture also defines how leadership ought to be shared with children.

Biblical countercultural family.

The ancient world was not known for cherishing little ones. In contrast, both the Old and New Testaments held a countercultural understanding of children as participative in the faith community. Children can engage the church through leadership teams. Team members who seek peace and justice, are relational, and practice sacrifice and community are likely to help children grow spiritually.

Roman and Israelite devaluing of children: A brief ancient history.

In New Testament times, babies often died before they reached the age of 5 (Fitzgerald 31). Poor families sometimes sold their children as slaves for income or sent them to relatives (Rousselle 227, 229). Children were understood to be insignificant, and investment in them was thought of as unwise (Blomberg 273; Brooks 160). Ancient

Roman parents even disregarded or killed their babies if they were thought to be undesirable.

The cultural devaluing of children by the New Testament Israelites was described in Mark 9 when Jesus chose a child to serve as an illustration of an insignificant person (Bunge et al. 168; Mark 9:30-37). The general population, as well as Jesus's disciples, thought that children were not valuable. Thus, at the time of Christ, both the secular and Jewish realms of society did not value children. The Bible, however, taught a different view of children.

The biblical value of children.

Teaming for Children in the Old Testament. In contrast to these ancient understandings, the Old Testament asked everyone in the community of God to form and raise children with the "jealousy of a she-bear," as Walter Brueggemann wrote (Bunge, Fretheim and Gaventa 400). Raising children was a communal activity. Children saw symbols of Israelite history, and God expected them to ask questions about it (Deut. 6), leading them to discover and worship Jehovah.

Some of the first laws God asked Moses's judiciary team to uphold were those about teaching the next generation. In the Shema (Deut. 6:7-25), God commanded the community to act in ways that would cause children to ask questions and allow others to answer, leading young people to honor God (Abingdon Press 343). Jewish Scriptures, therefore, taught that children were to be led by everyone. The community was held accountable by those with whom Moses shared leadership—the judges. Thus, one of the reasons these God-fearing, trustworthy judges practiced peace and justice was to develop

a community where questions could be asked, and answers given that would lead to the spiritual growth of children.

According to psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, young children must move through a stage called the "Pre-Conventional Level," where they seek fairness and reciprocity (chap.1). Moses's example of teaming as a means of practicing peace and justice is a good fit for children's ministries since it may help leaders connect with boys and girls on a deeper level by engaging them in the "pre-conventional."

Teaming for Children in Jesus's Teaching. Following the teaching of the Old Testament, Jesus did not leave the discipleship of children up to their parents alone (John 9:6). Confronted by his mother and brothers, Jesus claimed that anyone who followed the Father was his family (Luke 14:26). In other words, "Jesus diminished the role and significance of one's biological family for the priority of the family of disciples" (Horn and Martens 98). This reorientation of those who made up a family included Christian children (Bunge et al. 179–80; Horn and Martens 88). Adults and children were to think of other followers of Christ as their main family. Jesus challenged the traditional family structure by developing the faith community as a family.

Roehlkepartain wrote in his study of congregations that the church is a community in which children's faith can grow. This is because churches are "complex, dynamic, and multifaceted ecologies or systems in which spiritual development is influenced through a web of relationships" (Roehlkepartain 327). In other words, a network of relational teams is one of the structures that can grow a child's faith.

In application, like Jesus (and later Paul), Team Leaders (TLs) and Directors (DCMs) need to value teaming and team members before they can practice shared

leadership—they need to be a kind of family. Shared leadership cannot just be an ideal, but a valued practice. To be like Christ, the DCM will need to spend time developing relationships with TLs. While directors cannot constantly be with their TLs like Jesus was, they should be present through times of pain, especially when the vision and mission of the ministry cause it. Additionally, the DCM and TLs should expect and understand that TLs will face challenges. Because of this, the DCM should take time to empower TLs, giving them authority and tools for the mission. Like Jesus, the DCM can offer comfort by reminding the team of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of sacrifice (John 14:16).

Jesus saw potential in individuals who others may not have seen as leaders, inviting them into relational team leadership. Thus, the DCM should engage and authentically connect with team members who have different experiences and educations. DCMs ought to develop authentic connections with a diversity of TLs—connections that allow for confrontation and even betrayal without expulsion from the group, as in the case of Peter (Matt. 26:75). TLs and DCMs can then display authenticity and the ability to connect with others.

Because of the need for diversity, the DCM should be open—respectfully answering important questions, checking in with team members, and listening to them. Leadership should develop relationships that allow for difficult questions, providing an atmosphere of relational connectedness with room for risk taking.

Within family, children should not fear asking questions. Teams that share leadership can intentionally create settings where questions are freely asked and answered, allowing children to thrive through participation. Like Jesus did, DCMs and

TLs should practice openness for the sake of their teams being relatable, or family-like, toward the children being served.

For any leader, living as an example allows children to learn from watching (Roehlkepartain 317). One way in which children can see sacrificial lifestyles that lead to salvation is through shared leadership. Jesus asked his disciples to practice sacrifice as a part of sharing leadership with them. Teaming can engage children more easily in the practice of suffering for others. By setting an example of sacrificial living through teaming like Jesus did, children's ministry leaders show children a part of who Jesus was.

Teaming for Children in Paul's Teaching. Paul followed Jesus's teaching regarding the church as the Christian's family in addition to biological kin. The principle Paul taught was similar to Jesus's teaching: that those who followed Christ were family (Matt. 12:48, Mark 3:35, Luke 8:21). Child and family were redefined in terms of spiritual relation—the body of Christ was the family of God (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 3:15-4:16). According to this research, TLs could be important in helping children see church as family through watching and participating in interdependent leadership.

Since community is important to children (Akerlund 31), the ability to create and maintain a culture where everyone responsibly brings children up can help them grow spiritually. Developing a teaming community, using the characteristics defined by Paul (as well as Moses and Jesus), can help TLs and DCMs engage with children and their families in an atmosphere of safety for developing faith.

Paul lived in deep relationship with Christ. The reason he began ministry was because of this relationship, and the reason he built teams was to give this relationship to others. Because passing on a relationship with Christ is crucial to Christianity,

relationship is especially important in children's ministry (Roehlkepartain 327–28). All leaders ought to be able to live in a way that can be used as an example of sacrifice that leads to salvation.

Summary of biblical countercultural family.

Teaming is one way to develop a countercultural family of faith for and with children. Since one of the goals of ministry with children is reception of and growth in Christ by girls, boys, women, and men, leaders should have a commitment to God. Moses, Jesus, and Paul demonstrated this commitment in their shared leadership. Children learn about the world through relationships. TLs and DCMs can use the relational characteristics of sacrifice, relationship, and dedication to draw children into Jesus.

Children sharing in leadership.

Children require a community and leadership that pass on a culture of grace to and with them (Roehlkepartain 327–30). According to the Old and New Testaments, it takes a village—a team—to raise a child. That village, in this case, may be a shared leadership team made from redeemed people.

Jesus concurred with Old Testament writers that the faith community, rather than parents only, was to include and lead children in discipleship. Then, Jesus pushed the norm to include children as exemplars of faith (Mark 9:25-26). Christ used young children to set the standard of discipleship, using them as examples:

> Jesus did not just teach how to make an adult world kinder and more just
> for children; he taught the arrival of a social world in part defined by and
> organized around children. […] He invited the children to come to him not

so that he might initiate them into the adult world but so that they might

receive what is properly theirs—the reign of God. (Bunge 60)

Jesus's treatment of children challenged the cultural understandings of ancient Rome and

Israel. Children were not only included but became models of discipleship—types of

leaders in the Kingdom of God. Because of this, one of the main characteristics of any

leader in children's ministry could be that of valuing children as those who can share in

leadership or example setting.

Additionally, if shared leadership between children and adults is the goal, the

characteristics and practices of children ought to be taken into consideration. As noted

above, shared leadership needs the characteristics of diversity and sacrifice. One way to

practice these qualities is to involve children, their ideas, and their understandings—their

childlikeness—in leadership. Shared leadership can engage a diversity of ages through

the sacrifice of stepping into the world of the child.

Scripture teaches the community of God to pass on its faith to and with children,

allowing the coming generations to believe. Team leadership in children's ministries

should involve the community of faith, including children. The church is not just adults

guiding children, but adults and children mingled in shared leadership and "follower-

ship."

Summary of a biblical basis for shared leadership with children.

Team leadership can allow a child to participate in the body of Christ at a familial

level; relating to the church as family can help children grow in faith. By sharing

leadership with children, teaming can also help Christians observe the imperative of

Christ: "Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, will never enter

it" (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). In order to develop a team which supports a biblical understanding of children, TLs and Directors ought to counterculturally value children, inviting them to lead as well. To do this, leaders should be able to develop community which acts as a biblical family.

Summary of Team Characteristics in Scripture

In order to facilitate biblical team leadership with children, DCMs and TLs ought to have a relationship with Christ, speak into and carry vision, connect relationally, value teams and team members, set an example, take risks, be self-giving, be empowering, and create and maintain community. The DCM, specifically, should have vision and commitment and should empower risk taking. These characteristics may have the capacity to engage children in initial and deeper faith.

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Team Characteristics in Theology

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Since the Godhead is the source of leadership in Christianity, team leadership may be shaped similarly to the Trinity. The characteristics and practices of the Godhead can therefore provide examples of the core competencies required in shared leadership.

The Trinity intrinsically shares leadership through perichoresis. The term *perichoresis*, literally translated, means "to rotate." You can imagine three beings moving in a circular motion, as one. In the history of the church, *perichoresis* is defined as *intima et perfecta in habitatio unius personae in alia* (the intrinsic relationship between the person and perfect where two dwell inside one another). In relation to leadership, this means the Trinity rotates, or dances, through power, each person keeping and giving power. Jürgen Moltmann described it by saying, "Through the concept of perichoresis, all

subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity is avoided…. The three persons are equal; they live and are manifested in one another and through one another" (175–76).

Therefore, *perichoresis* defines the Trinity as participative in its leadership of itself, wrote Jim Horsthuis. One of the ways the Father, Son, and Spirit relate to each other is through equally shared authority (87). This shared authority lends itself to a theological basis for the core competencies of TLs in children's ministries.

Perichoretic Character in Team Leadership

The dance of the Trinity in shared leadership shows three characteristics. The perichoresis is, of course, unified. The Trinity also produces discipleship through a culture. In order to be unified and produce discipleship, the Trinity uses the characteristics of sacrificial alignment with a team (R. Crosby 139; Davis 55, 116, 124–25, 128), and empowerment (Davis 124–25; Horsthuis 99–100, 129).

Perichoretic leadership is unified.

Dwight J. Zscheile wrote that "rather than construing the leader as operating alone, wielding authority in isolation from others, the Trinity points toward a collaborative, shared, team-based approach" (55-56). If truly unified, the Trinity *must* share power. Thus, TLs need to share power, valuing and working toward unity.

Augustine wrote of the Trinity that the "communion itself is consubstantial (*homoousios*) and co-eternal; and if it may fitly be called friendship, let it be so called" (bk.1). Accordingly, one of the ways the Trinity is united is through communion or friendship with itself, or each person with the other persons. Since community marks the Godhead, the archetype of leadership, it should also be a vital part of Christian team

leadership (Augustine et al. 3; Davis 129). It is in friendship that TLs should move together, honoring the perichoretic nature of the Trinity.

Further, Robert Crosby contended that one of the ways in which the Trinity is communal is through collaboration (133). Since the Trinity shares headship within itself, collaboration takes place because their members lead one another in the perichoretic dance (Davis 139; Horsthuis 99; Norheim 80; Zscheile 55–60). The Trinity exists in and is made perichoretic by collaborative community. Therefore, team leadership should also be marked by this characteristic. Team Leaders (TLs) should be collaborative for the purpose of building community.

Perichoretic leadership produces discipleship.

By becoming Emmanuel, Christ showed humanity who the Trinity is. Christ is the visible archetype on whom Trinitarian team leadership can be modeled. Since spiritual growth is based on a deepening relationship with Jesus, leadership that produces spiritual growth ought to engage with and be modeled after his participation in the Trinity (Augustine bk.1; Davis 129).

Robert C. Crosby wrote regarding Jesus's participation in both human and divine circles:

> There is dramatic tension as Jesus intercedes between the two great circles in which God the Father allowed him to be a part. He looks at one circle in light of the other. He asks that the circle of disciples be brought into a relational unity that reflects the same experiences he had in the Divine Circle, the Trinity. (R. C. Crosby 15)

Therefore, perichoretic leadership develops discipleship—the growth of the human toward the divine. Trinitarian shared leadership has discipleship at its heart because of Christ's earthly example.

Since Jesus was a member of the Trinity, and a relationship with Christ can drive discipleship, TLs in children's ministry have the capacity to model Christ in his participation with the Godhead. To do this, those engaged in shared leadership need to set an example of care and effectiveness for the purpose of loving discipleship.

Perichoretic leadership sacrifices.

Long-suffering and emptying, or kenotic, leadership is one of the ways the Trinity engages in perichoretic leadership (Ayers 17–27; Bass 22; R. C. Crosby 127; Zscheile 54–55; Phil. 2). Sacrifice requires the mutual vulnerability of powerlessness; it is an emptying of status combined with the ability to suffer for others. Zscheile defined it this way:

> For leaders to embody in their own lives and leadership practices the cruciform, open, other-oriented way of the Trinity rather than hoarding power and manipulating people to accomplish their own agendas is not only to reflect the *imago Dei*, it is also to invite trust in the longsuffering, biblical God who patiently forgives and forms people. (Zscheile 58)

Trinitarian shared leadership includes sacrificial self-giving, being forgiving and longsuffering. Vulnerable sacrifice also connects Christians to the Trinity through embodying the suffering of Christ and finding unity with him in it.

Because of this, trust becomes a needed component between leaders in a shared leadership model (Davis 127; Horsthuis 99–100; Zscheile 58). As Zscheile noted in the

quote above, cruciform leadership "invites trust" in God. Sacrificial leadership practices trust in others because power is given up to them, causing vulnerability. God must also be trusted. Thus, sacrificial team leadership requires trust between leadership and toward God.

Additionally, shared leadership rejects even being a "benefactor" because in "such a deep other-orientation… one's own status, power and prestige are put at stake in order that the other may flourish" (Zscheile 54–55). Leadership patterned after the Trinity does not just give but shares; it is not just an outside supporter, but a participant. Those in leadership in a team model must, therefore, be able and willing to share power. This means power is not only delegated, but willingly shared between all leaders.

Perichoretic leadership aligns.

Because authority is shared in team leadership, it takes on the characteristics of the ontological—it is a communion of being, of substance (Zizioulas 84–86). This requires a type of collaboration in which all team members' views are considered, while each is willing to sacrifice their understanding for the good of unification (R. Crosby 139; Davis 129; Zscheile 55–56). Leadership, in other words, chooses to change conversationally. Zscheile noted that through conversation, collaboration takes place: "It involves a deep, relational conversation of listening and speaking in which all parties risk learning as well as changing" (60).

Alignment can take place through dialogue, or collaboration. Alignment is marked by a relational interchange of listening and speaking in which the risk of change by listeners and speakers is always at the forefront. Team alignment through

collaboration is a hallmark of the Trinity. Because sacrifice is a part of Trinitarian leadership, personal agendas ought to be given up for the vision of the team.

Perichoretic leadership empowers.

Horsthuis wrote that empowerment, giving authority and tools to carry out authority, is a characteristic of the Trinity regarding shared leadership. This is because a deepening of relationship rather than a need for control is present (Davis 124–25; Horsthuis 99–100; Zizioulas 220–24). If "God is a communion of persons inseparably related" (Gunton 116), then the persons of the Godhead are empowered to act rather than made to act because relationship is essential rather than control. Because of shared leadership, the Trinity neither delegates nor hoards authority. None of the Three have power to make the others subordinate by delegation. On the other hand, all the members have power, as one, so it is not hoarded. Each member of the Godhead empowers the others because each participates equally.

Instead of demanding work to be done, work is empowered because empowerment lends itself to a deepening of relationship. Based on this, Trinitarian leadership enriches relationship. For instance, TLs and Directors (DCMs) should not tell others what to do but should empower them to do it—giving encouragement, support, and freedom.

Summary of perichoretic character of team leadership.

Leadership grounded in the Trinity includes sacrifice, alignment, and empowerment. Sacrifice allows authority. Alignment communicates within the perichoretic. Empowerment shares. All three characteristics together contribute to shared collaboration.

Perichoretic Leadership with Children

Perichoretic leadership has the capacity to pass faith on to children. This type of shared leadership holds key points for leadership not of children, but with and by children. It can also enable children to participate more fully in grace because of its connection to the Godhead through Christ.

Perichoretic leadership passes on the culture of faith.

Churches are cultures of influence. In her article regarding the spiritual formation of toddlers, Karen Marie Yust noted that little ones rely on a culture that passes on faith (147). A church generally has a deep history of Christian understandings and language. According to Yust and Brueggemann, the body of Christ is the culture that supplies children with the "religious vocabulary and rituals necessary for articulating and enacting their God-given spiritual nature" (Brueggemann and McWhorter 32; Yust 147). Erik H. Erikson agreed that the church can produce a context in which young children become autonomous while still practicing the historic faith—making it their own (119). Yust contended, based on Erikson's study, that the community of faith provides the context where the young child's ego "can encounter the salvation narrative and become an identifiable part of an integrated story of faith" (Yust 138). Team Leaders (TLs) could help develop a culture that passes on faith when they are engaged with the perichoretic— enacting the unity, discipleship, sacrifice, alignment, and empowerment of the Trinity for children.

The church, according to Roehlkepartain, is one of the communities in which children grow if they are guided by "caring and effective leaders" (326). Building caring

and effective TLs who participate with and live as an example for children can benefit children's spiritual growth.

In his article regarding leadership and spiritual formation, Akerlund wrote that calling anyone to live in a different kind of culture, such as the faith community, means "resocialization." This requires "significant others who mediate the new world" of church and faith (Akerlund 26). Therefore, a context allowing children to own their faith, as Erikson postulated above, while sharing the experience of community is important. This may be especially so for children who are living in a culture that is increasingly unchurched (Barna Group, "State of the Church" sec.3; Barna Group, "What Millennials Want," col.2). Therefore, TLs who are living by the example of the Godhead could be those who help children mediate church and world, sacred and secular.

Churches are thus instrumental in being a people group in which children can be formed. Children need access to this people group. With their invitational qualities as noted above, TLs and Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) may facilitate the offering of the culture of faith to children, allowing them to live within the full culture of the church. Consequently, TLs in children's ministry should value the church and the place of children within the church. They are also in a position to help children make faith their own while living it in the context of Christian and non-Christian communities. TLs may also need to have the capacity to help children translate the world and the church, contextualizing their faith. They should be prepared to help other volunteers do the same.

Children need a place to participate in the walk of faith. The Christian culture is made up of people who are walking according to the faith tradition—in relationship with

Christ. Roehlkepartain affirmed that churches are a kind of "place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence" the spiritual growth of children (334). Nicholas of Cusa, John Wesley, and Friedrich Schleiermacher agreed that in order to build discipleship, children need a loving system of faith in which to grow (Berryman 51, 136; Chrysostom 9; Bond 295; Schleiermacher). Children are participative and therefore must participate actively in the faith to grow and live in it (Berryman 83).

Additionally, since children often learn from watching others and through participation (Fox and Warhol 3), it is vital that children see models of who God is—a unity of persons sharing power. Team-based leadership in ministry with the young may facilitate knowledge of how God works as the Trinity in participative terms. By passing leadership back and forth to each other, TLs can show children how God works with and within himself perichoretically. Shared leadership could therefore assist in giving children a more Trinitarian picture of God.

In order to follow the Three in One in their example of shared leadership, leaders should develop the characteristics that the Trinity shows. To pass on a culture of faith, TLs and DCMs could be influencers who can contextualize the culture of the child for adults and from both the secular and the sacred milieu. Leaders must be willing and able to allow the participation of children in faith and the church. They should be able to exemplify the faith for discipleship and to learn from children as ones who can easily enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Mark 10:14-16). Of course, none of these characteristics will yield much if they are not wrapped with the skill of caring for others.

Leadership by children as perichoretic.

Leadership modelled after the perichoresis does not amass power but attempts to be like the Trinity in cruciform, sacrificial living (Zscheile 58). Based on a principle of sacrifice, it gives birth to leadership from relationship rather than power (Zizioulas 223–24). Part of this cruciform sharing may be giving children a place in leadership. In an article regarding power in relation to children's spirituality, Annemie Dillen wrote, "When one reflects further on the many initiatives taken for children, one can ask whether children really get a voice, whether their own perspective is recognized" (Dillen 146–47). Taking this to its furthest application, perichoretic leadership would require adults to give up power, kenotically sharing it with children, like the Trinity does for all of us. In this way, leadership could be sacrificially shared through trust and vulnerability. As noted above, this happens particularly in team leadership through practicing Trinitarian characteristics such as trust, kenotic vulnerability, collaboration, and sharing power.

Especially in children's ministries, when leadership is shared, it should be between adults and children, not just between adults. Otherwise power is not truly shared, and children may be taken advantage of. Schleiermacher noted that "religion […] is about the redemptive quality in relationships to which children are, perhaps, more open than adults and which they can initiate in adults" (Berryman 149). Current studies show that adults can be changed by little ones because children interpret their surroundings and narratives differently from adults (Dillen 147; Yust 135, 142). This can require adults to sacrifice their authority and power over children, valuing children's voices.

Much of what may be taken for granted in Christian life, children are in the process of wrestling within their discipleship process. Because of this, they may have fresh expressions of faith to offer. Including these fresh understandings allows leadership to remember and review questions of faith. This participation with children in theological leadership could help the church remember dependence on Christ. It might also allow stagnation to dissipate through the wonder of childlike searching. Therefore, allowing children to enter into and share leadership may be beneficial to the spiritual growth of the church. Instead of the child being only ministered to and led, ministry and leadership take place with the child.

Additionally, since empowerment enhances relationships and children learn faith through relationships (Berryman 149; Dillen 148; Robson; Roehlkepartain 201; Schleiermacher), sharing leadership with the young may be effective for young people's spiritual growth. In his book *Will Our Children Have Faith?* Westerhoff contended that ministry ought to be done with rather than for or to children. He wrote that spiritual development of children was a community or communal experience rather than a top-down or teacher-student education. A perspective of Trinitarian team leadership, however, takes Westerhoff's question of *with* versus *for* to a new level (Westerhoff, chap.4), allowing children to participate not only in ministry and faith but in leadership of ministry and faith. Therefore, churches may need to have a way to not only grow children in faith but to grow in faith through children. Leaders in a team leadership model need the characteristics of including children in decision-making processes and growing in their faith as a result of children's examples.

Grace for children through perichoretic leadership.

Children live in prevenient grace until they accept saving grace. Thomas Aquinas wrote that "grace […] enables children to develop into people of mature spirituality in cooperation with their natural gifts" (Berryman 80–81). John Wesley agreed, saying that "the earliest inclination and ability to respond to God's saving action—is dependent upon a renewing work of God's grace" (Maddox 83). God's prevenient grace is always reaching out to adults, children, and infants. It is a gentle grace that does not invade but beckons response with love. Certainly, every orthodox Christian would agree that grace is primary for anyone's spiritual growth, including children's. One way grace could engage children at a young age is through setting an example of the movement of the Trinity in regard to shared power and leadership.

This grace is always present no matter one's orientation to God. It is possible that one of the ways God's wooing grace affects children is through leaders who act perichoretically. The team, sharing leadership, shows the self-giving, sacrificial dance of the Trinity for children to see and participate in. In a way, teaming can become a "means of grace"—an "ordinary channel whereby [God] might convey […] preventing (prevenient) grace" (Outler 160). Those in shared leadership ought to be willing and able to engage children on a team in order to give them another way to experience grace.

Because it is initiated by the Trinity, grace is also a main component in leadership: "According to the Father's will, Christ leads the Church, and the Holy Spirit actualizes this as specific people are caught up in the flow of grace and lead with Christ" (Horsthuis 98–100). The Father sends grace, Christ embodies grace, and the Spirit sets grace in motion. In order to be healthy, leaders must engage in grace with Christ—both

giving and receiving it. Team members should live by displaying grace in order to be more Trinitarian.

If grace is a "main component in leadership," participating in leadership can lead to grace. Because of this, leadership should be shared with children and may be one of the ways that children can participate in the grace that stands at the heart of orthodox Christian faith.

Summary of perichoretic leadership with children.

Theologically, it appears that children require leadership as much as leadership requires children. Sharing leadership between adults and children may strengthen not only team leadership in children's ministries but the church itself. Participative leadership with children may also fortify the grace living inside of them. To accomplish this, TLs would have to be willing to include children on their teams, valuing their leadership. Leadership should also have the characteristic of bravely shared communication when it is perichoretic in nature. This means that DCMs and TLs ought to possess the characteristic of alignment through sacrificial collaboration.

Summary of Team Characteristics in Theology

The Trinity is the source of leadership in the Christian community. It seems that human leadership ought to reflect the Trinity's perichoresis by being shared: unified, discipling, sacrificial, aligning, empowering, and grace giving. Power should be sacrificed while community is centralized, allowing leadership of and with children to be relational.

Team Characteristics from the Field of Leadership

Current practices of shared leadership may inform the core competencies of team leadership in children's ministry. Some skills emerged from the literature specifically for directors, such as being inviting, engaging, assessing, and called. While these skills might also be practiced by some Team Leaders (TLs), they seemed imperative for a leader of leaders, such as a Director of Children's Ministries (DCM). TLs and DCMs seemed to require relational, technical, and communication skills.

Skills Specific to DCMs

The Director of Children's Ministries (DCM) must lead not only followers but other leaders. According to some research, the DCM must also have a specific calling to ministry leadership. Leading other leaders requires an additional set of skills that invite, engage, and assess.

Calling.

The director must have a calling from God both to children's ministry and to leading other leaders (Barna, *Master Leaders* chap.12). Barna defined a calling as being "humbled and . . . open to learn" (chap.12).

The calling seems to include engaging others in leadership. In other words it is a calling to involve others in the vision of teaming, rather than a calling to be the only leader (Wright, chap.4, sec. 5). This connects well with the biblical and theological foundations of shared leadership, since all are subject to the leadership of God and his leadership is shared. It also connects with Jesus's calling to sacrifice.

Some of the literature pointed to a need for the director to "cause" a calling in Team Leaders (TLs) (Yukl 422). In this context, calling might be applied to TLs as well as to DCMs.

Respecting.

More than anyone else on the team, including TLs, it is important that DCMs respect their followers (Barna, *Master Leaders* chap.12; Leadercast, sec..3). This shows children not only that they are respected, but that it is important to respect those whom you lead. As Jeffrey Camplin wrote, respect is something everyone wants (Camplin 38). Respecting followers can garner followers.

Respect of followers can also lead to sustainability, empowerment (Leadercast, sec.3), and trust (Lawson and Eguizabal 267). Respect causes trust in both the leader and the follower, and empowerment allows trust to be used. So, Respect of followers by the leader causes greater leadership. Those leading other leaders should be able to live respectfully of others, or they risk being unable to develop any leaders at all.

Careful Communication.

Because they often navigate various generations, policies, teams, and issues, leaders of teams may want to invest in the ability to communicate carefully and intentionally. It is not enough for the leader of leaders to be able to communicate—they need to know how to do so with care. This way of communicating could help develop respect between members of the church and of the children's ministry (Collier 105). Additionally, shared leadership cannot thrive if the director drives team members away by careless communication.

Evaluation.

Evaluation is a part of careful communication. Tasks, goals, and communication itself must be tracked so that knowledge sharing and vision carrying can take place healthfully. Communication, specifically, is a major part of team leadership (Shane Wood and Fields 252), affecting shared mental models and the success of the TL, thus, evaluating it is very important. TLs could also be evaluated to see if they practicing the characteristics of team leadership and carrying the vision (Barna, *The Power of Team leadership* 89–97; Batchelor 98; Marks, Mathieu and Zaccaro 363; Taylor 144). Kathy M. Batchelor postulated that this communicative evaluation of team members should be done by the main leader. Conversely, Lawson and Eguizabal indicated that in a shared leadership model, the team might evaluate each other rather than the director evaluating the rest of the team (273). In that type of model all leaders would set and evaluate goals together. In either case, skills in performing formal or informal evaluations of people and resources can be helpful in leading a team.

Inviting.

The DCM should be able to invite leadership. This means engaging with diverse people, discovering the skills of others, and spotting influential people. The DCM must also be able to invite the participation of other staff into knowledge of and community with children and their families.

Including Diversity.

According to Camplin's research regarding management teams in churches, people successfully engaged in a leading team of leaders were able to invite a diversity of members onto the team. Diversity included variations in spiritual maturity, length of

relationship with the DCM, age, attitudes, and tenure on the team (Perkins and Fields 838). According to D. Clay Perkins and Dail Fields, greater diversity in TLs added to the sustainability of the ministry and the team because it meant that members were related to various others within the church. In turn, TLs had the potential to invite other diverse members into volunteer ministry as well as diverse families into church life (836). Thus, DCMs must be able to invite those who are different from themselves into leadership, again participating in sacrifice.

Discovering Other Leaders.

Building on this, Anthony Pescosolito contended that the DCM would need to be able to find TLs who possess influence (Pescosolido 78–85; Camplin 39). He postulated that inviting those who are already seen as leaders added an extra edge to their ability to accomplish leadership. Of course, this was because they were already leaders— influencers. Especially at the beginning of their tenure on a team, these leaders were able to produce greater success in regard to reaching goals than those who were not already influential among followers (Pescosolido 85). In regard to leadership in children's ministries, this means that the DCM should be able to identify and recruit those who have influence among families and their children as well as volunteers.

Identifying Skills.

The DCM may also need to identify the skills or gifts of those invited onto the leadership team (Barna, *Master Leaders* chap.12; Barna, *Power of Team* 165–66). The DCM must be able to sight people with the gift of leadership and with the particular skills and characteristics that a TL ought to possess.

Additionally, directors need to be able to discover talents in others that they do not possess themselves, but that might benefit the team, ministry, church, children, or families. For instance, the DCM might need to find people with an education in child psychology or administrative skills (Barna, *Master Leaders* chap.12; R. G. Crosby 40).

Being able to enable others' skills can help develop a strong volunteer team. However, this means the main leader must be able to share the duties of leadership. Identifying skills without allowing others to use them becomes disempowering. One cannot enable others to engage in leadership without giving the responsibility of leadership away (Snider, sec. Summary). Because of this principle of giving leadership, the DCM needs characteristic humility, a collaborative attitude, and delegative empowerment. This, wrote Alan Snider, creates a tension that the leader must carefully steward: giving power while losing authority (Snider, sec.Dynamic Tension Between Agents and Volunteers).

Inviting Other Staff.

The DCM may need to be able to invite other church staff and leadership into the culture of the child (Dillen 146–47). If TLs must be able to navigate church politics while championing the child, the DCM may need to be able to do this specifically with staff members (Perkins and Fields 838). This could be especially difficult for directors who are unpaid and therefore not included on the church's staff team. Advocating for children's culture and spirituality among paid staff is a particularly important skill for the DCM, since children, themselves, are necessary for developing a consistent and real model of shared leadership.

Summary of Inviting.

The DCM may need to not only invite other leaders onto the team but have the capacity to discover and recruit a diverse team of influential leaders. Directors should also learn to invite other leadership within the church, such as the senior or youth pastor, into the culture of the child.

Empowering.

Paul Hersey, Kenneth Blanchard and Dewey Johnson wrote that empowerment develops an attitude of ownership in a group, liberating them to act on their own. It develops shared leadership through ownership. Different from delegation, empowerment implies assisting and encouraging others to take ownership rather than just giving them a task (156–57). The needs of the follower in learning how to act on their own are listened and responded to.

Empowerment included building the confidence of TLs. This means allowing them to take and learn from risks that may carry vision forward (Barna, *The Power of Team* 125; Collier 109). Risk taking could be encouraged among TLs as a way to build confidence. The DCM may also need to be available to re-empower leaders when risk ends in failure (Taylor 134). This is one reason why the DCM should have a strong faith growing out of an identity in Christ (Shaw 125). Because of that identity, the director can view failure and risk as opportunities for learning rather than causing loss of self. It therefore allows the DCM to use risk and failure for empowerment (Taylor 134).

Some research indicated how to empower volunteer leaders. Paid leaders, wrote Edwin J. Boezeman and Naomi Ellemers, prefer autonomy while volunteer leaders often prefer relational connectedness (Boezeman and Ellemers 910). Therefore, the effective

paid children's minister may need to function with both, thriving in autonomy but becoming close to volunteers while sharing power (Posner 889). Shared leadership may be the best posture for a children's director since it facilitates relationship while rewarding autonomy through the practice of empowerment.

In order to empower well, those leading teams of leaders should be able to resource their teams (Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership* 140; Marks et al. 363; Yukl 342–44). They need to provide not only the supplies needed for TLs to do their work, but also the ability to acquire new skills, insights, and practices to carry out the vision of the leadership and ministry (Marks et al. 363). DCMs ought to know their budget, where to obtain supplies, and how to obtain or give leadership training (Collier 105; Guzzo and Salas 178; Marks et al. 363). In regard to ministry with children, this also means locating and providing resources that will help TLs in assisting parents and children (Shore 50).

Building destiny.

Vision casting.

Research showed that developing vision and willingness to allow others to carry out this vision can be helpful on leadership teams (Barna, *The Power of Team* 89–97; Bowers and Hamby 8; Leadercast, sec.3; Taylor 137). Therefore, a clear sense of destiny for the ministry can be important to teamwork (Leadercast, sec.3). For the most part, TLs should be trusted to carry and pass on this vision; otherwise leadership is not being shared. Participating in carrying the goals of the ministry helps the team engage with the future, one another, and the DCM, providing destiny. The ability to understand followers so that vision could be clearly communicated was also noted as a help to the destiny-driven leader (Posner 888–89).

Conversely, a study also revealed that vision casting, especially in a team

leadership model, could be shared. In this case the team would collaborate regarding the

vision. The members together would create and hold destiny. Batchelor postulated that

this provided sustainability, especially in relation to leadership roles. This was because

members were more likely to remain in their specific positions on the team if they were

invited into envisioning what their roles would accomplish (127).

> In fact, sharing vision casting may be particularly helpful in innovation:
>
> Teams that share vision for future innovations are influenced by
>
> innovation effectiveness and [understand] that the subsequent shared
>
> vision ultimately affects innovation effectiveness at a future point in time.
>
> (Pearce and Ensley 260)

Teams who share the development of a vision are more likely to be effective in

innovation and, thus, in the future functioning of the team. Since children's ministry often

requires creativity in working with intergenerational and diverse populations, shared

vision casting could be helpful for teams working with infants, girls, and boys.

Modelling team.

Those who want to develop a team of leaders must value and model shared

leadership (Bowers and Hamby 7–10; Collier 82–109). Part of modeling an

understanding of teams is working toward a shared mental model. A shared mental model

is a pattern of thinking or working together. To create this model, a DCM needs to talk

with leaders about past situations and how they could be handled, as well as hypothetical

future situations. If a DCM cannot actually share leadership, work on a team, or engage

in a shared mental model, they are not likely to gather a team. As Bryan Collier wrote,

modeling being on a team sets "the tone and expectation" for the group (Collier 40). While this may seem obvious, there may be directors who desire a team but have no experience working on one or communicating shared understanding. They might need additional experience or education before beginning team leadership.

Altruistic love.

For the DCM in particular, altruistic love may be an important characteristic for sharing power and authority with others, including children. This means they would be sacrificial (Yukl 420), caring more for others than themselves. The DCM should be more invested in TL development than in their own right or talent to lead. As the sections on the biblical and theological foundations of team leadership established, shared leadership cannot take place without sacrifice.

Summary of skills specific to directors.

The DCM must be called to lead other leaders as well as act with good character. Leaders of other leaders should practice inviting other leaders and then empowering them through building authenticity and destiny.

Leaders Who Team Are Relational

The interpersonal skills that Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and Team Leaders (TLs) require seem to be engaging in relational authority (often called politics), developing and navigating relationships, and supporting parents. These four major skills combined allow shared leadership to take place.

Relational authority.

TLs ought to possess political skills—the ability to navigate the relationships within the congregation's authority structures for the benefit of leaders, children, parents, volunteers, and ministry.

Shared understandings.

Mental models are the images people have in their minds of what should be done, how and when it should be accomplished, who should do it, and where they should do it. These models are solidified by specific language that is shared by the group and gradually comes into focus through continual communication regarding them, as well as through developing them together (Hill and Levenhagen 1065). Communicating about these models, or understandings, develops similar and accurate thoughts regarding how to respond to various situations.

Matthew Cronin stated that similar mental models can help manage conflict even in very diverse teams, such as intergenerational ones (Cronin and Weingart 770). Claus W. Langfred's research on church intergenerationality indicated that if conflict is not managed well, a team can self-destruct through revenge or withholding relationship (889). Conflict is, perhaps, the surest part of a shared leadership structure. Therefore, those on the team must be able to withstand and work through conflict. One way to achieve this is to develop mental models through continually talking through or practicing various scenarios. While mental models can help with various situations, they are particularly helpful when moving through conflict.

Mental models require the team to be able to communicate with one another. Time must also be spent on developing accurate mental models to share. In fact, if a

model is not accurate, there is less likelihood that the team will complete its mission (Edwards et al. 735). Thus, leaders should spend time understanding not only how to communicate and gather around understandings, but what to communicate that will help the team reach the vision. In order to mediate, develop, and execute a team that works toward a goal relationally, leaders need to portray the ability to share understandings as well as discover what understandings are needed and why. For instance, on a children's ministry team, leaders might need to research accurate ways to teach children, spend time thinking together and in the same direction regarding accurate ways of teaching, and then practice teaching accurately together. In other words, the team needs be able to discover, develop, and practice its understandings together.

Educating the church.

Political skill is needed to educate the church about children and ministry with them (Cocco 128; Shore 51; Yukl 344). Being politically minded also helps build a healthy view of the ministry through positive relational communication. One characteristic of volunteer leaders that was noted by Barry Z. Posner was that of pride in the organization (894). Being able to present the ministry well helps other leaders develop the characteristic respect for it that is needed for teaming.

As stated above, children ought to be included in the power structure of their Christian community. However, because children are often voiceless, they require advocacy to use their voice within the church (Dillen 147). Also, since children often learn through watching adults, every adult within a church ought to be made aware of how they may be leading children (Dillen 148). This may require someone like a TL or a DCM to educate the congregation on how they affect children. Leaders on a team should

be able to invite others who can connect with the culture of the church and the child

(Hyde 243).

Relationships.

Those sharing leadership in children's ministries ought to practice relational

connectedness. Friendship is key to relationship. Additionally, consistency of presence

and authenticity were important in building healthy team relationships.

Friendship.

TLs and DCMs need to personally invest in friendship with people in the church

(Marks, Zaccaro and Mathuie 363). This can assist in developing shared mental models

since it helps the a group synchronize(Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks 469). In a shared

leadership structure, friendship may also increase a desire to participate because of social

ties (Yukl 263). Since personal attachment helps volunteers desire to stay in the

organization and in their roles (Batchelor 27), friendship can help create a team. Team

leadership should engage in shared leadership knowing that it is its own reward—the

reward of friendship (Shane Wood and Fields 257).

Oddly absent from Robert G. Crosby's study regarding the formal education of

children's directors was the topic of skill in working with children, other than having

knowledge of their development and helping others to lead them (R.G.I. Crosby 40).

According to Crosby, friendship, rather than volunteering with young people, is one of

the characteristics that drives and sustains teams. In other words, TLs must find their joy

in caring for and leading other adults in ministry and helping them to grow rather than in

being hands-on with the children. One of places where a TL or DCM should find

fulfilment is in team relationships—mutual friendship.

Commitment.

The loyalty of leaders fosters followership. While sharing leadership tends to build members' commitment (Yukl 363), dedication to the team also needs to be reinforced (Barna, *Power of Team* 90). Dedication of TLs and DCMs can help volunteers become more effective because it allows volunteers to have a consistent vision—they understand the vision and, as a result, know where they are going together because they have had consistent leadership. In this way, consistency of presence—or dedication to followers—assists the leaders in developing a shared mental model (Lawson and Eguizabal 268; Camplin 39). This consistency of presence can also allow DCMs and TLs to build relational connectedness within their churches, helping them navigate politics. Consistency may also help give those on the team a deeper understanding of the ministry's vision as well as of the needs of children and their families. Thus, leaders need to be able to see the signs of lack of commitment in their team members and themselves, especially regarding the vision (Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership* 93).

Authenticity.

In his article regarding leadership's impact on followers, Bruce J. Avolio wrote that authenticity was one of the characteristics that created empowerment— "transforming followers into leaders" (Avolio et al. 807). Without authenticity, TLs may not be sure if their director is being genuine in sharing leadership. Thus, authenticity allowed DCMs to encourage TLs to take on visioning and develop leadership characteristics. The leader's openness made leadership by others possible and attainable.

Developing authenticity or openness in the team can cause that needed sense of destiny mentioned above and allow TLs to carry out vision. Since team leadership, by

nature, shares knowledge, vision, and authority, the ability to build openness may be especially important (Collier 40). In order to accomplish this, the DCM may need to model and provide authenticity through friendship and vision. By providing authenticity TLs can grow in their ability to lead because they become closer to the leader (Avolio et al. 807). Without friendship, vulnerable authenticity becomes challenging and shared leadership is difficult.

Fellowship, or friendship, can aid in authenticity. Since shared leadership involves a community of leaders, developing an atmosphere of friendship and togetherness can help the team become more authentic through their enjoyment and trust of one another (Collier 113; Yukl 422). This may be crucial for ministry with children since little ones appear to need a community of adults in order to mature spiritually (Roehlkepartain 326).

Authenticity often requires humility. When researching what made a good leader, the Arbinger Institute found humility to be an important characteristic, especially of those who led other leaders (8). In agreement, Bradley P. Owens and David R. Hekman concluded that "teams expressing high levels of humble behavior tended to have a better fit between team member skills and task demands, which led to collective promotion focus and to higher team performance" (1102–03). Humility on a team can lead to better longevity, allowing the team to reach its highest potential and performance. Dickens stated that this was because humility developed better influence, since it is attractive to others (Dickson, chap.2, sec. 4). People *want* to follow someone who is humble. Finally, humility is important because one goal of shared leadership in children's ministry is to help children become like Christ, who was deeply humble.

Navigating relationships.

In the literature reviewed, five approaches to navigating leadership relationships emerged. These were communication, managing emotions, influence, trust, and valuing teams.

Communication.

Communication stretches across many areas of leadership. Within shared leadership it is of utmost importance:

> Shared leadership models depict the team members as the source of a
> collaborative process in which the functions of leadership are shared. […]
> The collaborative process of shared leadership often results in improved
> team effectiveness, group productivity, and performance, particularly in
> complex task situations. (Shane Wood and Fields 252)

Excellent communication can lead to a healthier and more sustainable team, avoiding speculation by providing correct information (Camplin 39–40). In his research with 30 "master leaders," George Barna uncovered two main types of communication that were important in team leadership, calling them "advocacy" and "inquiry" (Barna, *Master Leaders* chap.12). Leaders ought to both advocate for their own position and inquire of others in order to come to a consensus.

Advocacy. Voicing opinion is the point of advocacy—leaders need to share and advocate for other's thoughts through their communication with one another. The better the communication in this area, the more "shared" a mental model can become (Marks, Zaccaro, and Mathieu 983). This includes communicating mission (Marks, Mathieu, and Zaccaro 363), strategy, and plans, as well as coordinating transitions and movement

(360–65). Everyone on the team needs to practice advocacy of their own understandings to allow true teamwork to take place.

Inquiry. On the other hand, questioning and listening must be present for advocacy to work. If no one is listening, advocacy is futile. If no one is questioning, advocacy cannot be honed. Listening, as Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith wrote, allows team members to discover what needs to be done and work together (chap.7).

In the article "Enhancing Leadership Skills in Volunteers," Landry L. Locket and Barry Boyd determined that inquiry often takes an investment over time. Engaging with the team or ministry during many events allows team members to understand their various perspectives. Deep questioning, then, takes place over a long period of time during which investment and relationship cause inquiry (Lockett and Boyd 237). For this type of communicative collaboration to take place, a safe atmosphere must be developed in which violation of healthy communication is not tolerated. Kevin E. Lawson and Orbelina Eguizabal's research found that safe communication was fostered through an understanding that language which attacked others would not be tolerated. Leaders should privately address those who were overly defensive or offensive, while reiterating the mission and values of the team (277).

A posture of inquiry promotes collaboration, which was defined as proactive conflict management by Lawson and Eguizabal in their research on effective teams in ministry (267 and 269). Inquiry also facilitates diversity because it listens to the distinctly other (Cronin and Weingart 770). Listening and questioning go hand in hand with advocacy to create communicative shared leadership.

Managing emotions.

Perhaps most important for navigating relationships is the skill of affect management (Aguilera 43; Barna, *The Power of Team* 89–97; Bowers and Hamby 10; Espinoza and Johnson-Miller 20; Marks, Mathieu, and Zaccaro 363). This means caring for and regulating the emotional climate of the team (Marks, Mathieu, and Zaccaro 363; Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks 473). Stephen J. Zaccaro wrote that caring for emotions can bring about better effectiveness, openness, and creativity (Zaccaro et al. 473). A team that feels better works better. Affect management helps TLs and DCMs engage their teams and develop authenticity as well. Authenticity then helps empower more effective leadership.

Several researchers indicated that affect management could be brought about by clear goals, roles, and strategies (Mintz 159; Sugiman and Misumi 8; Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks 475)—in other words, shared mental models. Affect management can also create sustainability and a greater number of leaders.

Influence.

The ability to influence others, or charisma, can help a TL or DCM facilitate politics (Cocco 147–56; Collier 82–109; Perkins and Fields 836; Pescosolido 85; Yukl 276). Team members use their understandings of one another and of followers to help them move in the direction of the vision (Cocco 147). Anthony T. Pescosolido suggested that influence within a shared leadership structure often happens intuitively, since the sharing of leadership that has already taken place has likely occurred naturally through interpersonal influence (75).

In a volunteer team situation, understanding the role of influence, rather than just possessing it, is important. Leaders must lead through influence since they may not have a formal place in the church's authority structure. Additionally, whether TLs are given authority or not, they need to be influencers of people who may not be a part of the governing structure, such as volunteers and parents. Thus, charisma could prove to be an especially important characteristic of with unpaid children's leaders.

Trust.

TLs and DCMs must be able to trust and be trustworthy (Bowers and Hamby 9; Cocco 115; Yukl 342). Trust is built through competent leadership combined with healthy character. Competency allows followers to understand that their leader can undertake a task. Character reassures them that the leader will see the task through (Camplin 39). Gary A. Yukl proposed that trust is vital in a team model because shared leadership requires relationship (342).

Kristen M. Bowers and William J. Hamby noted that trust builds freedom for a team to complete tasks—allowing members to make decisions and act upon them on their own instead of waiting for approval (9). Trust adds health to shared leadership since it gives the leader the willingness and ability to collaborate and to give away authority and power. Thus, trust empowers. Since "a positive adult-child relationship [is partly] built on trust" it seems this characteristic would be especially important in ministry with children (Joseph and Strain, sec.2).

Valuing teams.

To provide accountability for relationship building, TLs and DCMs could employ the practice of "mutual cooperative rewards" (Yukl 377). This means rewarding the

practice of being a team rather than giving individualized rewards. For instance, the DCM or TL might want to reward goals met by the team rather than by individuals on it. This practice may help members see the team as most important rather than the individuals, enhancing relationships. It also requires leaders to value the team as a unit rather than only the individuals.

Posner wrote that rewards could also come in the form of encouragement. Leaders reward followers with positive reinforcement when they succeed. Rather than being concerned only for themselves and their own leadership development, those on a team champion others' gifts and skills (889). Rewarding the team rather than individuals and rewarding others rather than investing in themselves add to leaders' characteristic of encouragement.

Relational support of parents.

In a survey of parents and young adolescents (ages 10–15), Roehlkepartain discovered that family relationships were among the greatest forces for sustaining children through adversity of any kind. In particular, affection and clear expectations between child and parents were highly important (Roehlkepartain and Syvertsen 14–16). Parents were key to a strong childhood, no matter the circumstances. Along with serving children, TLs and DCMs need to be able to support a diversity of parents and parenting styles. They should also be able and willing to emphasize the role of parents in their children's faith.

To parallel the concept of parents' roles, Roehlkepartain discovered that children involved with nonparent adults in a faith community were generally better at engaging with their own mothers and fathers (326). Additionally, in his research regarding

integrating generations within the church, Kathy Amidei found that intergenerational

learning required a diversity of leaders who were collaborative and empowering (119). If

teams in children's ministry possess the characteristics of collaboration and

empowerment, they may be able to provide this type of supportive leadership while

helping parents become more influential in their children's lives.

Rima Shore wrote that young, low-income, and single parents are often those who

need the most support. This support is needed more through encouragement than through

developing skills since, according to her research, most parents already have the skills to

care for their children (50 & 34). However, what was especially challenging to most

parents that Shore surveyed was developing morality and emotional stability for their

children's benefit (48). In conjunction, Roehlkepartain found that children who shared

their parents' values were more likely to gain resources accessed through a network of

friends and family (327). This means that leadership in children's ministries does not

need to replace parents, but needs to know how to equip, inform, and influence them to

be moral and emotional role models (Barna Group, "Research Shows," sec.3; Schweitzer

and Boschki 41–42). Importantly, parents, TLs, DCMs, and other adults should work

together in raising children.

Through their presence with children, TLs and DCMs can affect young people's

relationships with their own parents. Directors will need to know how to train or mentor

TLs to help parents be morally and emotionally strong and will also need to champion

parents' roles with other leaders.

The Importance of Belonging

Kirsi Tirri, Mary K. Tallent-Runnels, and Petri Nokelainen wrote that preadolescents are often looking to answer questions of belonging. Children want to know to whom and where they should be connected. The faith tradition and the church often have answers. Because of the church's interconnectedness, it is in a position to offer these solutions in ways that provide a context of belonging (212–13). Leaders can also listen to children as advocates who will incorporate the little ones' understandings of the church and of children's ministry.

Children ought to be valued as those who belong by those in leadership with them ("Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age," sec.3; Schweitzer and Boschki 42). When children feel belonging within a faith community, it is more likely they will grow into mature Christian adults (ibid sec.3). Additionally, Friedrich Schweitzer and Reinhold Boschki indicated that churches give children the ability to be a part of its culture and identify with it (42).

Those leading other volunteers must be aware that a relational environment between adults and children ought to exist and could then develop ways in which belonging can take place. Leaders within a children's ministry ought to be adept at creating this sense of belonging.

As a part of developing belonging, all leaders of children could consider how their lives exhibit the actions, stories, and moods of the faith (Worsley 57). Based on Fowler's *Stages of Faith*, Howard John Worsley indicated that in the preschool through early grade school years, children are especially influenced by story: "The child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith

of [adult relatives]" (Worsley 57). Parents are an important and key part of this process. However, other adults also influence children and affect their growth, especially preschool-age children (Joseph and Strain, sec.2). Therefore, Team Leaders (TLs) could practice faith visibly, encourage parents to do the same, and create a sense of belonging through the living example of their own stories.

Dillen wrote that for care with children to be ethical, some power ought to be shared with little ones—giving them a voice in their own leadership. In this way, children are not only taken care of, but given a place within the system. They are valued as authorities in their own growth (146–47). Worsley agreed, saying that children ought to be listened to not just for their benefit, but also to benefit leadership (60). In other words, "What the child brings to a story [of faith] was at least as important as what the story brought to the child" (68). If leadership values children, it ought also to value what children can teach about faith. In this way, TLs and Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) respect children not just as children, but as those who can speak into Christian leadership.

Research by the Commission on Children at Risk et al. discovered that children are made for community. Beginning with mother and father and extending to neighbors and friends (9), children need what the commission called "authoritative community." This authority-sharing community should be marked by certain characteristics: nurturing, establishing boundaries, and teaching and exemplifying healthy lifestyles. The people making up these communities ought to be committed—showing consistency of presence. The commission additionally discovered that people sharing leadership for the benefit of children should understand and practice dignity and love (34). Community, they found,

helps provide these needed characteristics for at-risk boys, girls, and infants. TLs and

DCMs who display dignity and love within a team can provide some of this community.

Summary of Team Characteristics from the Field of Leadership

Relationships are highly important in shared leadership, providing the backbone

of the team. Relationships also help support parents and develop belonging for children.

Along with being highly relational, TLs and DCMs need communication skills. In

particular, the DCM should be able to invite, engage, and assess the team and team

members. Additionally, the director ought to have a calling to sharing leadership, to

children, and to continuing depth of character.

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Research-Design Literature

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The research project was designed with the use of surveys and focus groups. This

instrumentation was chosen for its ability to engage the subject matter with the sample.

Regarding surveys, research revealed that purposive samples would be most

useful (Sensing, chap.4, sec. 3). Tim Sensing's guidelines noted that this type of sample

should use a group that has some knowledge of or experience in the subject being studied

(chap.4, sec. 3). Since the subject is team leadership in children's ministry in the Ohio

Valley District (OVD) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), the sample

was created from Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and volunteers in the OVD.

William R. Yount's understanding was that a survey return rate of at least 60% would be

most beneficial and least likely to skew results (10.3).

For greater reliability, surveys used queries such as Likert scales, weighed

questions, and multiple-choice-type queries for large samples (Sensing, chap.4, sec. 10;

Yount 10.4). Since there were over 100 volunteers in the group being surveyed, this type of instrumentation fit the project's focus and population.

Focus groups for the DCMs were also researched, in order to allow small groups to brainstorm and think together about the core competencies of Team Leaders (TLs). Adding a second methodological research tool improved dependability. Sensing offered the guidelines of using more than three members for each focus group and preparing questions in advance. Additionally, the focus groups were recorded to allow the researcher to better engage in facilitation (chap.4, sec. 12).

As Yount suggested, a pilot study of the questions was done with knowledgeable individuals to check the questions for clarity and the format for ease of use (10.10-11).

In summary, fixed-question surveys provided reliability. In conjunction, focus groups provided more dependability. These tools were used in a pilot study before administration to the research population.

Summary of Literature

Moses, Jesus, and Paul each give examples of relational, sacrificially exemplary, invitational, and committed shared leadership. Early in the literature review, a Trinitarian model of leadership emerged as being supported theologically. It related easily to shared or team leadership as well as ministry with children. The participative leadership characteristics of unity, discipleship, sacrifice, alignment, and empowerment combine to form a perichoretic example for children as well as allow young people to engage in leadership. A study of literature from the field of leadership revealed that DCMs should be called and should invite and engage their teams. On all fronts, shared leadership finds its backbone in relationship—with God, other leaders, and followers.

Five major characteristics of a TL in children's ministry emerged, each encompassing three important traits. First, a TL must have or gain Relational skills: listening (Listener), friendship (Friend/Relationship Builder), and community building (Community Builder). Biblical, theological, and pragmatic research all agreed that relationship is the foundation of team leadership. Second, closely linked to the main characteristic of Relational, is Encouraging—the TL must be someone who cheers others on (Encourager), manages team emotions (Emotional Manager), and offers rest (Rest Giver) in various ways. Third, based especially on biblical research, is the characteristic of Discipling. A Discipling TL communicates well (Communicator), sets an example with their lives (Example Setter), and helps others grow spiritually (Spiritual Discipler). Fourth, TLs in children's ministry need to be Sacrificial (Sacrificing). Following the example of the Trinity, Sacrificial TLs practice humility (Humble), vulnerability (Vulnerable), and building a sense in others and themselves that volunteering with children is important enough to practice self-giving (Sacrifice Builder). Fifth, a TL must share power (Power Sharing). Especially from a pragmatic understanding, those who lead children's ministries need to be trustworthy enough for others to take risks (Risk Giver/Trustworthy), empower others (Empowering) by giving away leadership and offering needed support, and build diversity on the team (Diversity Builder).

These seem to build on each other in two ways—from Relational to Power Sharing and from self-leadership to team leadership:

Figure 1: Self and Team Leadership.

Moving from left to right, each major skill builds on the previous ones to create an empowering TL. To grow in team leadership, a person might want to start at the bottom of the chart and move upwards. Conversely, if TLs want to grow in self-leadership, they might begin by participating on a team, then growing in conflict leadership, and finally adopting the skills of a self-leader.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The methodology for the project is presented in this chapter. A quantitative

volunteer survey and qualitative Director of Children's Ministries (DCM) focus groups

were utilized. The individuals who participated in these surveys and focus groups were

selected from churches within the Ohio Valley District (OVD) of the Christian and

Missionary Alliance (C&MA). Reliability, validity, and the process of collection and

analysis were all taken into consideration in the course of the research.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The nature of the project was to complete a mixed-method study. A quantitative

volunteer survey and qualitative focus groups for directors were developed regarding

team leadership in children's ministry. These were implemented for the purpose of

gaining insights about valued core competencies of Team Leaders (TLs) in children's

ministries through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well as from

the perspectives of DCMs and their volunteers.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What Are the Biblical, Theological, and Pragmatic

Characteristics and Skills of Volunteer TLs in Children's Ministry?

A study of other research regarding team leadership, children's ministry, and their

relationship to each other answered this question. This part of the study sought to gain an

understanding of biblical, theological, and pragmatic writings on the topic. These are

addressed in the literature review.

Research Question 2: What TL Characteristics and Skills Are Valued by Children's Ministry Directors from Selected Churches in the OVD of the C&MA?

The focus groups addressed this question for the purpose of gaining perspectives of DCMs. It was covered by questions 1–3 of the Director Focus Group (DFG) prompts.

Research Question 3: What TL Characteristics and Skills Are Valued by Children's Ministry Volunteers from Selected Churches in the OVD of the C&MA?

To gain an understanding of children's ministry volunteers regarding team leadership, a volunteer survey was conducted. Each survey question addressed this research query.

Ministry Context

Midsized churches in the OVD of the C&MA served as the context for the project. The OVD included churches of diverse backgrounds, ages, styles, and stages of ministry. Some of the churches comprised (or were entirely populated by) African immigrants while others were predominantly Caucasian. In general, however, the population displayed an American worldview.

Within the OVD, there are both rural areas and midsized cities. There are also areas of great wealth and pockets of deep poverty. The zone does not include any major cities. Additionally, there are very few areas with African American or Asian populations.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

Churches within the C&MA's OVD were chosen because of their size. Very small and very large churches were disqualified since their staffing and volunteer

structures fell outside the limits of the research. The study was organized in such a way that there were a similar number of volunteers participating from the smaller as from the larger churches. After the churches were stratified by size, every church in the sample was contacted to participate in the study. All children's directors and all children's ministry volunteers at the chosen churches were selected to participate in the DFGs and volunteer survey, respectively. Twelve DCMs and up to 250 volunteers took part.

Description of Participants

Participants from all walks of life who volunteered in or directed children's ministries in the OVD took part in the surveys. The only group that was explicitly not included in the project was the children, including teenage volunteers. Many of the directors had a college education.

Ethical Considerations

The DCMs and volunteers signed informed consent forms. The directors signed a written form for their focus groups, while the volunteers consented via a SurveyMonkey webpage for the online survey. The focus groups and surveys were kept confidential using a system of codes or pseudonyms for each church, director, and volunteer. The names of volunteers were never used. All tools and software were password protected. Additionally, the survey and emails regarding the survey were encrypted.

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Instrumentation

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The methods used were researcher-designed focus groups for directors and a volunteer survey. The DFGs consisted of four questions as well as a demographic section. The four focus groups included three groups from smaller churches and one group from large churches. A survey gathered data from the volunteers at each church.

The volunteer survey was a 41-question online Likert scale and weighted survey which included demographic information.

Expert Review

Three experts conducted a review of the volunteer survey. The three were engaged in children's ministry, respectively, as a volunteer, a director, and an expert in the field. Their feedback assisted in forming more precise and practical questions for the survey.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

The approach of this project met the criteria of the purpose statement through the methods of focus groups and a survey. These mixed methods added to the trustworthiness and generalization of the project. By asking volunteers specific questions about the skills and characteristics they would value in children's ministry Team Leaders (TLs), the survey answered research question 3. The focus groups permitted Director of Children's Ministries (DCMs) to respond to questions in relation to the core competencies they valued among TLs, answering research question 2.

The survey was validated through an expert review. Three experts provided helpful analysis of the clarity of and rationale for each proposed survey question. The experts also gave feedback regarding the design and flow of the survey. In general, each reviewer gave positive comments, saying that the questions would present no trouble for volunteers taking the survey. Any questions that they did indicate as troublesome were reworded.

Data was collected in a consistent manner. SurveyMonkey collected all the volunteer surveys. Therefore, each survey was administered and the data accumulated in

exactly the same way. The surveys had a response rate of 49.3%. The DFGs were each administered with a specific and consistent set of questions with no deviation whatsoever. Each focus group was treated in the same manner, with the same instructions given and recording tools used. Uniformity in collection of the volunteer survey and DFGs provided consistency for the project. Themes concerning the skills and characteristics of TLs were also developed in order to successfully validate responses for both the surveys and the focus groups.

Data Collection

Responses to the volunteer survey instrument were collected in the following manner:

1. I divided the churches in the Ohio Valley District (OVD) according to size.

2. I contacted the lead pastor of each church and asked for permission for the Director of Children's Ministries (DCM) and volunteers at their church to participate.

3. Contact was made with the DCM of each church and they were asked if they would assist in recruiting their volunteers to take the survey by offering their email addresses to the researcher.

4. A prewritten email was sent to the DCM to send to volunteers, inviting them to participate in the survey.

5. I then sent a survey link and instructions to volunteers who had agreed to participate in the survey.

6. I sent two reminders to the volunteers completing the survey.

7. I sent a thank-you email to the volunteers notifying them that the survey was closed.

   The volunteer survey took place between February 1 and March 30, 2019.

The focus groups took place in February and March 2019. The responses were collected by contacting the selected DCMs and setting up focus groups with them. Four DFGs were conducted: three with DCMs from small and medium-sized churches, and one with DCMs from larger churches. Each DFG had three participants. At the beginning of each DFG, the same instructions were given, and then the same questions were asked. Every focus group was videotaped and then securely transcribed.

Data Analysis

The survey questions were coded for the team leadership theme they represented. There were 15 themes divided into five major categories: relational, encouraging, discipling, sacrificial, and empowering. All the categories were compared to see which ones were most valued. They were also compared with the demographics collected to describe the groups of volunteers that valued or did not value each theme.

The Director Focus Groups (DFGs) were also coded with themes that were revealed throughout the study as well as those themes used to code the volunteer survey. These codes were compared to one another.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Children's ministry leaders often seem overwhelmed by the number of children, parents, and volunteers with whom they need to connect in order to help develop spiritually mature little ones. Building teams with volunteer Team Leaders (TLs) could help them shoulder the load. What would team members and Director of Children's Ministries (DCMs) value in these TLs? The purpose of this study was to discover valued core competencies of TLs in children's ministries through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well as from the perspectives of DCMs and their volunteers. Following are the statistical outcomes of the survey and the focus groups.

Participants

A total of 111 people participated in the study. DCMs participated in the focus groups. Volunteers from the DCMs' churches participated in the surveys. Pseudonyms and codes were used instead of the names of participants and their churches to ensure privacy. Below, all names used are not actually those of the participants or churches, they have been changed to protect their identity.

Focus Groups

Eleven out of the originally chosen 12 churches participated in the Director Focus Groups (DFGs). Nine DCMs were women and two were men. They had an average of 5.7 years of children's ministry experience in their respective churches, with the most time served being 20 years and the least 6 months. Most of the focus group participants had a

college education; however, three had completed graduate school, one had completed a

doctoral program, and two had completed only high school.

Two of the churches were quite large, having 800 or more attenders. The rest of

the churches had 120–450 attenders. The most children attending a church was 130 and

the least was 10. On average, children represented 21% of a church's population. The

highest rate was at Sinai Alliance Church (LA03), where church attendance was 35.2%

children, and the lowest rate was at Harvest Alliance Church (SB03) with 8.3% children.

DCMs who had served 2–8 years in their role tended to speak up with greater

frequency than those who had served for longer or shorter times. One outlier was Carol

Smith from Rockpointe Church (SB02), who had many comments but had only served 6

months in her position. Those with the greatest length of stay (11–20 years) spoke up the

least.

The first two DFG questions were asked in a way that allowed DCMs to answer

broadly:

Director Focus Group Question (DFGQ) 1: What have been, or may be (if you do

not have TLs) …

(i) some of the best characteristics/skills displayed by volunteers

functioning as TLs?

(ii) some examples of these characteristics and skills as they relate to TLs

leading other volunteers?

DFGQ 2: What have been, or may be (if you do not have TLs), some of the

challenges of establishing a team? Please share some examples.

The final DFG question noted one particular aspect of discipleship—example setting as a team:

> DFGQ 3: (3) Children often learn and grow through watching how leadership leads. In other words, children often learn by observing the structure of leadership. For instance, children may see volunteers praying together about a program and conclude that volunteers pray together, talk about issues together, etc. and they may conclude that this is a part of spiritual maturity. What children see, regarding how leadership leads, can be spiritually formative for them.
>
> (i) Based on this, what do you think is, or may be (if you do not have TLs), the impact on children of how leadership teams lead?
>
> (ii) What are some examples you have seen, or might see (if you do not have TLs), of children learning through observing leadership teams?

Surveys

Of the 217 volunteers who were asked to participate in the survey, 107 (49.3%) began it. Three of those individuals chose not to continue after reading the consent form, three were underage and not permitted to continue with the survey, and one stopped answering questions after being asked what church they were representing. Two individuals did not answer all the prompts.

Those participating included 85 women (84.7%) and 16 men (15.8%) out of a pool of 101 individuals who completed volunteer survey question (VSQ) 3 (see Figure *2*: VSQ 3 – What is your gender?).
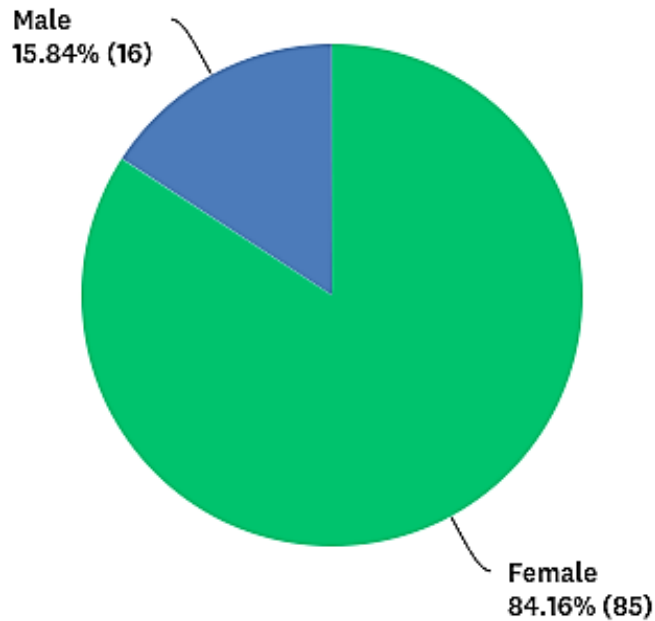
Figure 2: VSQ 3 – What is your gender?

Ten participants were aged 18–28 (9.9% Generation Z), 22 individuals were aged 29–38 (21.8% Generation Y), 14 were aged 39–44 (13.9% Generation X), 22 were aged 45–54 (21.8% baby boomer generation), and 9 people were aged 65 or older (8.9% Greatest Generation). The majority of women were aged 45–64, while the majority of men were aged 29–44 (see Figure *3*: VSQ 2 – What is your age?).
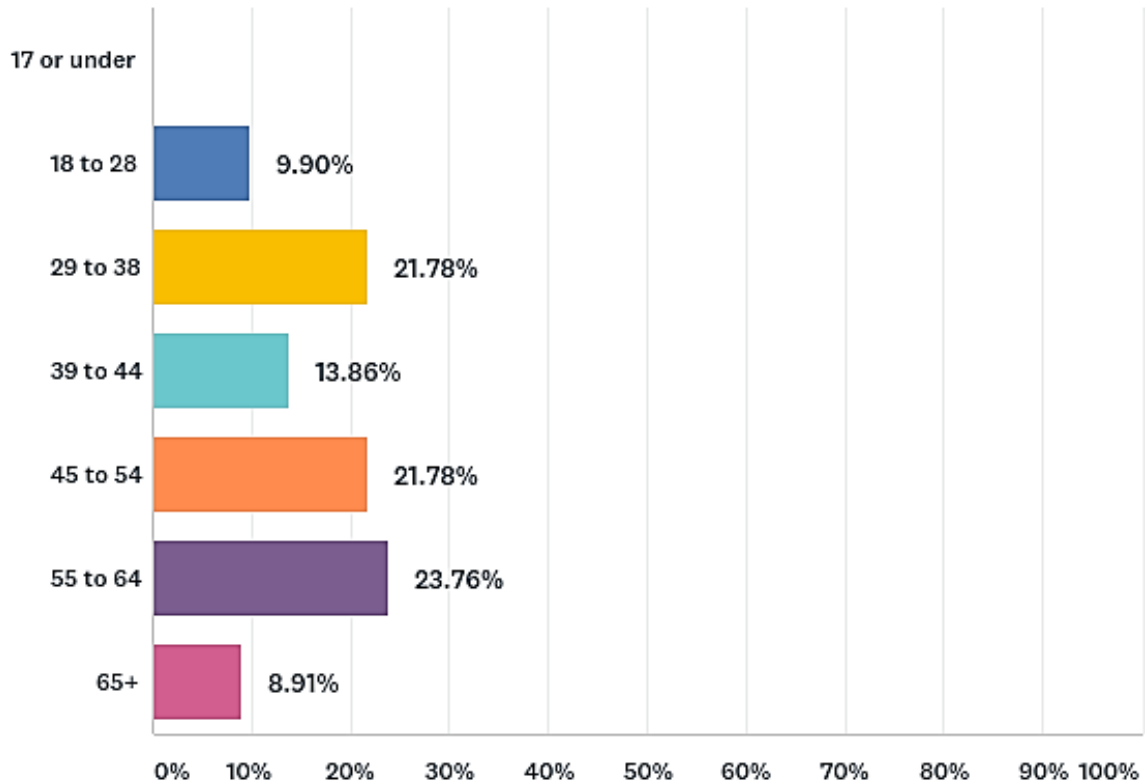
Figure 3: VSQ 2 – What is your age?

Five participants (4.95%) had doctoral degrees, the highest level of education achieved. Of all other participants, 50 (49.5%) had a college education, 21 (20.8%) people had completed high school, and 25 (24.75%) had received a graduate degree. More women (80%) than men (75%) had completed college (see Figure *4*: VSQ 4 – What is the Highest Level of Education you have Completed?).
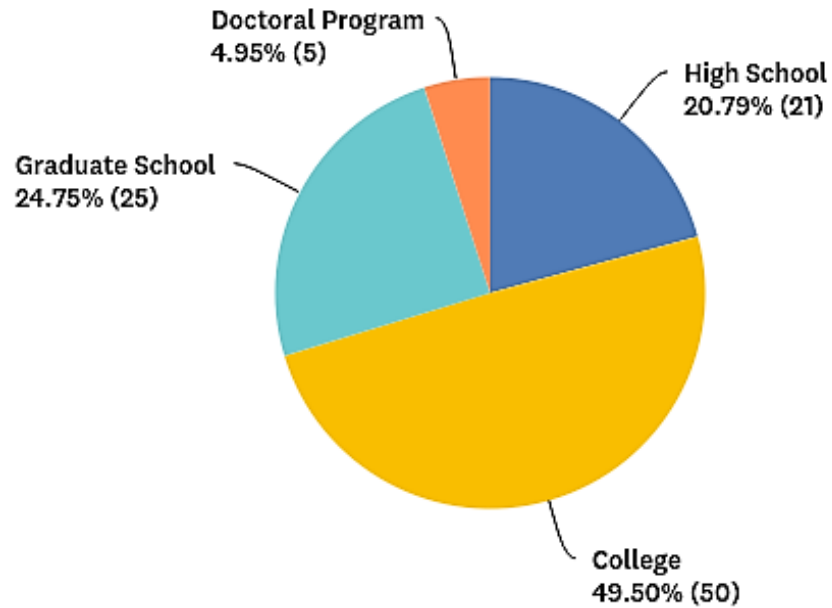
Figure 4: VSQ 4 – What is the Highest Level of Education you have Completed?

The greater number of these participating were married—a total of 82 (81.2%) people. Only 16 people (15.8%) had never been married. One person (.99%) was widowed and two (1.98%) had been divorced or were separated. No men had been divorced, separated, or widowed (see Figure 5: VSQ 5 – What is your Marital Status?).
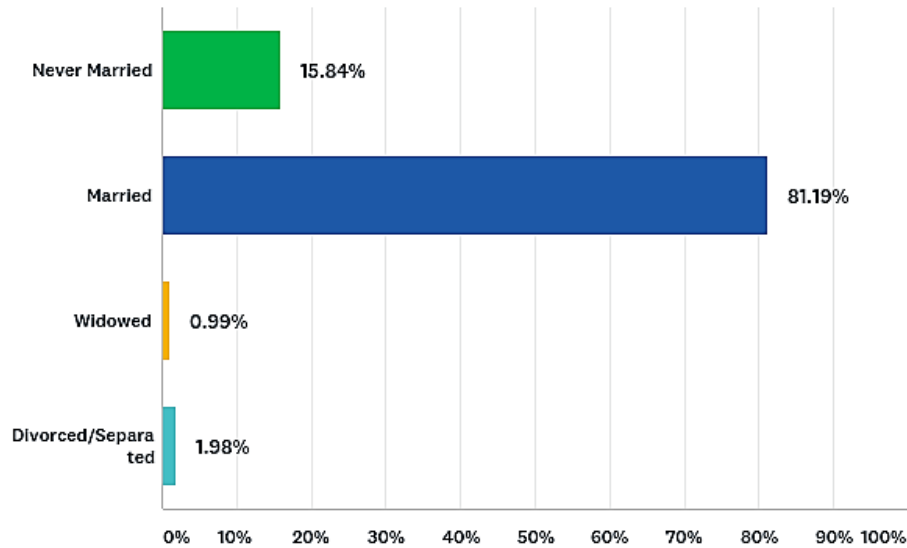
Figure 5: VSQ 5 – What is your Marital Status?

Those participating from churches with more than 400 in attendance equaled 55% and those from churches with 200–400 attenders equaled 45%. Two churches, Friendship Alliance Church (SD01) and Peace Alliance Church (NA), did not participate in either the focus groups or the survey. The greatest participation came from New Beginnings Church (LA02) and Faith Community Church (LA01), representing 53% of the

population (see Figure 6: VSQ 6 – What is the Name of the Church where you are Volunteering in

Children's Ministries). Both men and women were represented at most churches.
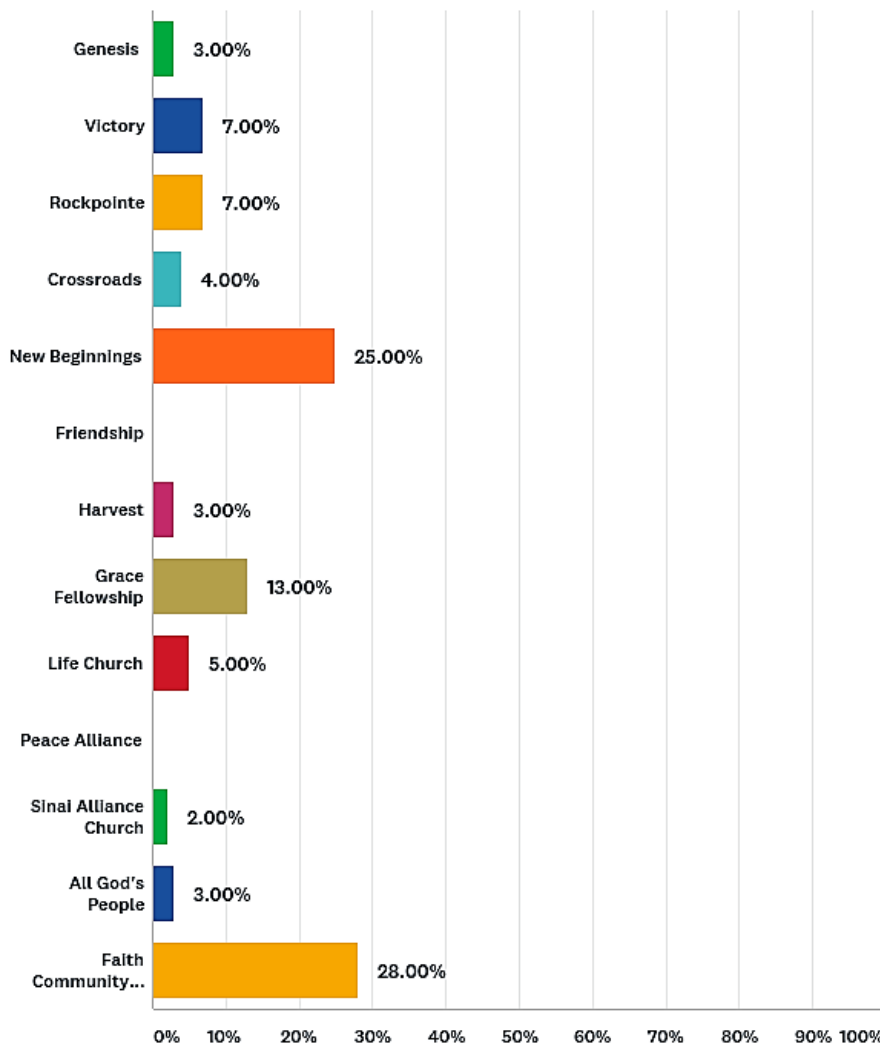
Figure 6: VSQ 6 – What is the Name of the Church where you are Volunteering in Children's Ministries

The greatest percentages of people who had served in their church's children's ministry were either 3–5 years (26%) or 15 or more years (19%). Additionally, 12% had served 6–8 years and 16% had served 9–11 years. Only 6% of respondents had worked in children's ministry at their church for less than 1 year (see Figure 7: VSQ 7 – How Long have you Served in Children's Ministries at your Current Church?).
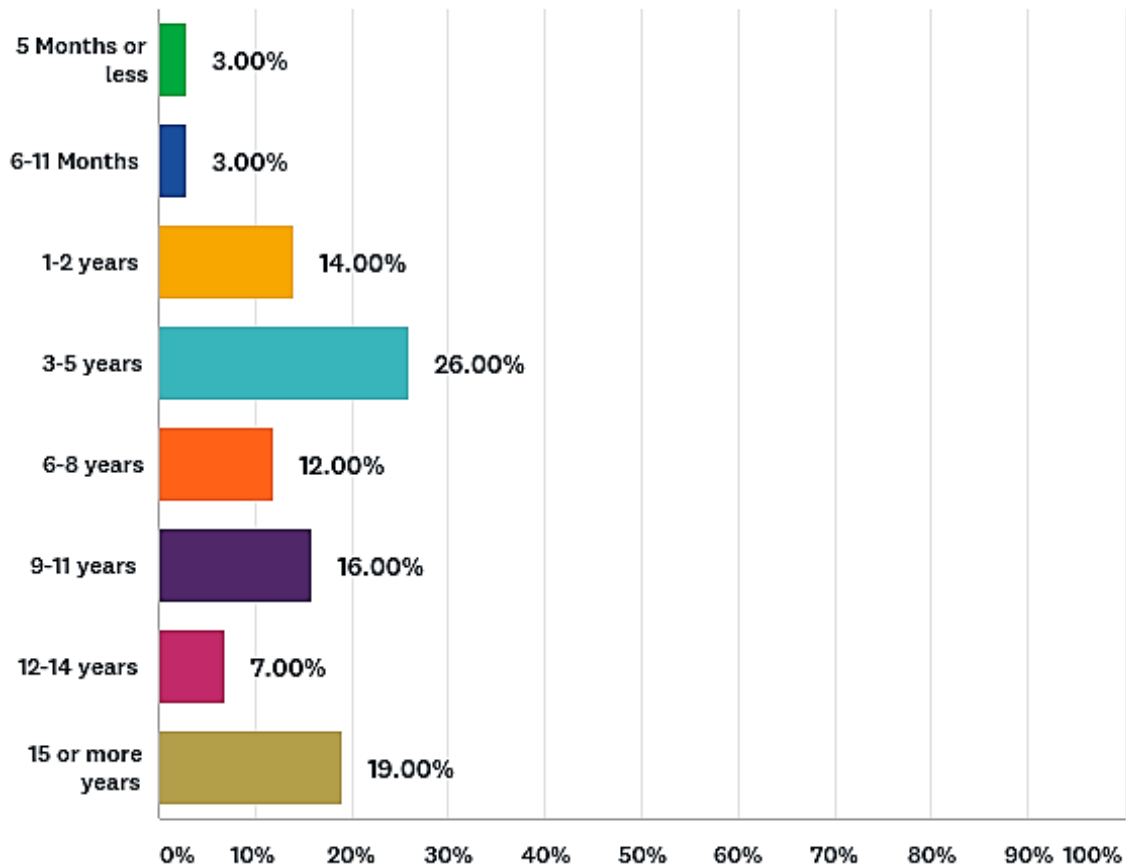
Figure 7: VSQ 7 – How Long have you Served in Children's Ministries at your Current Church?

Most individuals cared for children about once a week (34%). However, quite a
few noted that they worked in their church once each month (24%). A surprising eight
people (8%) indicated that they volunteered more than once a week in ministry with
infants, girls, and boys (see Figure 8: VSQ 8 – How Often do you Volunteer in Children's Ministries
at your Church?). Men tended to volunteer more regularly, with 62.5% volunteering with
children more than once a month. Women volunteered less regularly; about 51.2%
volunteered a few times per month or more.
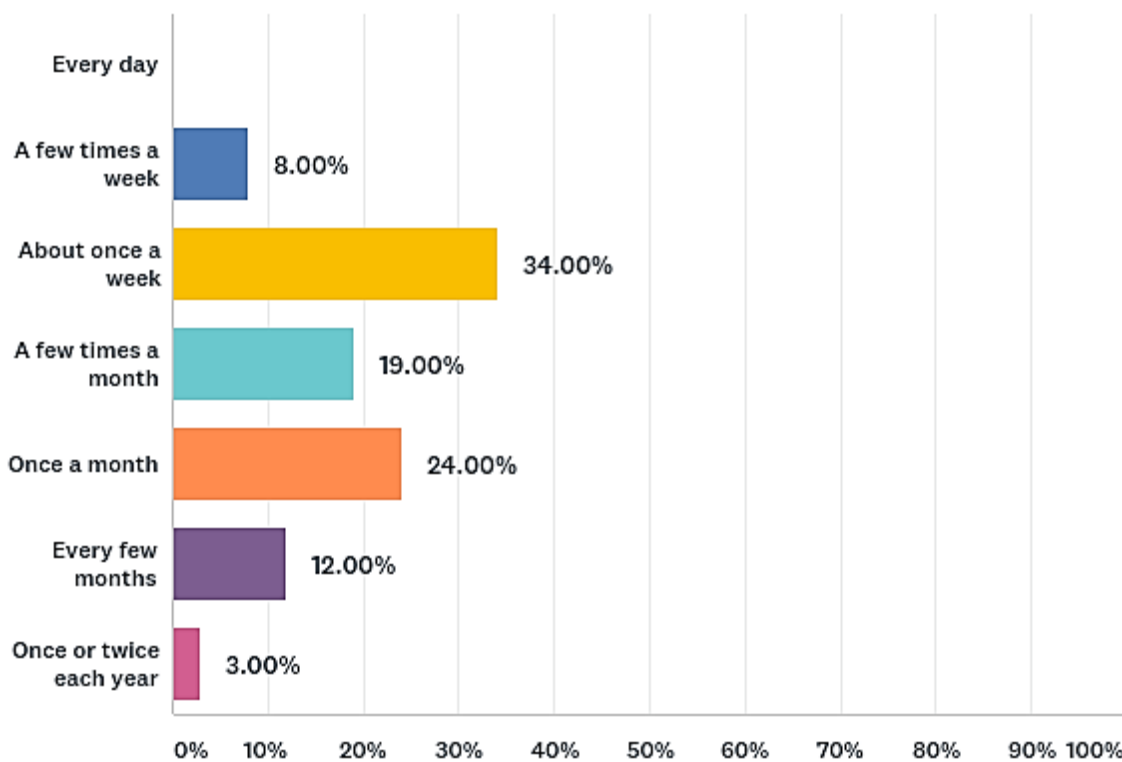
Figure 8: VSQ 8 – How Often do you Volunteer in Children's Ministries at your Church?

Most survey participants, 41 people, volunteered to help with children from infancy through age 2. The second-highest category was those who served with children in 3rd–4th grade—39 individuals. Twenty-three people stated that they served as leaders of others who oversaw children (see Figure *9*: VSQ 9 – What Age Group(s) of Children do you Generally Volunteer with?). Men mostly worked with grades 1–4 while women volunteered mostly with ages 0–5. Except for participants aged 65 or older, at least one representative from each age group oversaw others who worked with children.
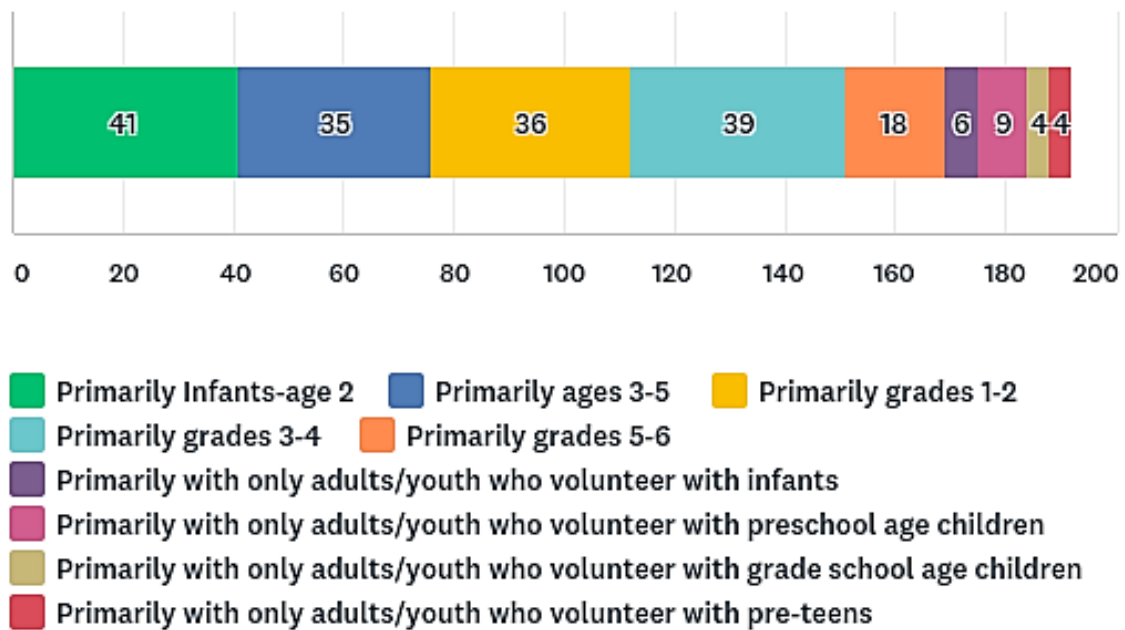
Figure 9: VSQ 9 – What Age Group(s) of Children do you Generally Volunteer with?

A response rate of 49.3%, with a total of 107 responses led to a reasonable conclusion that those who took part represented the surveyed population well.

Description of Evidence: Research Question 1 (What Are the Biblical, Theological, and Pragmatic Characteristics and Skills of Volunteer TLs in Children's Ministry?)

Chapter 2, "Literature Review for the Project," answered research question 1. Findings from a review of literature revealed five major characteristics of TLs, each comprises three minor traits falling into three areas of leadership (see Figure *10*: Areas of Leadership for a TL).

Figure 10: Areas of Leadership for a TL.

The five major team characteristics are *Relational*, *Encouraging*, *Discipling*, *Sacrificing*, and *Power Sharing* (REDSP). In *Team leadership* a group shares leadership, instead of decision-making being limited to only one person. *Conflict leadership* is managing

conflict well by joining with others in healthy ways, such as being vulnerable. *Self-leadership* refers to how individuals lead themselves. Together, the leadership areas will be abbreviated as TCS (Team, Conflict, and Self Leadership).

Volunteers

Only 10 of the volunteers left comments at the end of the survey. One mentioned a highly important biblical principle—that of calling. The respondent, who had been serving in children's ministries for between 6 and 8 years, noted that the children and other adults with whom Team Leaders (TLs) minister are gifts. Because of this, she believed that a TL should be a listener, a humble communicator, and a trustworthy person:

> It can be highly annoying as a volunteer to be invited to meeting with a new leader that is supposed to be about sharing ideas and what we see as going well, or not well, to then be talked at with no room for any input . . . Listen to the people who have been teaching and know the kids, then form and share your ideas and your vision, then listen again to how it may or may not work for the students or volunteers you have been given by God to minister to.

In this statement, she strongly linked the self-leadership characteristics (Listener, Encourager, Communicator, being Humble, Risk/Trust Giver) together. Her statement also linked self-leadership to the biblical concept of calling, just as Jesus and Moses were called to live in ways that provided a basis for team leadership.

Out of the 10% of volunteers who left substantive comments, five talked about the importance of visionary team leadership in Sacrifice Building. One said, "If you don't

communicate your vision, how can others follow?" In other words, she needed the vision to be explained in order to want to sacrifice for it. Another of the respondents commented that giving input on where the ministry was going was important to her. In this way, she gave value to the opportunity to share her insights as a sign of developing self-leadership.

Encouragement was also mentioned. One volunteer celebrated the reassurance she got from TLs: "Our TLs are wonderfully supportive and encouraging!" Another talked about how having others come alongside volunteers blessed the children. She said, "I am thankful to be a volunteer and I always feel very appreciated. Also, we are blessed that our kids can have such great leaders to come alongside us as parents to help our kids grow in their faith."

Directors

A few Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) made comments with a particularly biblical focus regarding team leadership. One noted the relationship between Paul and Timothy when talking about how to mentor TLs personally. Another four (Jane Milton [SD02], Thomas DuPointe [LA02], Jill Kent [SD03], and Karie Coolavin [SC02]) talked about spiritual gifts in the context of how children might grow in their faith from watching a teamwork.

Description of Evidence: Research Question 2 (What TL Characteristics and Skills Are Valued by Children's Ministry Directors?)

Based on responses to all the DFG questions, directors appeared to rank the five main characteristics of a TL in this order:

1. Power Sharing (93 comments)

2. Discipling (84 comments)

3. Sacrificial (81 comments)

4. Relating (Relational) (79 comments)

5. Encouraging (43 comments)

When responses to DFGQ 3 (regarding discipleship) were removed, the ranking changed to:

1. Power Sharing

2. Sacrificing

3. Relating (Relational)

4. Discipling (56 comments)

5. Encouraging

DCMs seemed to rank the 15 subcategories in this order:

1. Being Power Sharer (54 mentions)

2. Being a Sacrifice Builder (49 mentions)

3. Being a Community Builder (47 mentions)

4. Being a Diversity Builder (45 mentions)

5. Being a Friend (33 mentions)

6. Being a Rest Giver (though some of these comments were negative) (30 mentions)

7. Being a Communicator and being Humble (26 mentions each)

8. Being an Example Setter and a Spiritual Discipler (19 mentions each)

9. Being a Risk/Trust Giver and a Listener (14 mentions each)

10. Being an Encourager (12 mentions)

11. Being a Vulnerable person (8 mentions)

12. Being an Emotional Manager (3 mentions)

Main Characteristics Rated by Frequency of Mention by Each DCM

When comparing each individual's own statements, and when including DFGQ 3, Julia Marrow (SB01, Genesis Church), Karie Coolavin (SC02, Grace Fellowship Church), and Thomas DuPointe (LA02, New Beginnings Church) mentioned Discipling the most. For Laura Regent (LA03, Sinai Alliance Church) and Tabitha Long (SB03, Harvest Alliance Church), being Discipling was tied with other traits. This means that a Team Leader (TL) who was Discipling *and* setting an example for children through team building was most highly valued by the most people.

However, when DFGQ 3 is filtered out of the data, Sacrificial takes the lead in what directors would want to see in a TL. Power Sharing (especially Diversity and Empowerment) and Relational (especially Community Building) came in at a close second, with two people mentioning Relational more often than other traits. The characteristics of Encouraging (especially Rest Giver) and Discipling (especially Spiritual Discipler) came in last, with one person mentioning each of them most often. When ranked by how often Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) mentioned the five traits after DFGQ 3 is filtered out, they would be ordered in this way:

1. Sacrificing

2. Power Sharing

3. Relating (Relational was tied with Power Sharing, but less valued when DFGQ 3 was not filtered out)

4. Discipling

5. Encouraging (tied with Discipling, but less valued when DFGQ 3 was not

filtered out)

The chart below (Figure *11*: Director Comparison of REDSP) indicates, when compared to the

DCM who gave the most responses (Carl Hanson, Faith Community Church, LA01), how

much each director favored each component of REDSP.
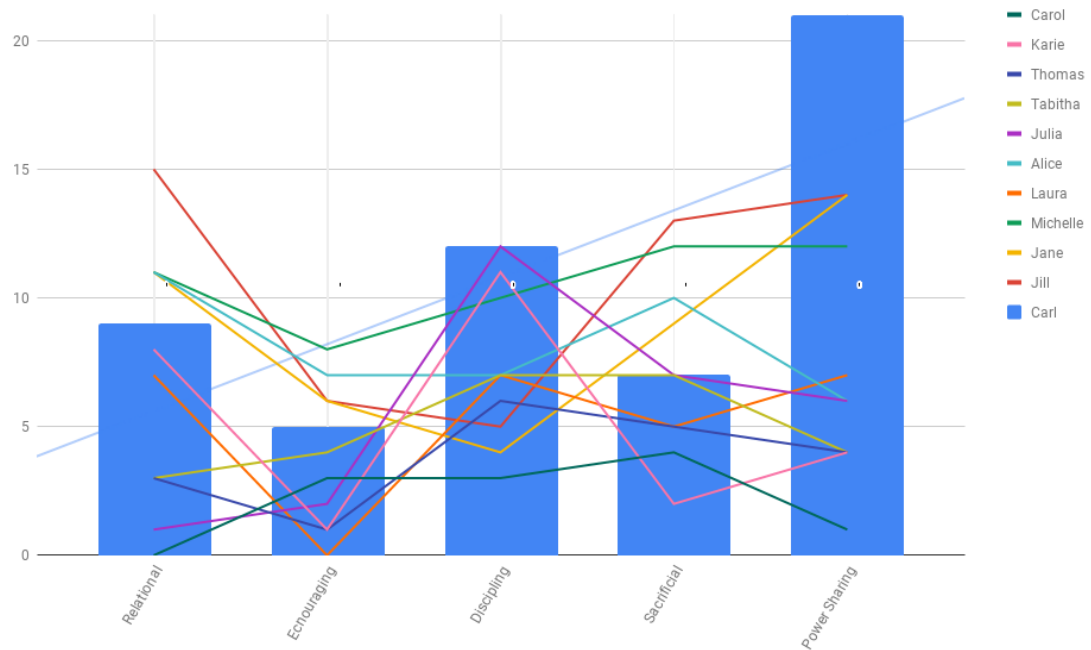
Figure 11: Director Comparison of REDSP.

Sacrificial.

As expected, the DCMs had a lot to say about a TL who would be Sacrificial. They noted such traits as willingness, flexibility, dependability, resiliency, and service. For instance, Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) noted that "it takes something special to be willing to walk into a position, and return to a position, where you're going to be dealing with conflict and scheduling and a lot of the back-end things and creating your own solutions." Julia Marrow from Genesis Church (SB01) said directly, "I think a lot of our leaders are very servant minded."

Humility, especially regarding teachability, was very important to the directors as well. In fact, being Sacrificial was more important to some than having a passion for ministry. Michelle Sharp (Crossroads Church, SC01) and Alice Breckner (All God's People Church, SC03) discussed this concept, saying that it was more important to have someone who was "more of a long-term participant" than someone who "really wants to be involved but then uses up a lot of enthusiasm" toward the beginning and does not come back (DFG SC, Lines 153–158).

Quite a few of the DCMs noted that being willing and able to sacrifice time was important to being a TL. Lack of time was one of the often-mentioned themes related to the challenges of creating a team. Jane Milton (Life Church, SD02) said that when she asks people to lead teams, they often say, "I haven't got time for that." Other directors agreed, saying that meetings and other relational forms of communication had been cut out because volunteers lacked availability. Carl Hanson even noted how tired volunteers were in every area of ministry at Faith Community Church (LA01).

Many talked about the issue of communicating in a way that could help others sacrifice for the ministry and navigate unexpected changes. For instance, Michelle Sharp (Crossroads Church, SC01) said TLs should "stay on mission and . . . have a vision for where our team is going" (Lines 194-195). Thomas DuPointe (LA02, Lines 370-387) from New Beginnings Alliance Church (LA02) put it this way in regard to leading volunteers toward the future and engaging in more ministry: "If you don't have [mission, vision, and values] as a part of the team you're trying to establish, . . . [the volunteers] think . . . 'I've got better things to do with my time.' But if you're helping them to realize, 'Hey, this is bigger than yourself and you (volunteers) are the kind of people to make this happen—to have an impact on people in God's kingdom.' And [helping them realize what they are] doing here is a part of your [church] body." Explaining the mission as well as the biblical basis for being a part of a team was some of what Thomas DuPointe looked for in a TL.

Power Sharing.

Many of the DCMs mentioned diversity in conjunction with Empowering and offering others the chance to take risks. In fact, this was an area that, when lacking, seemed to hinder team building, according to many directors. Julia Marrow from Genesis Church (SB01) noted that creating a team was challenging because "they haven't had that kind of training or any experience working with kids" (Lines 278-290). She was saying that more diversity and more training (empowering) of those who would add diversity could help a team. Additionally, it was important to Julia Marrow that a TL be someone others could trust when taking the risk of caring for children.

Karie Coolavin (Grace Fellowship Church, CS02) said succinctly, "[TLs should] live independently; they don't have to run everything by me" (Lines 190-191). This director believed a good TL should make decisions apart from the DCM, adding diversity to the team. She also thought it was good for the DCM to allow TLs to take the risk of independent leadership.

Relational.

None of the directors seemed to link all the subcategories of being Relational together. They did mention Friendship and Community Building as important aspects. One director (Jill Kent, Victory Alliance Church, SD03) had a TL who was her "best friend" and noted how this person, better at relationships than she was, helped her establish a team through friendship (Lines 166-167). She said part of building a team, or creating the community of a team, was "finding people that we also get along with" (Line 411). A few DCMs also said that listening to new concepts was important in building community—thus highlighting the Listener aspect of being Relational. Carl Hanson (LA01) noted, "That's been a big thing with the TLs where they're eager to learn . . . They're eager to see those things and implement those things. They're just some real good players" (Lines 243-247). Contextually, he was saying that TLs should be learners (participating in training, etc.) in order to work together in ministry, building community.

Discipling.

Shared leadership as an example for children.

Most of the DCMs agreed that team leadership could help children see how the church works together as a body, that it's bigger than them, and that the church should love each other and work together. Everyone, except Carl Hanson (LA01) from Faith

Community Church, seemed to understand that sharing leadership would help disciple children. He said, "I don't mean to nitpick . . . I think I really have to stretch my definitions to say our fourth graders are discipled because, you know, the . . . administrative style and organization [was correct]" (Lines 776-779). Thus, Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) did not think that the organization of a ministry helped children grow spiritually, which raises the question of what he might think children learn or fail to learn if a ministry is *dis*organized.

Team leadership, the DCMs believed, could disciple little ones toward serving in the church, allowing them to start "to receive that group servanthood rather than our USA tree [top-down] leadership" (SD, Lines 587-588). Karie Coolavin (Grace Fellowship Church, SC02) noted that, when children are involved in a leadership team, it can "help them take ownership" and understand they are part of the church body (SC, Lines 657-659). In her DFG, Jill Kent (Victory Alliance Church, SD03) reiterated this point:

> I want [children] to be the ones that say, "I want to be a part of the team." You know, [they will say,] "I see when I'm that age I can be a part of that team that is moving things forward and I don't have to be a boss . . . I'm part of the team." I want them to see that. (Lines 496-499)

In another DFG, Alice Breckner (All God's People Church, SC03) noted that children start to believe they are a loved part of the church when a group of others loves them (SC, Lines 513-516). Thomas said that team leadership helps children see that "there's something bigger than [them] that's going on" (LA02, Lines 789-795).

Carol Smith (Rockpointe Church, SB02) mentioned that children can see kindness when a team is working together, and shared that, from observing this, one preschool

child welcomed a new child into the class without being prompted (SB, Lines 413-417).

Children learn kindness from watching others work together: "The act of love is always

caught. You can teach about love, but if you're not acting in love, they won't catch that"

(Michelle Sharp, Crossroads Church, SC01, Lines 556-558).

As far as what children might learn from a group of TLs, most agreed it would

help young people see a better picture of the church. Children see and discover love,

passion for the church, and a representation of God through TLs working together. When

this is combined with aspects of the literature review, it seems that a view of Jesus's body

working together could also help little ones understand the Trinity.

Discipling of adult leaders.

The ability of TLs to disciple other adults was not mentioned often. Setting an

example for other leaders was only mentioned by Thomas DuPointe (New Beginnings

Church, LA02) who experienced that TLs were better equipped to show volunteers how

to serve (Lines 213-221). Talking about discipling leaders, Laura Regent (Sinai Alliance

Church, LA03) said that just communicating the goal and getting people to understand

the importance of leading children with a team was difficult (Lines 418-455). Jill Kent

(Victory Alliance Church, SD03) said that she thought training and conferences were

important for TLs to be Discipling (Lines 452-456). Additionally, Karie Coolavin (Grace

Fellowship Church, SC02) noted that TLs should be able to "offer wise counsel to other

leaders" (Lines189-190). However, no one else talked about TLs Discipling.

Encouraging.

While DCMs mentioned Encouraging least, they also quite often lamented the

rest-less lives of their volunteers. Most of the comments about encouragement were made

in regard to a lack of rest for volunteers, TLs, or directors. Jane Milton (Life Church, SD02) and Jill Kent (Victory Alliance Church, SD03) agreed that having TLs would "take the stress off of you" and would allow directors to "focus on something else that needs to be done." It seemed like getting rest for themselves was one of the reasons these two DCMs would have liked to have TLs.

Apparently, directors did not have TLs because they could not offer rest. For instance, Tabitha Long (SB03) from Harvest Alliance Church talked about how most volunteers already have "chaotic lives" and, while they may be willing to help, they might not realize the value of working in children's ministry. She was looking for someone to shoulder the burden of leadership. However, she did not entertain the idea of offering rest to TLs as a part of their ministry.

Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) also noted a lack of rest that hindered team leadership: "Our biggest challenge in coordinating our overall [team] ministry is, you know, our nursery group is really tired, our children's group is really tired . . . our periphery ministry, they're really tired. Our support program is really tired, and they have no idea what each one is doing—not out of lack of interest but out of lack of ability to process that information well." He commented that those who volunteered in his church were also likely to have the most active lives outside of church responsibilities. The lack of rest in his TLs had caused a breakdown in leadership.

In general, however, the DCMs would value as TLs people with time for ministry; in other words, they would value people who were already practicing rest. TLs may also be attracted by the offer of rest. Additionally, TLs will need to offer the possibility of time away from ministry if they want volunteers to value their own leadership.

Large and Small Churches

Out of the churches with 120 or fewer attenders (three out of five churches) or 30 or more children (four out of nine churches), Discipleship was mentioned by directors most as an important quality for TLs. DCMs from churches with an attendance of 135–300 were the only ones more likely to mention Relational as a key TL characteristic. An outlier was Carol, from a church (SB02) with 250 attenders, who did not mention Relational at all.

Longevity of DCMs at their Churches

DCMs who had served 5 or more years in their current churches tended to talk often about Power Sharing (three out of four DCMs mentioned Power Sharing most) and Discipleship (three out of five DCMs mentioned Discipleship most). They were the least likely to mention Encouragement as a top trait for TLs (four out of six DCMs mentioned Encouraging the least). Out of the three directors who talked about Sacrificing the most, two had served only 6 months, but one had served the longest time at her church, at 20 years.

Other Characteristics Mentioned by DCMs

Directors noted other skills and characteristics in addition to the five discovered in the literature review. These were passion (mentioned 12 times by Carl Hanson, Jane Milton, Jill Kent, Julia Marrow, Laura Regent, and Michelle Sharp), right fit (mentioned 10 times by Alice Breckner, Carl Hanson, Jane Milton, Laura Regent, Michelle Sharp, and Thomas DuPointe), love (mentioned nine times by Alice Breckner, Carl Hanson, Carol Smith, Michelle Sharp, and Thomas DuPointe), dependability (mentioned six times by Alice Breckner, Carol Smith, Jill Kent, Julia Marrow, and Michelle Sharp), problem

solving (mentioned five times by Carl Hanson, Karie Coolavin, and Thomas DuPointe), and organization (mentioned five times by Jill Kent, Julia Marrow, and Thomas DuPointe). Comparing all mentions of these traits with the subcategories of the five main characteristics, apparently DCMs valued Emotional Management less than any of the new traits they brought up. They also mentioned passion, right fit, and love more often than Vulnerability.

Leadership Areas: Team, Conflict, and Self-Leadership

As might be expected, Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) mentioned team leadership more often than conflict leadership or self-leadership. Not only did they generate the most responses overall in this leadership area, but eight out of the 11 directors (72.7%) referred to team leadership more often than the other two leadership areas (see Figure *12*: DCM Leadership Areas Most Mentioned by All Directors).
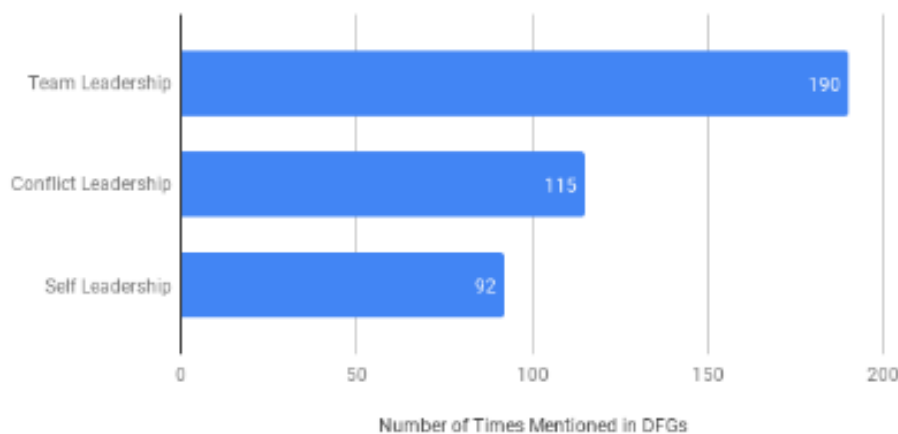
Figure 12: DCM Leadership Areas Most Mentioned by All Directors.

Team leadership.

The team leadership area encompasses the traits of Community Builder, Rest

Giver, Spiritual Discipler, Sacrifice Builder, and Diversity Builder. Within this category,

the directors seemed to talk about Team Leaders (TLs) as Sacrifice Builders most. Jill

Kent (SD03) from Victory Alliance deftly combined most of the team leadership area

characteristics in this statement:

> [God] didn't give us all the talents . . . He meant for us to work in
>
> community . . . I don't think God set up the authority of the church, in
>
> serving, in a way that was under a single person . . . I do not believe that
>
> servanthood is a tree, it's a group. And I wanted to see our kids starting to
>
> receive that group servanthood.

She identified the principles of community building, group discipleship ("work in

community"), sacrifice (service), and diversity. In the end, Jill noted how important it is

for children to see and participate in team leadership.

Laura Regent (Sinai Alliance Church, LA03) and Jane Milton (Life Church,

SD02) said it best about the team leadership area. Laura Regent, from Sinai Alliance

Church (where 35.2% of the attenders were children!), excitedly spoke of how creating a

team affected her volunteers and children:

> When [the volunteers] saw the team get together and we started working
>
> together and saying, . . . "This is how we're going to lead this, . . . and the
>
> structure stuff,' then it trickled down to our teachers . . . They went then to
>
> take [it to] the kids and when the kids started changing, it was like all of a

sudden, you know, the teams are—I'm getting goosebumps, because I

remember it was Sunday, . . . I walked down the hallway and two of our

classrooms were reading their Bibles. One other classroom and all of the

kids, the preschool kids, they were all standing up and they were singing,

and they were really into it and they were just really enjoying. And then,

the fourth classroom, they were . . . deep in prayer. And I need to tell you,

I walked past the teams, which [had] usually sat at the back of the room

doing their sort of things, playing with their phones. They were standing

and they were worshipping . . . And I just sat there like, "Wow. What just

happened?" [Laughs] And it started with a team. (Lines 735-755)

Before the creation of the leadership team, the children had generally run free in the

basement of the church, sometimes destroying doors, tables, and chairs because of lack of

supervision. Those who were volunteering with the children checked their phones and

barely interacted with the girls and boys during the Sunday gathering.

In her statement above, Laura Regent encapsulated the values of team leadership.

In a stark before-and-after contrast, a team made the difference for the children and

volunteers in her church. Everyone, the DCM, TLs, and volunteers, came together as

Community Builders to create the team. Before this, Laura did not experience rest on

Sunday mornings. In her story, she talked about how she was able to take time to see how

everything was working. Volunteers also had different jobs with different classes and a

leader they could trust working with them (Rest Giver). Laura and others had done the

work to help volunteers see that ministry with little ones was something important

enough for which to sacrifice (Sacrifice Builder). Discipleship had taken place to build

teams, and TLs were taking the initiative to disciple leaders who were able to disciple children (Discipleship Builder). Of course, Laura was also allowing others to take the lead, building diversity (Diversity Builder). The TLs she invited to ministry may, or may not, have been building diversity as well.

Jane Milton (Life Church, SD02) delved more deeply into why TLs need to develop along the Lines of team leadership: "We're not all gifted in the same way. So, you need to build that team that works together, [it] needs to be a team, not just a person: For they all have different strengths, and all have different gifts" (Lines 593-603).

Jill Kent (Victory Alliance Church, SD03) seemed to adamantly agree with Jane (Life Church, SD02). She followed up by saying, "I just want to see the church stop thinking that their lead pastor is that answer to everything, that their children's director has to have the answer to everything, and that each one of those just work together to change the community, not individually" (Lines 606-612). She was talking about building a community of people (Community Builder) who understand why they are sacrificing (Sacrifice Builder) and are discipled together (Spiritual Discipler) for the sake of the children and the congregation. She realized this takes diverse people (Diversity Builder) who understand that they can lead and "change the community." Jill indirectly highlighted the importance of rest (Rest Giver) when she emphasized that the main leader should not need to be the only with answers or doing ministry work. Such an approach might not only allow the pastor and DCM to have rest, but also help volunteers engage in ways that allow them to rest in their gifts.

Thomas DuPointe (New Beginnings Church, LA02) pointed out even more poignantly how sacrifice needs to be part of developing a team, driving home the idea

that a TL who is a Sacrifice Builder and Spiritual Discipler could build community and

diversity. He said that his church's previous pastor had not challenged the congregation

with a biblical worldview of the body of Christ; instead the church was

> walking in a cultural view of, "I go to church and I'm learning my Bible
>
> and my kids are not in jail, and I'm loving Jesus." . . . But it was like
>
> stopping short of . . . "What does it mean to be a part of the body of
>
> Christ? What does it mean that you have spiritual gifts that can be used to
>
> help from the beginning?" . . . So, we're working through that and
>
> realizing, "Yeah, our folks don't [understand] any of that challenge." . . .
>
> That was making [building teams] difficult. (Lines 576-598)

In this way, Thomas DuPointe, seemed to emphasize that rest and sacrifice build on one

another. Being challenged to grow might help more people engage in ministry, but it

would also give them rest from consumerism. In the end, what would help build teams

was a leader who understood sacrifice as a part of being a gifted member of the body of

Christ.

Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) agreed with Thomas DuPointe

(New Beginnings Church, LA02) in saying that his church had struggled with a consumer

mentality as well and that they had gotten in the habit of hiring people care for the

children. Toward the end of the conversation, Thomas (LA02) said plainly, "If

[volunteers] aren't . . . given a vision" of who they are in Christ, they cannot become the

body of Christ (Lines 612-614). The lack of Sacrifice Building in his church, Faith

Community, led to having a congregation of over 500 who did not know how to share

leadership. For these DCMs, consumerism had led to neither rest nor sacrifice, but to a chaotic life that hindered people from being part of and leading teams.

All of the directors in the focus groups seemed to agree that shared leadership was the mark of a children's ministry that could disciple leaders and children. Additionally, four DCMs who spoke often about community building also spoke highly of Rest Giving, Sacrifice Building, and Diversity Building.

Conflict leadership.

Many of the leaders noted friendship as part of team leadership, but none seemed to connect it with the conflict leadership area. Jane (SD02) said that a TL needed to be a Relationship Builder in order to help keep others engaged in ministry (Lines 321-322). Building friendship not only created a team but kept the team together.

Laura Regent (Sinai Alliance Church, LA03) commiserated that it was not until connections—friendship between parents, volunteers, and children—were made between the parents worshipping "upstairs" and the children's ministry "downstairs" that team leadership began at Sinai Alliance Church (Lines 670-710). This happened because two major tragedies took place that awakened the church to the importance of discipling children while they were still young. Two teenagers were killed in gang-related incidents. While the children particularly mourned, the teens' deaths deeply, that did not cause the change. It was the realization that the church's youth were making deeply unbiblical choices that helped the congregation build a team to engage their children in Christian discipleship.

More than any other characteristic by far, DCMs talked about empowerment of others or needing to empower others for teams. They also connected this to conflict leadership, especially when it might come to issues arising during ministry time.

One context in which Conflict Leadership was mentioned was how having a team might mitigate challenges with children. For instance, the DCMs believed that having a leadership team could help children enjoy church and focus on the lesson's activities. Jane Milton (Life Church, SD02) said this most clearly: "If you have a good team, if you have TLs . . . and they truly want to be there, truly supporting each other and working together, the kids are going to have fun no matter what they're doing and they're going to enjoy it" (Lines 515-521).

Some of the DCMs noted that a TL should be a problem solver, including solving conflict. Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) linked this with empowerment when he said, "As soon as you start taking all the battles [away from the TLs], you take away the empowerment and then they're not leaders anymore, you know?" (Lines 558-560). Thomas DuPointe (New Beginnings Church, LA02) and Laura Regent (LA03) also mentioned problem solving. Karie Coolavin (Grace Fellowship, SC02) related that TLs "need to be problem solvers . . . Running a ministry comes with challenges. So, some of that [is,] 'Can you think of how to overcome those challenges?'" (Lines 123-125).

Tabitha Long (Harvest Alliance Church, SB03) also talked about how responding well in a difficult situation was an important part of team leadership. She related a story in which one volunteer did not respond well to a TL because the TL was not acting in an example-setting manner and was not willing to be vulnerable (Lines 393-395).

The DCMs seemed to agree that a leader who practiced friendship, example setting, and empowerment could help create Conflict Leadership. They did not mention Emotional Management, and only one talked about Vulnerability. In general, it did not seem as if directors connected the characteristics listed in the conflict leadership area together.

Self-leadership.

In general, the DCMs did not often note the characteristics of self-leadership. Some of the traits they did talk about in this area were Risk Giving, being humble (Humility), and Listening.

Several DCMs talked about offering the ability to take risks. Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) even discussed risk in terms of "good failures" (Line 534). Many of the DCMs noted that a TL should be able to move forward independently—being someone who invites risk.

Michelle Sharp (Crossroads Church, SC01) went so far as to say that humility can make a leader even if they have no other skills—linking it with self-leadership and a basis for growth in team leadership. She said, "Some people don't have [the] gift [of leadership] but . . . are very teachable and humble hearted. That is so . . . good to have" (Line 148). Alice Breckner (All God's People, SC03) agreed, saying humility was something that a TL would *have* to possess to begin leading (Lines 150-151).

Michelle Sharp (Crossroads Church, SC01) connected self-leadership to risk taking when she noted that TLs need to be personally mentored—like Paul and Timothy (Lines 411-412). Karie Coolavin (Grace Fellowship Church, SC02) concurred with Michelle: "I'd say we are helping [TLs] understand their own spiritual gifts and

understand their own best quality, then . . . empowering them to put those into action. Not [to] limit themselves but encourage them to be careful with the function [of leading]" (Lines 413-417). For Michelle and Karie, encouraging their leaders to take risks while caring for them was important. A TL who listens to a mentor was also valued.

Laura Regent (Sinai Alliance Church, LA03) was adamant that a good TL would have to be both a good listener and flexible based on their perception of what was happening (Lines 223-231). Carl Hanson (Faith Community Church, LA01) agreed, saying that one of the "big," or basic, characteristics of a TL would be eagerness to learn or to listen to new ways of leading. One of the first, and basic, characteristics Karie Coolavin (Grace Fellowship, SC02) mentioned was "good listening skills" (Line 126). She said this was one of the traits that could keep ministry moving forward. Thus, one of the TL skills most highly sought after by a DCMs was listening.

While none of the DCMs directly said that the traits of Listening, Encouraging, Communicating, being Humble, and Risk Giving were important parts of self-leadership, they appeared to agree that many of these characteristics should be basic for a TL.

Summary

Directors seemed to value TLs who could work at a team level, leaders with the characteristics of uniting others together and moving them toward goals. While they talked about some of the principles found in conflict leadership, the DCMs did not explicitly connect these to conflict at a high rate. For directors, self-leadership principles, such as humility and being a good listener, were the basics of leadership. To them, the characteristics of self-leadership were the foundation of team leadership.

Description of Evidence: Research Question 3—What TL Characteristics

and Skills Are Valued by Children's Ministry Volunteers?

General Findings

The study revealed very few differences between male and female volunteers or among those with various marital statuses (only 18% of participants were not married) regarding what they would value in a Team Leader (TL). When ranking the qualities of Relational, Encouraging, Discipling, Sacrificial, and Power Sharing (see Figure *13*: VSQ 43 -- A TL in Children's Ministries should be… (1=Most Valued, 5=Least Valued)), volunteers ranked Encouraging as most important (37.2%), with Relational a close second (32.6%).
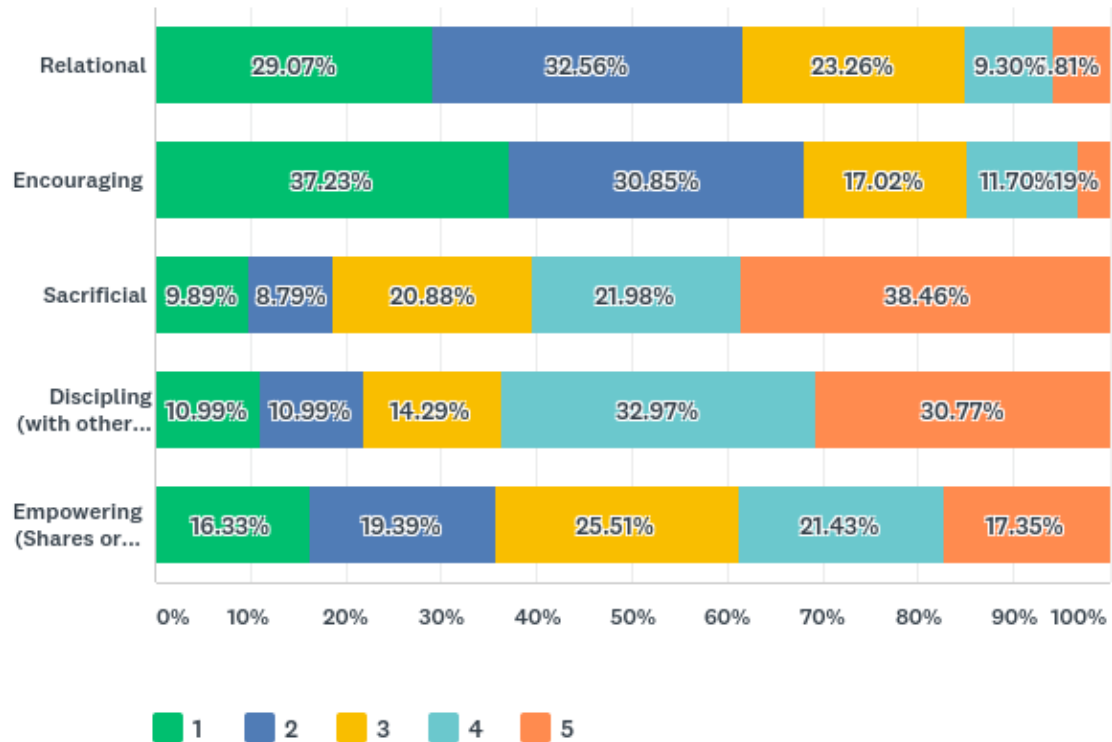
Figure 13: VSQ 43 -- A TL in Children's Ministries should be… (1=Most Valued, 5=Least Valued).

However, when answers are compared to each other from the Likert scale section, a different understanding appears. In this section, each main characteristic had six related VSQs. The most valued main characteristic (for which the related questions were rated as valued or highly valued) was Sacrifice, with an average of 80.8%. The second most valued main characteristic was Spiritual Discipler, with an average of 80%. However, questions related to the main characteristic of Encourager were rated as highly valued more frequently (twice) than for the other characteristics (VSQ 17, 90% valued or highly valued and VSQ 21, 98.9% valued or highly valued) (see Figure *14*: Likert Scale Rating of REDSP).
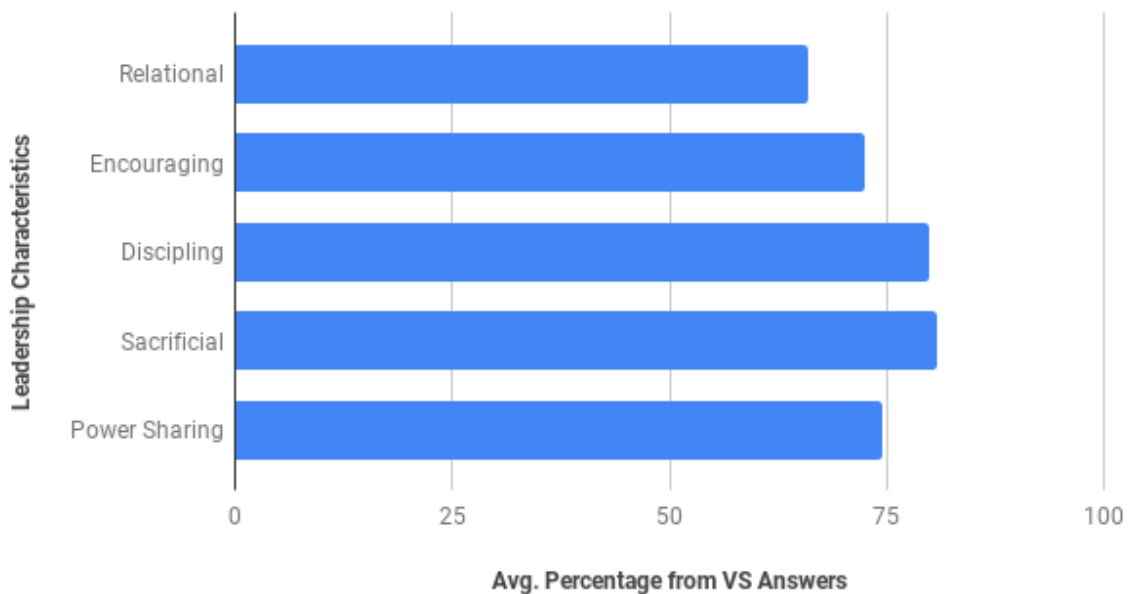
Figure 14: Likert Scale Rating of REDSP.

Out of all the Likert scale questions, the most highly valued was a TL letting a volunteer step away from ministry or offering help if the volunteer was overwhelmed (VSQ 21), correlating with the Encourager characteristic. Other highly valued actions by TLs follow.

Six Most Highly Valued Skills and Characteristics

In a comparison of individual Likert scale questions, volunteers valued most highly the following six skills and characteristics (ranked from least to most; see Figure *15*: Six Most Highly Valued Skills and Characteristics):

1. Helping volunteers relate to the direction in which the ministry is moving: 89.9% (VSQ 29). Main characteristic: Sacrificial; subcategory: Sacrifice Builder; leadership area: team leadership.

2. Responding kindly almost always, even if volunteers are making the wrong choice: 90% (VSQ 17). Main characteristic: Encourager; subcategory: Emotional Manager; leadership area: conflict leadership.

3. Knowing how to articulate instructions for children's ministry volunteering: 90.9% (VSQ 28). Main characteristic: Discipler; subcategory: Communicator; leadership area: self-leadership.

4. Admitting when they are wrong: 93.9% (VSQ 36). Main characteristic: Sacrificial; subcategory: Humble; leadership area: self-leadership.

5. Spending time listening carefully and respectfully to the team's challenges: 97% (VSQ 12). Main characteristic: Relational; subcategory: Listener; leadership area: self-leadership.

6. Offering help or letting volunteers know they can step away from ministry if it becomes overwhelming or tiring: 98.9% (VSQ 21). Main category: Encourager; subcategory: Rest Giver; leadership area: team leadership.
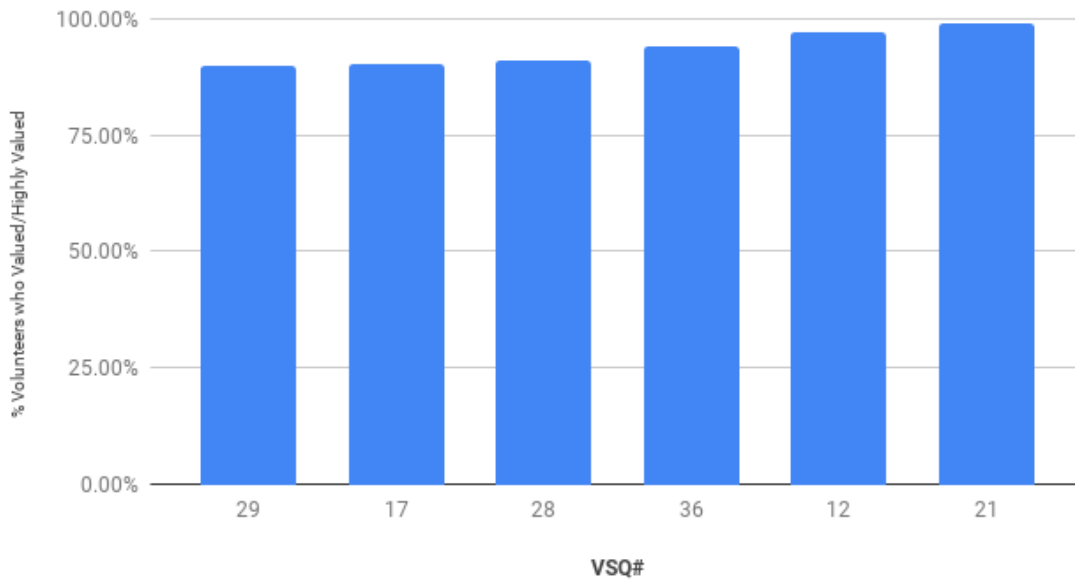
Figure 15: Six Most Highly Valued Skills and Characteristics

Six Least Highly Valued Skills and Characteristics

In a comparison of individual Likert scale questions, the following were the least highly valued (somewhat or not valued) TL skills and characteristics (ranked from least to most; see Figure 16: Six Least Highly Valued Skills and Characteristics):

1. Spending informal time outside of ministry with volunteers: 34% (VSQ 11). Main characteristic: Relational; subcategory: Relationship Builder/Friend; leadership area: conflict leadership.

2. Providing informal time and space for volunteers to have fun with other adults during ministry: 41.4% (VSQ 22). Main characteristic: Encourager; subcategory: Rest Giver; leadership area: team leadership.

3. Asking about specific aspects of volunteers' lives that were important to them: 43% (VSQ 13). Main characteristic: Relational; subcategory: Relationship Builder/Friend; leadership area: conflict leadership.

4. Developing times for volunteers to be together as a team: 50.5% (VSQ 24). Main characteristic: Relational; subcategory: Community Builder; leadership area: team leadership.

5. Leading short devotions with the team: 54% (VSQ 19). Main characteristic: Discipler; subcategory: Spiritual Discipler; leadership area: team leadership.

6. Enabling volunteers to use their gifts and skills as part of ministry, even when a TL is better at them than the volunteer: 61.6% (VSQ 39). Main characteristic: Power Sharing; subcategory: Risk Giver/Trustworthy; leadership area: self-leadership.
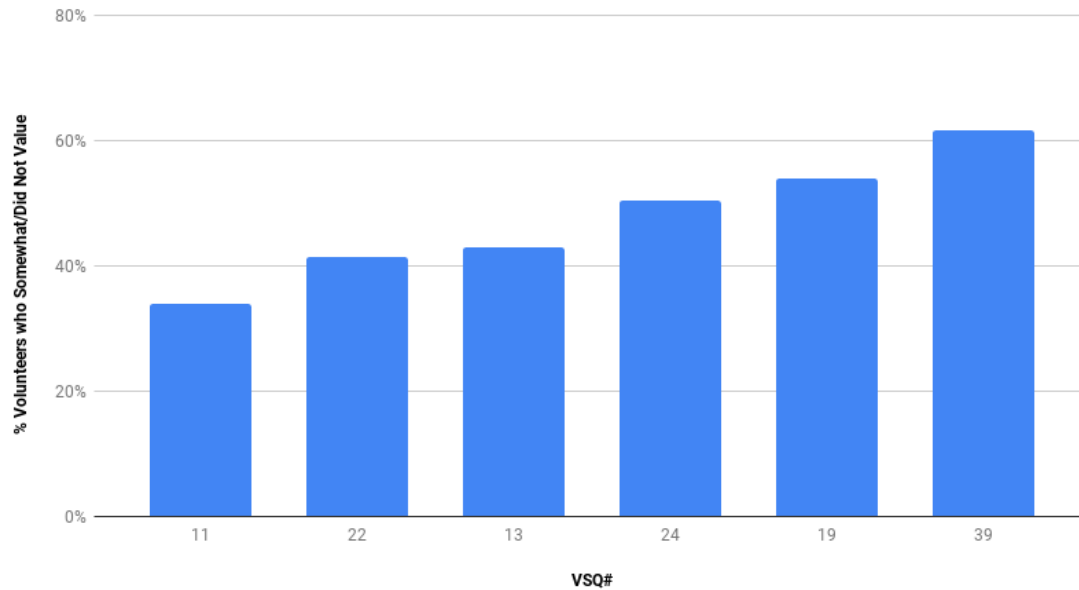
Figure 16: Six Least Highly Valued Skills and Characteristics.

Relational

Nearly everyone valued TLs who could ask for volunteers' opinions about ministry (VSQ 14; 83.8% valued or highly valued) and a team's ministry challenges (VSQ 12; 94% valued or highly valued). Conversely, when it came to the topic of relating as friends, many volunteers did not or only somewhat valued a leader who would spend informal time outside of ministry with them (VSQ 11; 66% did not or somewhat valued) or would ask about their lives (VSQ 13; 57% did not or somewhat valued).

Most valued a TL who could build community, but they were more likely to support this characteristic when done personally and during ministry time (VSQ 18; 87% valued or highly valued). Fewer volunteers valued being together as a team (VSQ 24;

49.5% did not or somewhat valued while 50.0% valued or highly valued), and only

15.2% of participants highly valued a TL who would develop times for volunteers to be

together as a team. In other words, volunteers were more likely to value a TL who built

friendship into ministry time (such as during Sunday school or children's worship) than

one who did so outside of ministry time (see Figure *17*: Comparison of Relational VSQs).
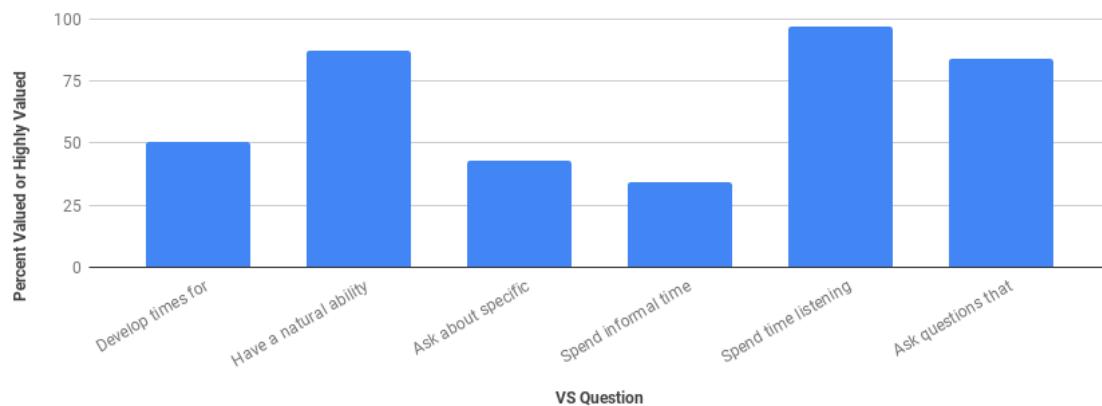
Figure 17: Comparison of Relational VSQs.

Surprisingly, this statistic did not change in relation to church size.

Encouraging

As indicated by the ranking question, encouragement was highly valued. About

63.6% valued or highly valued a TL who would encourage parents. Even more

participants valued a TL who would let them know they were a valued part of the ministry (VSQ 23), with 74.7% valuing or highly valuing this.

Volunteers highly valued a TL who could manage emotions. A whopping 90% valued a TL who would take time to talk to team members feeling positive or negative emotions. Conversely, while volunteers generally valued a leader who would stop a meeting to talk about tension or excitement (VSQ 26), only 65.7% valued or highly valued it, and 9.1% did not value this at all.

Individual rest was the most valued component of encouragement for volunteers. About 90.9% valued or highly valued a leader who would offer help or let them know they could step away from ministry if needed (VSQ 21). Only two people indicated that they did not value this at all. However, the provision of fun outside of ministry was not valued (VSQ 22), with 58.6% of participants somewhat or not valuing it (20.2% did not value this at all) (see Figure *18*: Comparison of Encouraging VSQs).
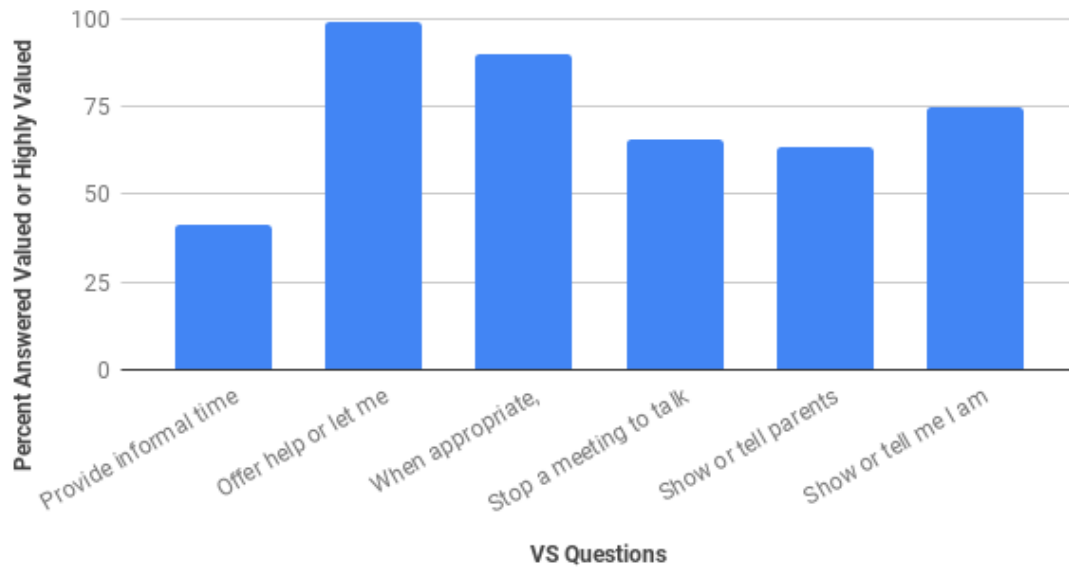
Figure 18: Comparison of Encouraging VSQs.

Offering rest away from ministry was the highest-valued trait of a TL (98.9% valued or highly valued). However, a TL who offered types of rest outside of ministry with others was almost the least valued of all the survey questions (see Figure *19*: VSQ 21 in Comparison to all other VSQs: Ability to Take a Break Compared to Sacrifice/Power Sharing and All of VSQs). This was only followed by a TL who would "Spend informal time outside of ministry with them."
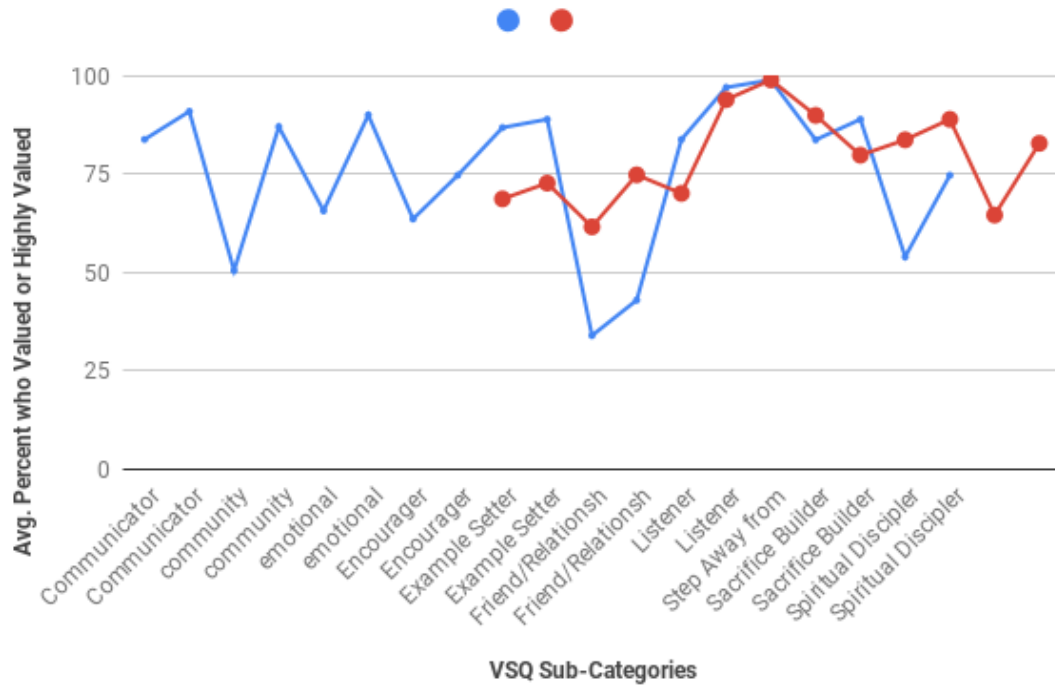
Figure 19: VSQ 21 in Comparison to all other VSQs: Ability to Take a Break Compared to Sacrifice/Power Sharing and All of VSQs.

(Red line: "Rest" vs. Sacrifice/Power Sharing questions; blue line: Rest vs.

Relational/Encouraging/Discipling questions)

Discipling

Communication was one of the most highly valued TL skills among volunteers. Out of both questions regarding communication (VSQs 27 & 28), only 16.2% did not value or somewhat valued it. Knowing how to articulate instructions was another of the most highly valued skills, with 90.9% of participants valuing or highly valuing it. All the rest somewhat valued it; there were no volunteers who did not value it at all.

Volunteers considered it more important for TLs to intentionally interact with children in ways that would show how to better serve young people (88.9%; VSQ 20)

than to often show through their actions that they were becoming more like Christ
(86.9%; VSQ 25). While 88.9% of people valued seeing a leader interact with children,
only 86.9% of volunteers wanted to see how volunteers interacted with Jesus (and 2% did
not value this at all!).

Spiritual discipleship was generally valued, but not highly valued when it
occurred between TLs and volunteers (see Figure *20*: Volunteer Survey Discipleship Questions in
Comparison). It was highly valued between volunteers and other teachers or pastors (in a
worship service). About 54% of volunteers valued or highly valued a TL who would lead
short devotions with the team (VSQ 19), while about 74.7% valued or highly valued a TL
who would encourage them to attend adult worship or classes, even if this sometimes
interfered with their ability to volunteer in the children's ministry (VSQ 35).
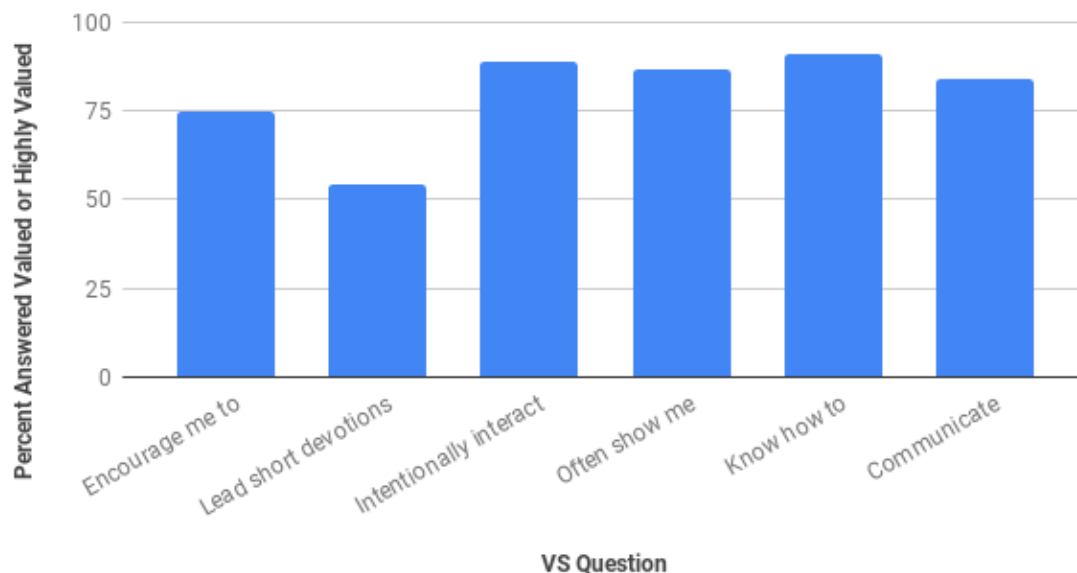
Figure 20: Volunteer Survey Discipleship Questions in Comparison.

Volunteers thought highly of discipling children by setting an example for them through TLs working together. Questions about how children might grow because of their TLs were much more highly valued, on average, than any other questions (see Figure 21: VSQs 20, 25 & 28 in Comparison to All Other VSQs: Setting an Example for Children).
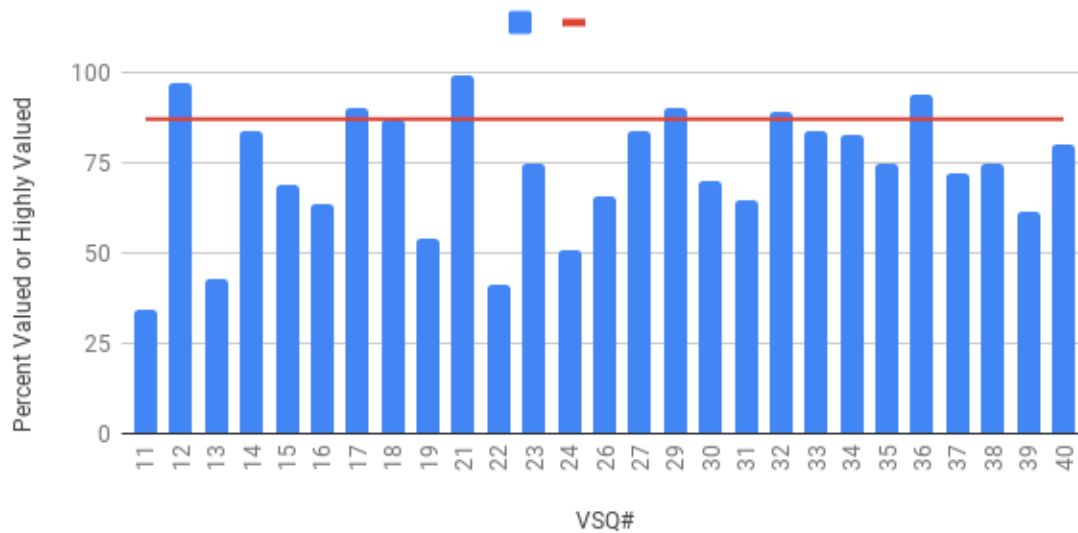
Figure 21: VSQs 20, 25 & 28 in Comparison to All Other VSQs: Setting an Example for Children.

(Red line: Average of VSQs 20, 25, and 28 which asked about setting an example for children)

Sacrificial
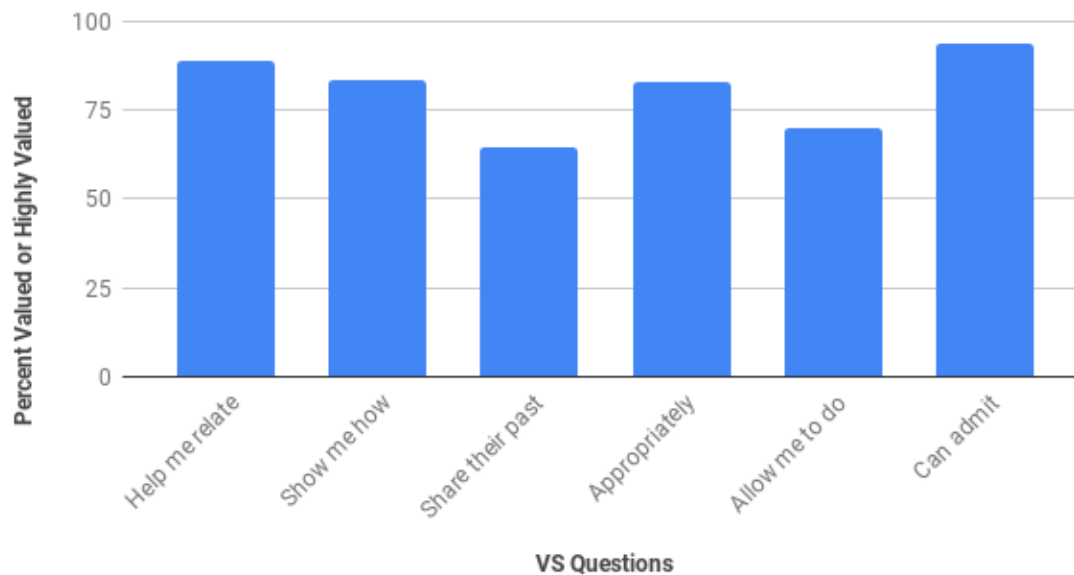
Figure 22: Sacrificial VSQs in Comparison.

Humility was important to volunteers; 70.1% valued or highly valued a TL who would allow them to do tasks that they were better at than the leader (VSQ 30). This question garnered a lower percentage than most other ones; 10.3% did not value at all being allowed to do tasks they could do better than their TL. In contrast, 73.5% wanted TLs who would admit when they were wrong (VSQ 36; one person noted that this was not something they valued at all).

Nearly everyone (82.8% valued or highly valued) valued a TL who was vulnerable enough to share their real feelings (VSQ 34). A little less valued were TLs

who would share their past failures as an example of what to avoid in ministry, with 64.6% valuing or highly valuing this trait (19.2% highly valued) (VSQ 31). Interestingly, both questions were answered mostly with *valued* rather than *highly valued*, which correlated with Sacrificial being ranked lowest of the main characteristics.

When TLs are building the desire to sacrifice through vision casting, 88.9% of volunteers valued or highly valued gaining insight regarding ministry plans (such as the future of the ministry, VSQ 32). Being shown how to use their passion in children's ministry was less valued, with 83.7% valuing or highly valuing this trait (VSQ 33). However, none of the participants indicated that they did not value this skill at all. One person did respond that gaining insight about the direction of the ministry was not valuable to them.

The graph above compares the questions related to the Sacrificial characteristic (see Figure *22*: Sacrificial VSQs in Comparison).

Power Sharing
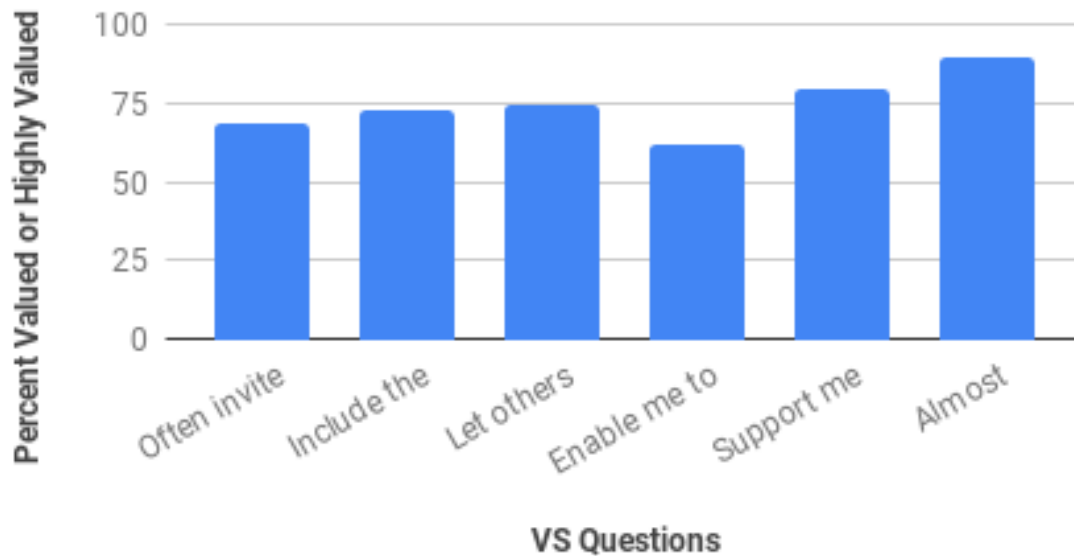
Figure 23: Power Sharing VSQs in Comparison.

TLs who would support innovation by volunteers and respond kindly even if it went wrong were highly valued. A TL who would respond kindly in this circumstance was valued or highly valued by 89.9% of volunteers (VSQ 29). A TL who would support a volunteer who implemented new activities (VSQ 40) was valued or highly valued by 79.8%. Thus, a leader who would support volunteers who tried something new, though they might fail, was an important part of power sharing for volunteers.

Less important to volunteers—and matching their ranking of the Power Sharing characteristic—was empowerment. Only 74.7% valued or highly valued a TL who would

let others teach or lead volunteers (VSQ 38). Additionally, as few as 61.4% valued or

highly valued a leader who would enable them to use their gifts and skills in ministry

even when the TL would be better at it than the volunteer (VSQ 39). This concept might

correlate with the characteristic of humility, where 10% of those surveyed did not value a

TL who would allow them to do tasks they were better at than the TL (VSQ 30).

Only 68.7% of volunteers valued or highly valued a TL who would often invite

people onto the team with various life experiences and opinions (VSQ 15). Rating only 4

percentage points higher, a TL who would include children's opinions when making

decisions about children's ministry was valued or highly valued by 72.7% of the

volunteers (VSQ 37).

TLs Versus Volunteers

Only 23 of the survey participants indicated that they were TLs (primarily

working with adults who volunteered with infants or children). However, since TL skills

and characteristics are the focus of this dissertation, this section has been included to

compare TL answers to those participants who were not TLs. Almost half (10 out of 23)

of the TLs were aged 45–64 and none were aged 65 or older. Only one of them was male,

and he worked with preteens. All but five of the TLs had a college education or higher

degree.

The TLs came from seven churches (out of 11), including New Beginnings, Life

Church (oddly, the DCM at Life Church indicated she did not have any TLs),

Rockpointe, Crossroads, Harvest, Grace Fellowship Church, and All God's People.

Length of service did not seem to make a difference in whether a person was a TL or not.

Frequency of service spanned anywhere from a few times each week to only once or

twice each year; however, 11 TLs served once a month or a few times per month (47.8%).

In general, TLs ranked Relational as more important than the other main characteristics (Relational, Encouraging, Discipling, Sacrificial, Power Sharing). This contrasted with the other volunteers, who ranked Encouraging as the characteristic they would value most in a TL. Only the one TL who worked with preteens ranked Encouraging as more valued than Relational in a TL.

Relational TLs

Compared to volunteers who were not TLs, TLs were more likely to value community building in those who led other adults in children's ministry. All of them marked the ability to foster friendship as valued or highly valued (VSQ 18). The other volunteers agreed with this in general, but 20% said they only somewhat or did not value this skill at all (see Figure *24*: Comparison of Volunteers and TLs who Valued or highly Valued Fostering Friendship among the Team). This makes sense, since TLs ranked Relational highest of all the main characteristics.
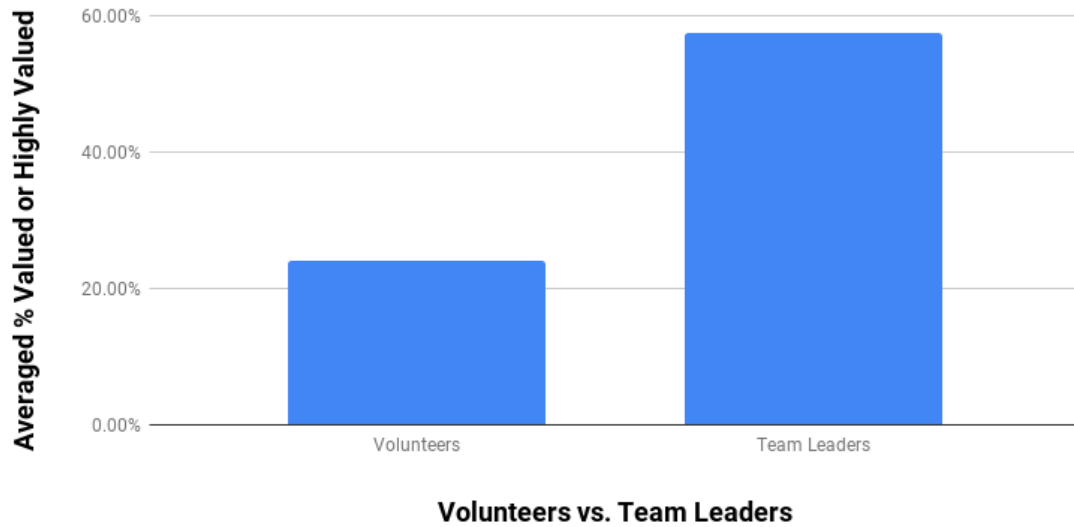
Figure 24: Comparison of Volunteers and TLs who Valued or highly Valued Fostering Friendship among the Team.

On the other hand, TLs valued developing times to be together as a team slightly less than other volunteers. None of the 23 TLs answered this question as highly valued, and only eight TL participants valued it. About half of the non-TL volunteers valued or highly valued this aspect of community building.

Encouraging TLs.

Figure 25: Encouragement Comparison between Volunteers and TLs.

While TLs ranked encouragement as the most important main characteristic of a TL, six out of 23 did not or only somewhat valued TLs showing or telling others that they were a valued part of children's ministry (VSQ 23). However, most did value letting parents know they were doing a good job spiritually raising their children.

TLs were also slightly less willing (35.7% did not value or somewhat valued) to stop a meeting to talk about team tension or excitement (VSQ 26), while other volunteers valued this skill at a higher rate (33.7% did not value or somewhat valued). Conversely, when answering the second question about emotional management, TLs were slightly more likely to value taking time to talk with an emotional team member (92.9% of TLs

valued or highly valued this, compared to 90.6% of volunteers; VSQ 17). No one

answered *not valued* regarding talking with emotional members of the team.

TLs valued or highly valued letting a volunteer who was tired or overwhelmed

step away from ministry (VSQ 21) about 5% less than other volunteers (see Figure *25*:

Encouragement Comparison between Volunteers and TLs), though none of them did not value it at

all (compared to three other volunteers who did not value this option). Again, since they

ranked Encouraging lower than Relational, this confirms that Encouraging is not

something TLs value in each other or themselves.

Discipling TLs.

Communication of instructions was valued or highly valued by all of the TLs,

except two. However, a greater percentage of TLs than other volunteers did not value the

communication of upcoming changes in several different ways (VSQ 27). About 14.7%

of volunteers and 28.6% of TLs did not value or somewhat valued this kind of

communication (see Figure *26*: Comparison of TLs and Volunteers who did Not or only Somewhat

Valued Communicating Coming Changes).
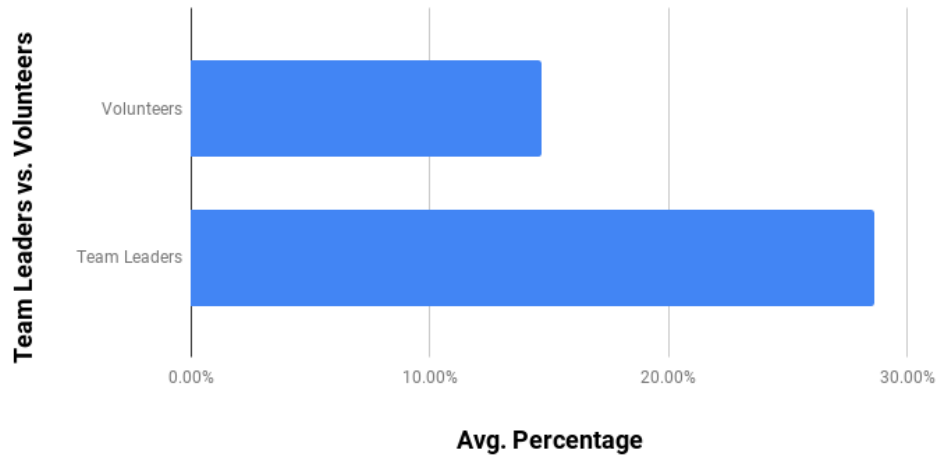
Figure 26: Comparison of TLs and Volunteers who did Not or only Somewhat Valued Communicating Coming Changes.

Volunteers and TLs valued at about the same rate a TL who would set a Christlike example and show others how to serve infants, boys and girls (three TLs did not value setting a Christlike example at all). Additionally, volunteers and TLs valued spiritual discipleship at about the same rate. Two TLs and 10 volunteers did not value being encouraged to attend adult worship or classes as part of discipleship (VSQ 35). All the TLs at least somewhat valued leading short devotions with their team, though only one highly valued it. On the other hand, 22% of volunteers did not value a TL who would lead team devotions.

Sacrificial TLs.

Volunteers were more likely than TLs to value being allowed to do tasks they were better at than their leader. Only 64.3% of TLs valued or highly valued this aspect of humility, while 69.9% of volunteers valued or highly valued it. Conversely, 23.4% of

volunteers and 21.7% of TLs did not value a TL allowing others to do tasks someone else might be better at than the TL. Regarding being sacrificial, TLs and volunteers generally valued a vulnerable TL. However, one TL did not value appropriately sharing their real feelings at all (VSQ 34).

Building sacrifice in others was slightly more valued by TLs than by volunteers, with all the TLs valuing or highly valuing this skill. About 20.8% of volunteers did not value or only somewhat valued a TL helping them relate to the direction in which the ministry was moving (VSQ 32). However, in general, everyone valued or highly valued a TL who could build in volunteers the desire to sacrifice for the children's ministry.

Power sharing TLs.

Being a trustworthy TL, who would allow others to take risks, was valued at about the same rate among TLs and volunteers. An empowering TL was also valued similarly by volunteers and TLs. TLs, however, were slightly more willing to accept a diverse team than their followers. None of the TLs said that they did not value inviting the opinions of children or gathering those with different opinions and experiences onto the team. However, 6.5% of volunteers did not value garnering the opinions of children and 10.4% did not value inviting people with various opinions and experiences onto the team.

Differences by Demographic

Education level.

Of those who had completed only high school, 47% did not value or somewhat valued a TL who would let parents know they were raising their children well in Christ (VSQ 16). These volunteers were the most likely to value someone who interacted with

children in ways that would help them serve children better (60% compared to 44–47%;

VSQ 20; see Figure *27*: Likelihood to Value TL Demonstration of Serving with Children).
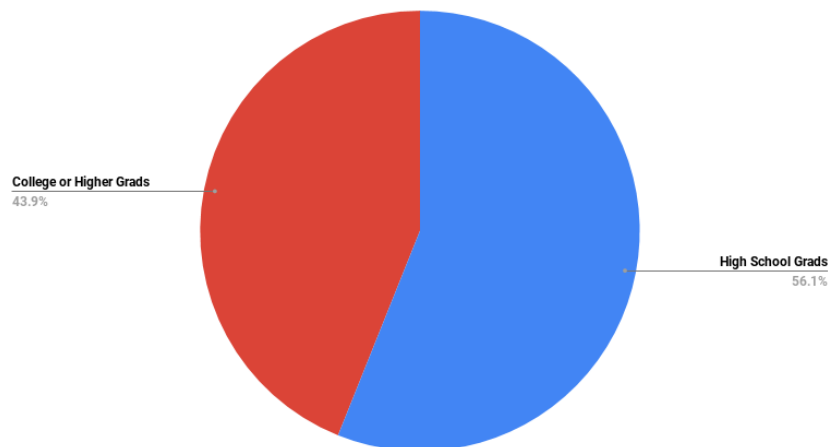
Figure 27: Likelihood to Value TL Demonstration of Serving with Children.

About 25% of those who completed secondary school only somewhat valued

knowing they could step away from ministry. They valued a TL who would encourage

them to attend other classes or worship slightly less than graduates of college or graduate

school.

Individuals who had graduated from college or graduate school had nearly

identical answers. College and graduate students preferred a TL who would appropriately

share their real feelings, a difference of 15–23% when compared to high school

graduates.

Graduates with a postcollege degree were least likely to value a TL who provided informal times outside of ministry to be together with their group of volunteers, but still generally valued this goal (20.4% did not value, 20.4% somewhat valued, 34.7% valued, and 24.5% highly valued). These individuals also valued communication and humility slightly more highly than the other groups (VSQ 36).

People who had completed a doctoral degree seemed to be outliers on almost every question. However, since only five doctors took the survey and most were from the same church, their data seem to be irrelevant to the study.

Generational differences.

Relational TLs.

While all age groups valued relationship, some valued certain aspects more than others (see Figure *28*: A TL in Children's Ministries should be… (1=Most Valued, 5=Least Valued)). When asked to rank being relational in comparison to being encouraging, discipling, sacrificial, or power sharing, 42.1% of volunteers ages 29–38 said being relational was most important to them. Only 35.7% or less of all volunteers said this was important, with Generation Z and baby boomers (age 65+) coming in at 0% (three individuals from each generation).
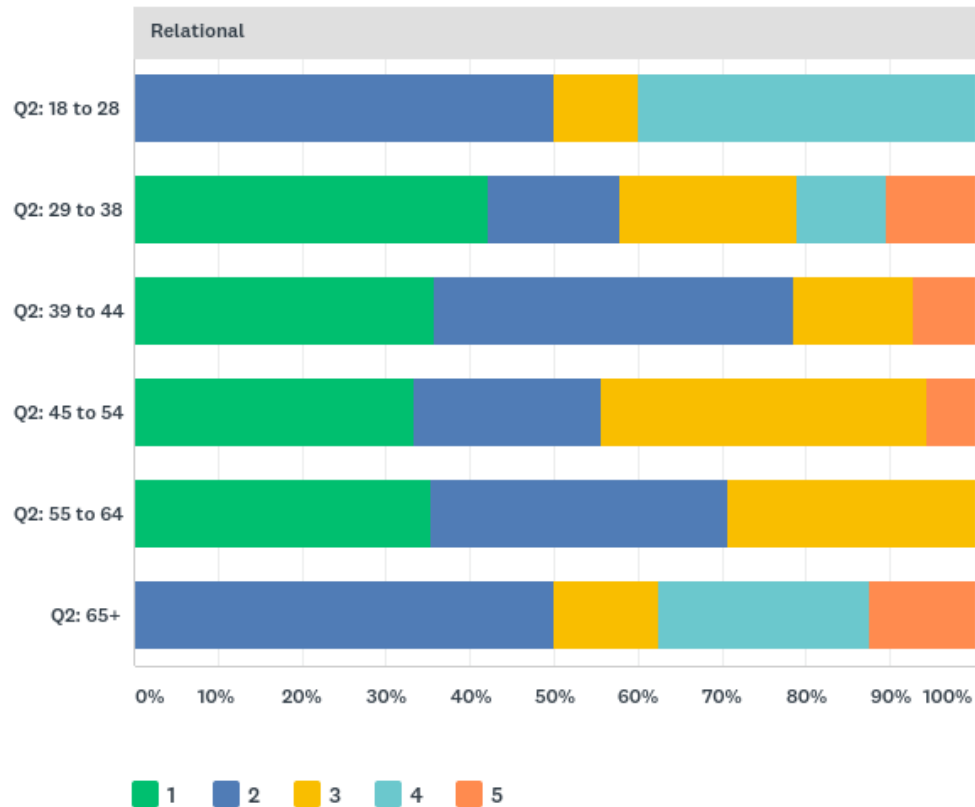
Figure 28: A TL in Children's Ministries should be… (1=Most Valued, 5=Least Valued).

When asked about spending informal time outside of ministry with their TL, volunteers aged 45–64 valued this aspect of friendship least, and none noted that they highly valued it. Generation Z most highly valued friendship with a TL outside of ministry times (all generations at least somewhat valued; VSQ 11; see Figure 29: VSQ 11 -- Spend Informal Time outside of Ministry with Me).
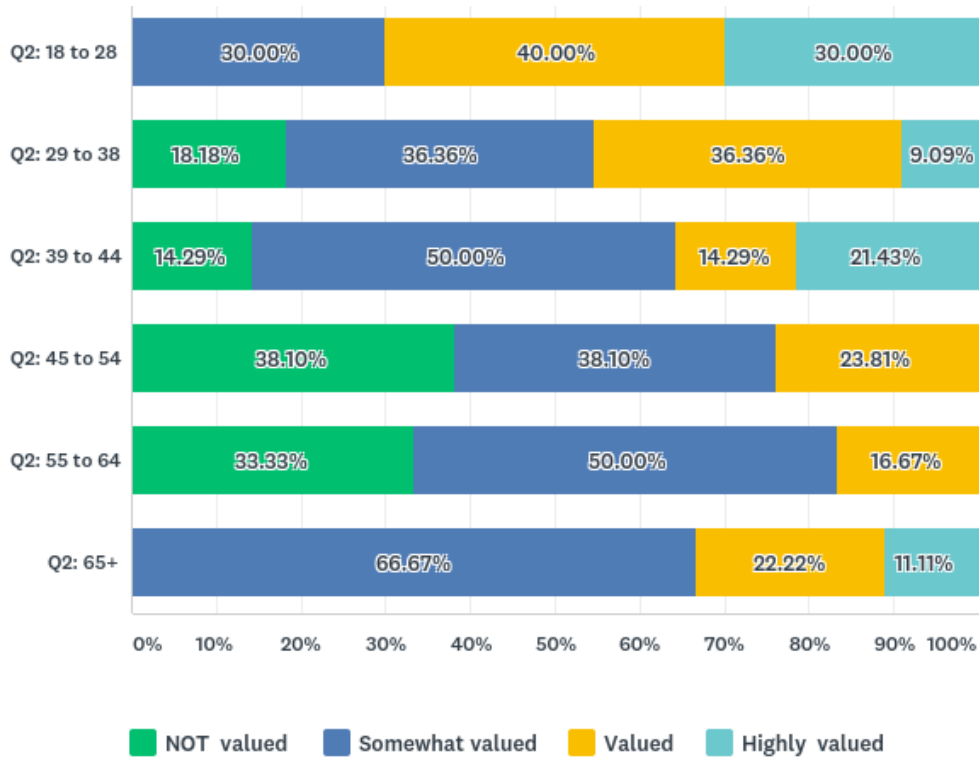
Figure 29: VSQ 11 -- Spend Informal Time outside of Ministry with Me.

Most age groups valued individual friendship with their TL (VSQ 18). However, those aged 18–28 (Generation Z) and 65 or older (Baby Boomers) more highly valued relationality *within* a team than other generations.

Encouraging TLs.

Volunteers seemed to highly value an encouraging TL. There were very few generational differences on topics pertaining to encouragement, such as giving rest, managing emotions, and being encouraging. When asked to rank encouragement as a TL characteristic, 57.9% of those aged 55–64 thought this was most important, making them the most likely to value someone who would encourage them.

When asked if they would value the provision of fun outside of ministry time, only those aged 18–28 and 56 or older more strongly valued it (VSQ 11). Those aged 45–64 barely valued resting with others outside of ministry (see Figure 28). Respondents aged 18–28 were more likely to highly value a TL who could manage group emotions, though most generations valued this in general (VSQ 26).

Discipling TLs.

Those aged 18–28 most valued discipleship, including being discipled by their TL. Those aged 39–44, Generation X, valued being engaged by their TL in short devotions (VSQ 19) as well as in other settings with other leaders.

Of those aged 65+, 89% highly valued TLs setting an example of discipleship for children through shared leadership. Other age groups valued example setting with children in general, but not to the degree of those in the "grandparent" age group (see Figure *30*: Age Group Comparison of Setting an Example for Children).
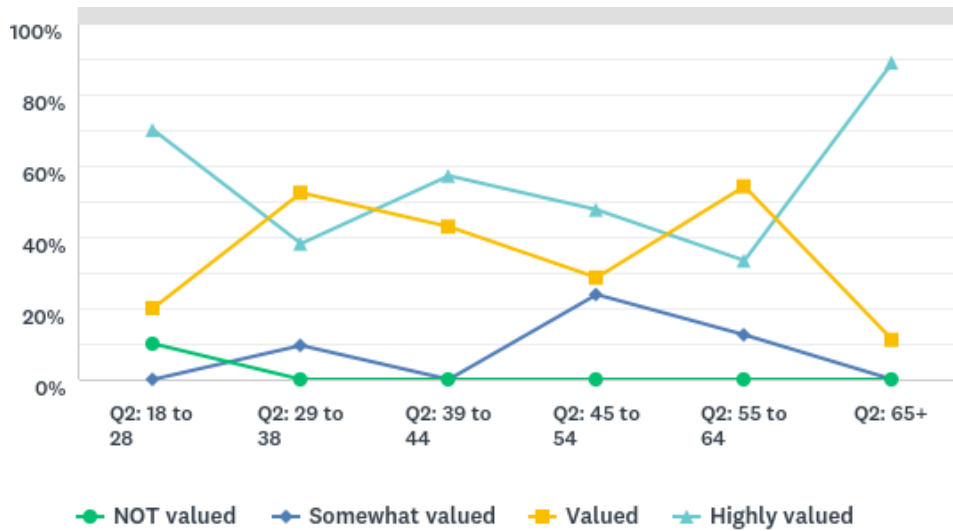
Figure 30: Age Group Comparison of Setting an Example for Children.

Setting an example in caring for children and in becoming more like Jesus was generally valued by all ages, as was communication. However, those aged 39–44 were most likely to highly value communication of instructions and events.

Sacrificial TLs.

Although those aged 29–38 valued vulnerability, they reacted more negatively to TLs who might share past failures when being vulnerable as part of sacrificing for ministry. In general, those aged 18–28 ranked Sacrificial most favorably compared to Relational, Encouraging, Discipling, and Power Sharing. However, this amounted to only three individuals out of nine who ranked Sacrificial as most valued. On the other end of the spectrum, 63% of people aged 65 and older ranked Sacrificial as least valued.

Power-sharing TLs.

Baby boomers (aged 45-64) and the Greatest Generation (aged 65+) valued inviting people who had different life experiences into the team (VSQ 15). However, when it came to including the voices of children (VSQ 37), only Generation X (57% of people aged 39–44) and Generation Z (50% of people aged 18–28) highly valued this characteristic. Other age groups valued listening to children when making decisions, but not as highly as Generations X and Z (see Figure *31*: Age Group Comparison of Listening to Children when Making Decisions).
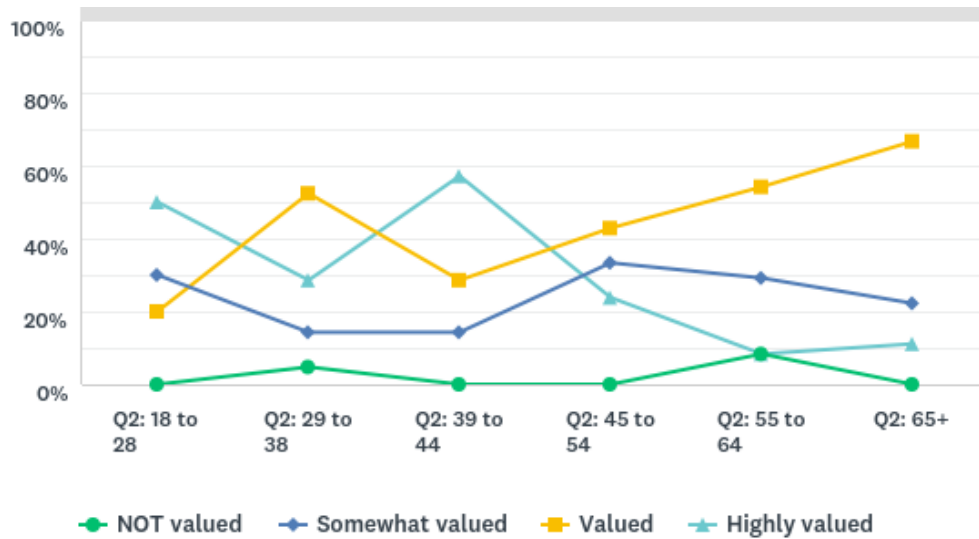
Figure 31: Age Group Comparison of Listening to Children when Making Decisions.

Baby boomers, the Greatest Generation, and Generation Z more highly valued being enabled to use their gifts and skills, even if a TL might be better at a task than they were (VSQ 39). The same generations more highly valued a TL who would allow others to teach or lead, as well (VSQ 38; see Figure *32*: Age Group Comparison of Empowerment to Use Gifts by TL).
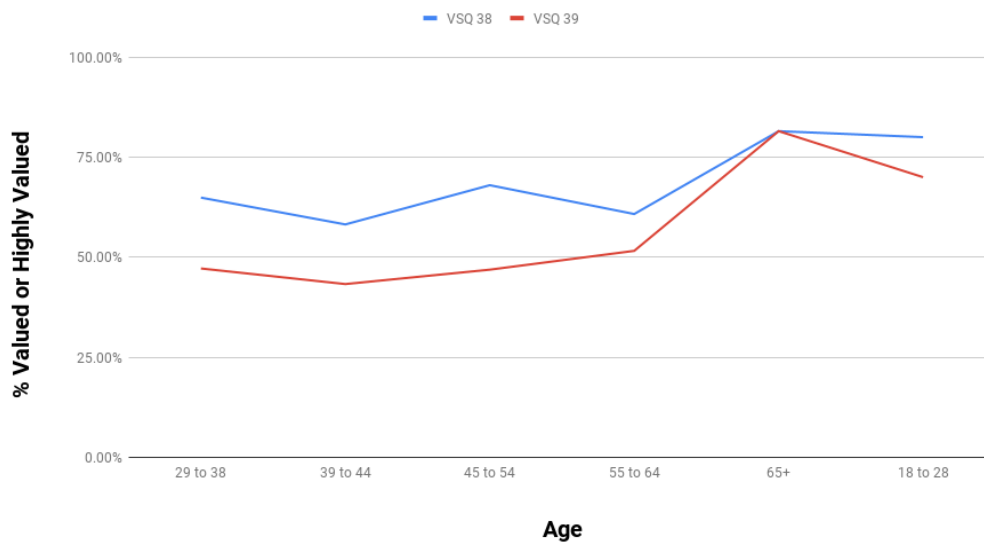
Figure 32: Age Group Comparison of Empowerment to Use Gifts by TL.

Differences by Length of Service in Children's Ministry

Only six participants in the survey had volunteered in children's ministries for 1 year or less. About 37% had served between 6 and 14 years. The majority of those

surveyed had served for either 3–5 years (28%) or 15 or more years (20%). Of those who

had volunteered for more than 15 years, the majority were aged 55–64 (63.2%). When it

came to ranking the main TL characteristics (VSQ 43), those who had served 1–2 years

most highly valued Relational, and those who had served 9–14 years most highly valued

Encouraging (9–11 years: 66.7%; 12–14 years: 57.1%; see Figure 32). People who had

volunteered for 12 years or longer were less likely to value Empowering, ranking it

fourth (15+ years in ministry) or fifth (12–14 years in ministry) out of five (see

Figure 33: Longevity Comparison of Ranked REDSP).
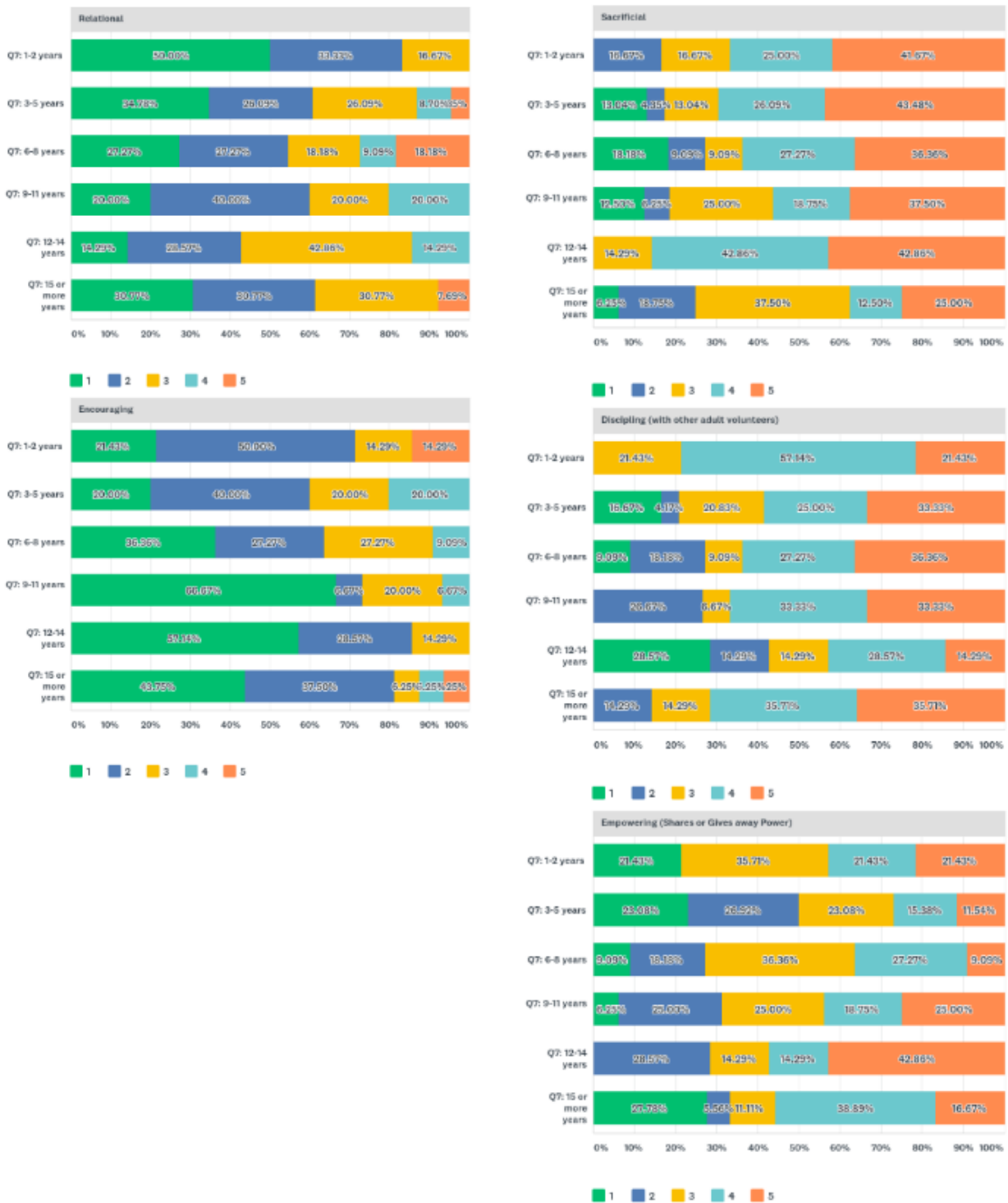
Figure 33: Longevity Comparison of Ranked REDSP.

Relational TLs.

Being listened to was most valued by individuals who had served at least 6 years (VSQ 12). Out of those who had served only 3–5 years, two even said they did not value being asked questions that would help them express their ministry opinions (VSQ 14). While listening was not the most valued main characteristic, most survey participants valued or highly valued it.

Friendship—especially being asked about their lives—was most valued by those who had served 1–2 years (VSQ 13). Friendship was least valued by those serving between 6 and 14 years, and only slightly more valued by those serving 15 or more years. Individuals serving in children's ministries for 12–14 years most highly valued a TL who would build community among these friends. Those who served for 1–2 years had the most favorable reaction (57.1%) to a TL who would foster friendship on the team (VSQ 18). In general, those who had served for less time more highly valued aspects of friendship fostered by TLs (see Figure *34*: Longevity Comparison of Value of the Characteristic of Friendship).
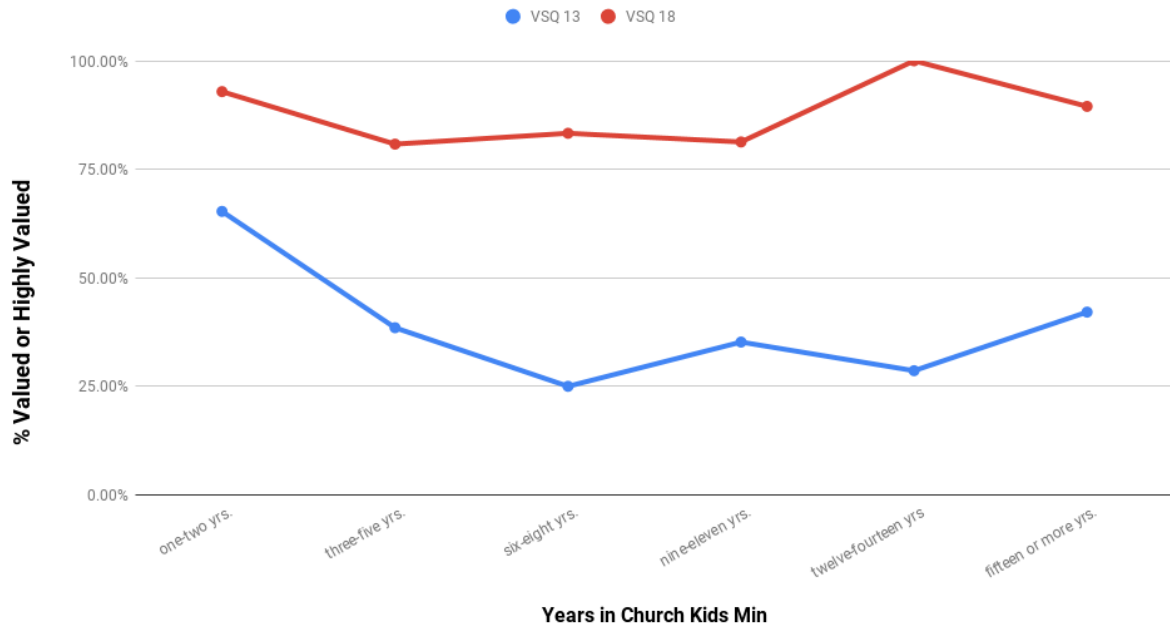
Figure 34: Longevity Comparison of Value of the Characteristic of Friendship.

Encouraging TLs.

While everyone valued a TL who would care for team emotions, those who had volunteered in children's ministries longer tended to more highly value this. The only exception was that those who had served 15 or more years valued emotional management slightly less than those who had volunteered for 12–14 years.

A TL who would offer rest was also increasingly valued the longer a person had served, apart from those who had served 3–5 years. Again, this was more in the realm of giving time off from ministry than providing times of fellowship outside of ministry. Those who had served 1 or 2 years most highly valued having fun together outside of the children's ministries (42.9%) and those serving 15 or more years valued this least with

31.6% saying they did not value it at all. Thus, rest away from ministry was valued more than rest during ministry together, except among those who had a shorter longevity.

Discipling TLs.

For the most part, everyone valued a communicative TL. However, those serving 12–14 years most highly valued a TL who would communicate changes or events in different ways (100%; the group that next most highly valued this was those serving 15 years or more, at 63.1%). Those serving 12–14 years also valued a leader who would articulate instructions well, though only by a 3% margin. Additionally, this group most highly valued a TL who would set an example in their faith growth (100% either valued or highly valued this trait).

Those volunteering 5 years or less were least likely to value a leader who would show them how to become more like Christ, with two people even saying they did not value it at all. However, they valued someone who would lead short team devotions more than any other group (78.6% valued or highly valued). Those serving 3 or more years generally only somewhat valued this aspect of spiritual discipleship by a TL, with eight people not valuing it at all. Only those who volunteered for 12–14 years did not *highly* value being encouraged to attend worship or other classes, but they did generally value it.

Sacrificial TLs.

Everyone valued a humble TL, but those who had worked with little ones in their churches for 1–2 years were least likely to value a TL who would allow them to do tasks that the volunteers were better at (64.3% did not value or only somewhat valued). Those serving 6–8 or 12 or more years were most likely to value this kind of humility. Survey

participants who served 1–2 or 9–11 years were slightly more likely to value a vulnerable leader.

Power-sharing TLs.

Individuals who served between 6 and 8 years did not highly value an empowering TL, with 72.7% only somewhat valuing a TL who would enable them to use their gifts in children's ministry. Those who had volunteered for 1 or 2 years were less likely than those who had served longer to value a TL who would let others teach or lead other volunteers. Those with less tenure in ministry with young people were most likely, however, to value a leader who would invite people into the team with different experiences and opinions (100% valued or highly valued).

Ranked Differences

Three final questions asked volunteers to rank skills related to the five main characteristics. VSQ 41 asked volunteers to rank the following skills: develop effective meetings (Relational), explain the curriculum (Encouraging), relate well to children (Discipling), move teams toward future goals (Sacrificial), and teach other team members (Power Sharing). Volunteers ranked them in the following order from most to least valued (see Figure *35*: Ranked Skill Set 1):

> 1. Relate well to children (Discipling). Thus, volunteers seemed to most highly value the discipleship principle of example setting. This was more important to volunteers than any other item on the list by at least 50%. In comparison to the other four skills, 64.4% of respondents ranked this as most valued.

2. Teach other team members (Power Sharing). The ability to help others grow as leaders was ranked toward the middle of what volunteers would want in a TL; 14.4% of respondents thought this was the most important skill.

3. Move teams toward future goals (Sacrificial). Volunteers highly rated the ability of a TL to help them move sacrificially toward a goal. About 14.3% of participants ranked this as most important.

4. Develop effective meetings (Relational). Volunteers did not seem to want to be relational in a meeting setting. Only 6.7% of respondents thought this was most important compared to the other four skills.

5. Explain the curriculum (Encouraging). Being encouraged to use the curriculum better for children was not particularly valued by volunteers. A nominal 5.8% noted this as most important.
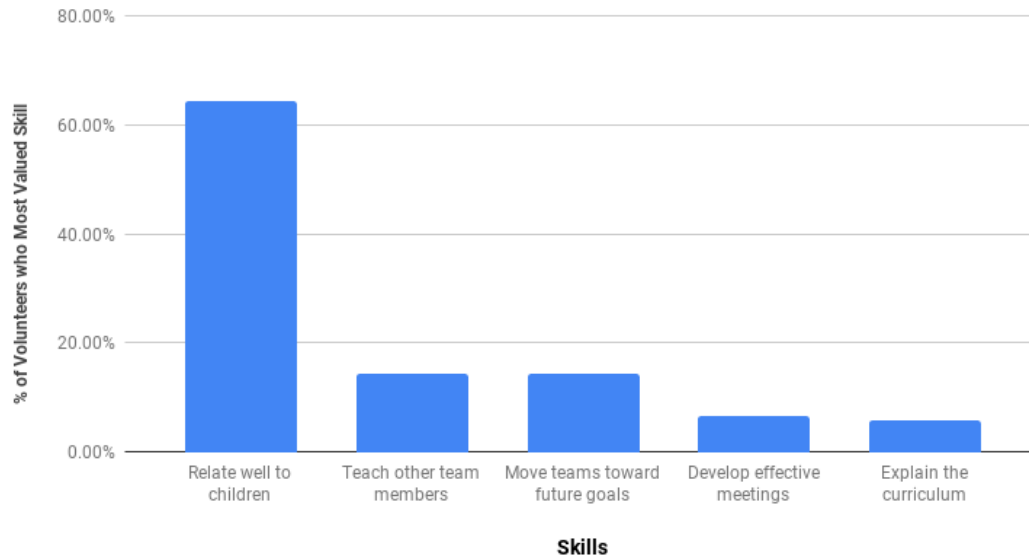
Figure 35: Ranked Skill Set 1.

The next ranking question, VSQ42, asked volunteers to rate these five skills: successfully invite others to volunteer (Relational), easily talk with parents (Encouraging), manage events well (Discipling), communicate effectively (Sacrificial), and schedule volunteers effectively (Power Sharing). They ranked them in the following order, from most to least valued (see Figure *36*: Ranked Skill Set 2):

1. Communicate effectively (Sacrificial). Volunteers seemed to value someone who would lead them into the future with effective communication; 53.8% thought this was most important of the five listed skills.

2. Easily talk with parents (Encouraging). Volunteers wanted a TL who would be encouraging in the way they related to parents. About 17.2% of the participants understood this to be the most important skill.

3. Successfully invite others to volunteer (Relational). Relationally asking others to be part of children's ministries was only somewhat important to volunteers when compared with the other items on the list; 13.5% of respondents believed that successfully inviting others to volunteer was the most important skill for a TL.

4. Schedule volunteers effectively (Power Sharing). Volunteers did not especially value a TL who would share power by scheduling other volunteers. About 12.6% of the survey participants believed scheduling to be the most important skill.

5. Manage events well (Discipling). Respondents did not particularly value a TL who would disciple through events. Only 5.6% of volunteers valued this as the most important skill.
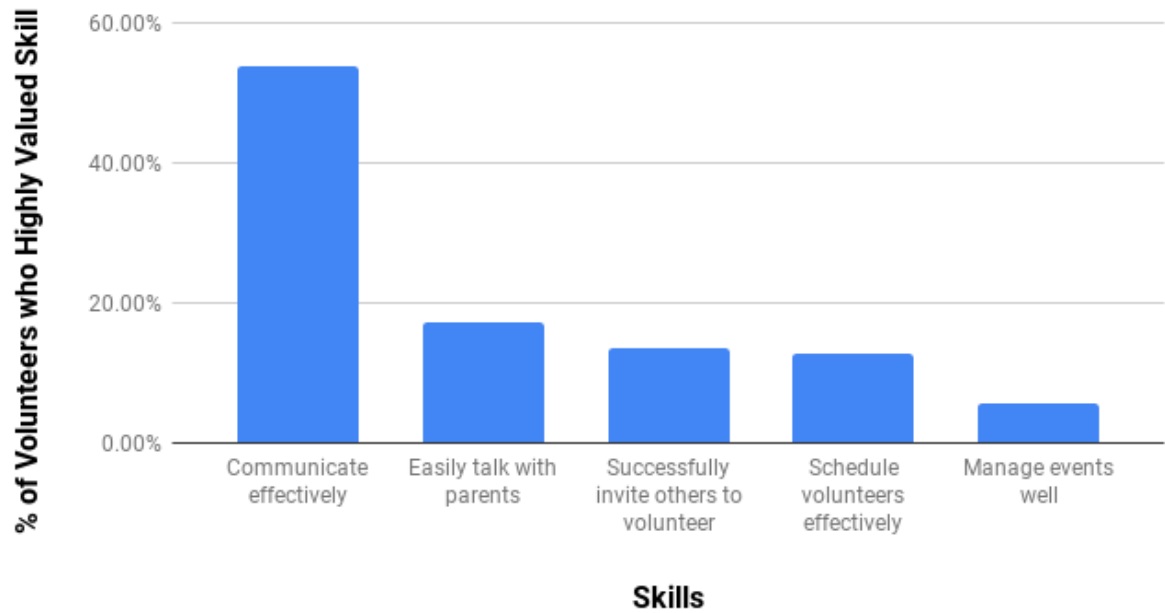
Figure 36: Ranked Skill Set 2.

The last ranking question, VSQ 43, asked volunteers to rank the five main

characteristics. They ranked them in this order:

1.Encouraging

2. Relating (Relational)

3. Empowering (shares or gives away power)

4. Discipling (with other adult volunteers)

5. Sacrificing (Sacrificial)

Leadership Areas: Team, Conflict, and Self Leadership

Of the three leadership areas, volunteers mostly highly scored self-leadership

characteristics (see Figure *37*: High Value of Self-Leadership of TLs in Comparison to Team and

Conflict Leadership Areas).
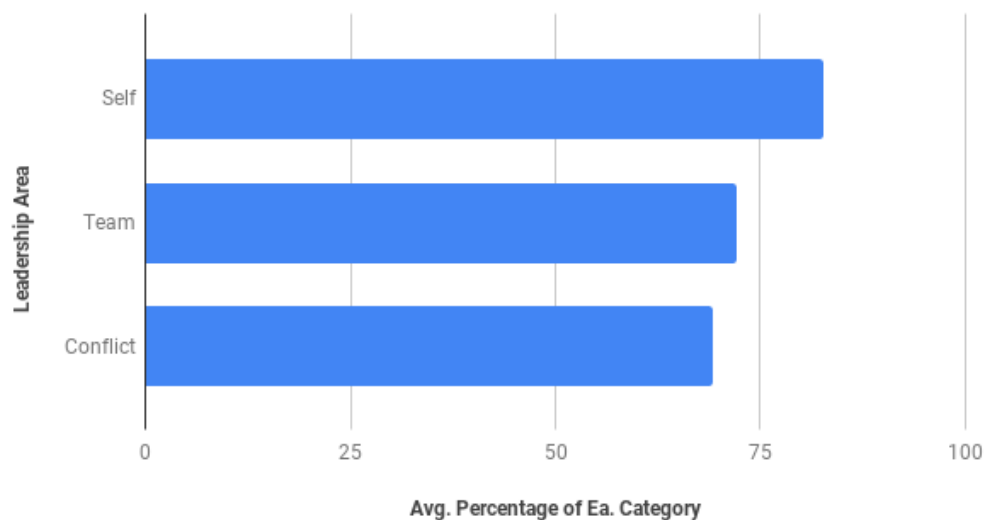
Figure 37: High Value of Self-Leadership of TLs in Comparison to Team and Conflict Leadership Areas.

Above all, they wanted a TL who would spend time listening to them. Two commented

on this skill; one plainly said, "Listen to the people (volunteers)."

Humility and communication were rated at 90% or above. Several volunteers

commented on communication, saying things like, "Instruction . . . could be given to the

new leader to help them adapt" and "Communication is very important in leading." A TL

being trustworthy enough to allow others to take risks was also one of the most highly scored questions. About 90% of volunteers said they would value or highly value a TL who responded to them in kind ways even if they made a bad decision (VSQ 29). The comments, combined with the Likert scale responses, reinforced how important self-leadership principles were for volunteers. They wanted someone who could lead personally and who could lead themselves within volunteer situations. According to volunteers, a TL should be able to lead themselves by choosing to be good at listening, encouraging, communicating, being humble, and allowing risks.

Within the leadership areas, team leadership came in second and conflict leadership was third, if rated by the average percentage who valued or highly valued the related questions. The question indicating that volunteers would like a TL who offered rest was given the highest value, with 98.9% valuing or highly valuing it. In the comments, however, most mentioned wanting a TL who would help them sacrifice better for the ministry. One woman who had served in her church's children's ministry for over 15 years simply said, "Communication is very important in leading. If you don't communicate your vision, how can others follow?"

Conflict leadership had one most highly valued question. Ninety percent of the volunteers wanted a TL who would take time to talk with team members experiencing positive or negative emotions (VSQ 17). Otherwise, this leadership area was not as highly rated.

Summary of Major Findings

Volunteers and Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) valued similar characteristics in a TL but placed higher value on different principles. Most volunteers

and all but one director also believed that it was important for TLs to work in a way that would show children how the church should operate through shared leadership. Finally, offering rest coincided with both Sacrificial and Power Sharing.

Shared and Foundational Leadership Valued

If TLs want volunteers to value their service, they should attempt to keep teams working and relational during ministry time. Volunteers highly valued someone who would lead teams in a way that helped them personally connect with the children's ministry. They also valued someone with the basic leadership skills of listening, encouraging, communicating, and being humility and trustworthy enough to allow risk taking (see fig. 19).

Directors agreed that those five skills were, in general, basic to being a TL. However, they also valued traits that enabled leaders to engage with others well and actually build teams. They wanted TLs who would share leadership, not only lead or have good character (see Figure *38*: Foundations of Team leadership).

FOUNDATIONS OF TEAM LEADERSHIP CHART	RELATIONAL	ENCOURAGING	DISCIPLING	SACRIFICIAL	POWER SHARING
Shared Leadership	Community Builder	Rest Giver	Spiritual Discipler	Sacrifice Builder	Diversity Builder
	Friend	Emotional Manager	Example Setter	Vulnerable	Empowering
Foundational Leadership	Listener	Encourager	Communicator	Humble	Risk/Trust Giver

Figure 38: Foundations of Team leadership.

Looking at these findings together, it appears volunteers highly value a leader who can act in ways that display good character and basic interpersonal skills. Directors value a TL who can act in ways that draw others into the team and ministry.

Setting an Example of Shared Leadership for Children

In general, volunteers and DCMs highly valued TLs (and teams) who would show children how the church works. Findings from the literature review agreed with participants that a correct understanding of the body of Christ can help children see that the Trinity works together in leadership. The Trinity works in love—another concept DCMs believed little ones could learn from TLs working well together. Setting an example through TLs sharing leadership, working as and in a team, has high value.

Empowering Rest and Sacrifice

DCMs and volunteers valued sacrifice, power sharing, and rest, more highly than any other characteristic. Volunteers, who highly valued a TL who would "offer help or let them know they could step away from ministry if it was becoming overwhelming or tiring," also more highly valued questions about sacrifice and power sharing.

Combining that finding with survey comments about time, it seems that a TL would need to practice offering rest in order to balance everyone's sacrifice of time in ministering with children. DCMs seemed more inhibited by chaotic lives and busy schedules than by lack of desire, willingness, character, or ability. When DCMs spoke of rest, it was often in conjunction with having enough other leaders who would sacrifice and with whom they could share leadership.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The problems addressed by this dissertation related to how overwhelmed many Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) become without the help of other leaders, and the need for children to see how the church should work together. Thus, the purpose of this study was to discover valued core competencies of Team Leaders (TLs) in children's ministry through biblical, theological, and pragmatic understandings, as well as from the perspectives of DCMs and their volunteers. The findings show the characteristics that are most valued by children's ministry workers as well as how the use of these characteristics impacts TLs, the growth of little ones, and empowerment within interdependent children's ministries.

Through this research, I discovered that DCMs and volunteers both value similar characteristics in a TL. However, directors place more value on shared-leadership skills and characteristics, while volunteers value more foundational leadership competencies (see Figure *39*: Shared and Foundational Team leadership).

Figure 39: Shared and Foundational Team leadership.

Both volunteers and DCMs value a TL who sets an example of Christians working together for children. Additionally, empowerment, sacrifice, and rest were valued at similar rates by all participants.

Major Findings

The major findings were that shared and foundational types of leadership were valued by different sets of people. Most participants agreed that it was valuable for children to see an example of shared leadership as a part of guiding the young people in an understanding of the Trinity. Additionally, nearly everyone in the study valued empowerment, rest and sacrifice at a similar rate.

Shared and Foundational Leadership Valued

Volunteers and directors both valued team leadership skills. However, volunteers valued foundational skills and characteristics: listening, encouraging, communicating, trusting (trust/risk giving), and being humble (Humility). Conversely, Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) valued competencies that would lead to sharing leadership, such as building friendship and community, offering rest and managing emotions,

discipling other leaders and setting an example, and, most of all, building diversity and empowering others (see Figure *39*: Shared and Foundational Team leadership).

Personal reflections.

Before attempting the focus groups and surveys, I assumed volunteers, in particular, would value relational and encouraging Team Leaders (TLs). I thought DCMs would likely value aspects of shared leadership and power sharing more than volunteers would. My understandings began to change as I viewed the volunteers' survey responses, especially the Likert scale questions. After I saw how the DCMs and volunteers responded, I became convinced that both groups valued aspects of power sharing, sacrifice, and discipleship in a TL more than a relational and encouraging TL.

Clearly, directors did, in fact, value TLs who would engage interdependently with volunteers. While directors valued foundational leadership principles, they viewed them as just that—foundational. They saw them as beginner-level leadership characteristics, the basis of leadership. Volunteers much more highly valued foundational principles in a TL (see Figure *39*: Shared and Foundational Team leadership). They valued a leader who showed skills in listening, encouraging, healthy communicating, offering trust and being humble.

Literature review.

The literature review seemed to indicate that relational TLs would be best. Several scholars agreed that "relationship" was foundational for TLs, talking about personal identification with others, attachment, and commitment to others (Marks et al. 363, 370; Yukl 263; Zaccaro et al. 469, Batchelor 27). They also spoke of how team leadership should be done with a relational type of authority, sharing understandings and vision as much as possible (Hill and Levenhagen 1065, Cronin and Weingart 770,

Langfred 889). However, these aspects, while appreciated by volunteers and DCMs, were

not the most highly valued (although volunteers did more highly value some of the basics

of relationality, such as listening).

DCMs and volunteers most valued empowerment and sacrifice in a TL. Many

researchers agreed about the importance of these characteristics. For instance, offering

the freedom and support to take risks (which indicates TLs trust their volunteers),

developing and communicating clear vision, and giving volunteers opportunities to voice

their understandings about the team came through clearly in the review (Barna, *The*

Power of Team 89-97, 125; Collier 109, Boezeman and Ellemers 910, Bowers and

Hamby 8; Leadercast, sec.3; Taylor 134-137). By using these principles, the TL can

develop "destiny," or clear the way for the future. This helps volunteers become willing

to sacrifice for the ministry. Volunteers and directors in this study wanted TLs who could

trustingly invite volunteers to take risks, empower them, and build diversity, as indicated

in the red box in Figure *40*: Opposing Values in Power Sharing.
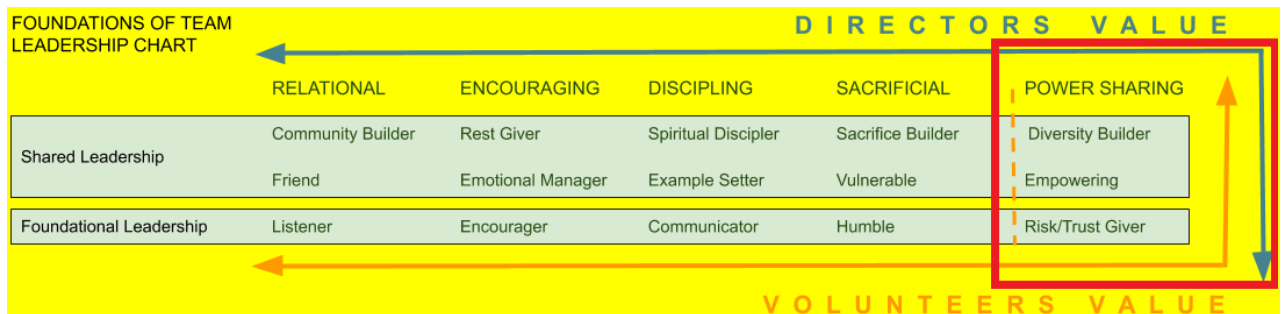
Figure 40: Opposing Values in Power Sharing.

In general, directors more highly valued a person who would share leadership with others and could lead a group than those who solely listened, encouraged, communicated, trusted and were humble. Of course, according to the literature review, most of these characteristics could be defined as relational. Thus, the skills of Power Sharing being used relationally would be valued competencies.

Biblical and theological perspectives.

While Scripture strongly highlighted that a TL should have a deepening relationship with Christ, neither volunteers nor DCMs highly valued this as much as other leadership aspects, such as communication, listening, and providing for rest. Scripture and theology alike greatly emphasized sacrifice and empowerment of others in a Trinitarian-like dance among leadership. While Moses, Jesus, and Paul were all highly relational, they also shared their leadership and sacrificed much to do so. They also helped others see how they should sacrifice for the mission (Sacrifice Building). Scripture, along with the volunteers, also noted that characteristics such as listening, encouraging, communicating kindly, having humility, and trusting (trust/risk giving) were foundational for leadership. According to Scripture, these were some of the most valued characteristics of anyone, including TLs, and should be based in a relationship with God.

Conclusion.

Directors are more likely to value a TL who can share leadership. Volunteers are more likely to value a TL with foundational leadership skills. In conjunction with the

literature review and biblical and theological understandings, building a relational team based in intimacy with God is clearly important. A TL who is relationally connected with others as an outpouring of connection with God and who can both share and show leadership would be a valuable guide in children's ministries.

Setting an Example of Shared Leadership for Children

Team leadership, as a way to show children who they are and who God is, was highly valued. Both Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and volunteers thought that this structure of leadership was a valuable tool.

Personal reflections.

I thought that setting an example of teaming for children would be important, but I did not expect to receive as much agreement on this point as I did from both volunteers and directors. *How* children are led matters to people who work with them. This was more emphatically valued by all study participants than discipling others or even setting a Christlike example. Sharing leadership with other adults was valued as a way to show girls and boys how to be the church, love each other, and use their gifts.

Literature review.

Leading children as a team correlated highly with the literature. If children need to belong, they need a structure and people to whom they belong. Like Schweitzer and Boschki said,

> Belonging is mediated, especially for children, by identifications, usually with adults. Consequently, religious education should give children a chance to be with adults with whom they can identify in terms of religious belonging. (42)

The actions and leadership of adults in the church, as children watch them, is important to volunteers and directors.

Biblical and theological perspectives.

Scripture and theology backed this up as well. Leading in a way that exemplifies the Trinity is valuable to help children grow toward and with Christ. While this should be done by families, it should also be done by the church family as a countercultural expression of belonging for children.

Conclusion.

Interdependent leadership with children was a high value for everyone. Team leadership shows children who they are and can become. It engages little ones in spiritual growth in a way that allows them to be autonomous, as well as part of a loving group of people who share leadership with each other and even with children.

Empowering Rest and Sacrifice

Empowerment, rest, and sacrifice were all highly valued by volunteers and directors. The literature and biblical/theological reviews also indicated that rest and sacrifice were related by how these two characteristics were empowered by a Team Leader (TL).

Personal reflections.

While I originally thought rest and empowerment might be related, I did not realize they would also be related to sacrifice. When volunteers and DCMs valued one of these characteristics, they valued the other two as well. Together, rest, sacrifice, and empowerment were all important for those working with children.

TL's valued both rest and offering rest. One of the ways of doing this that DCMs highly valued was sharing leadership. Directors wanted to be able to engage in rest themselves, but they also wanted TLs to have calm, manageable schedules so that they could focus on both life and ministry.

Literature review.

Rest was not explicitly named in the literature. However, empowerment was one of the main characteristics noted by researchers as important for a TL in any field. Creating an attitude of ownership and encouraging others when they do "own" ministry, is key to interdependent leadership. The literature named sacrifice as part of inviting diversity as well as of caring for others more than self (Yukl 420). However, the literature seemed to say that the main leader (the DCM), more than the TL, should practice this trait of empowerment.

Biblical and theological perspectives.

Moses instituted rest as part of power sharing when he began the judiciary system of Israel. For Jesus, rest and sacrifice were two sides of the same coin. He had a pattern of asking his disciples to rest and to sacrifice (and set an example of these competencies) as a way of training them for future roles. Thus, Jesus actually used rest and sacrifice to cause others to grow in leadership. Paul also led by sacrifice but did not seem to set an example when it came to rest (though perhaps his prison time was a sort of forced rest). Rest, sacrifice, and power sharing go hand in hand for a valued TL.

Conclusion.

When the biblical and theological perspectives are considered, the key to empowerment is offering and taking rest as well as building and engaging in sacrifice.

Empowerment cannot take place without the components of rest and sacrifice. Thus, a valued TL would be able to rest and sacrifice as well as build these characteristics in others by offering them as a part of growing empowerment. Instead of empowerment being defined only as power sharing and encouraging others, it also includes aspects of being able to step away from ministry to allow others to sacrifice. On the other side, it must include being able to sacrifice for the ministry while allowing others to rest.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The implications of these research findings affect the structure and understandings of children's ministry, help to define a Team Leader (TL), and suggest ways to strengthen shared ministry with and for boys, girls, and infants. New research could help discover what this structure is and how these understandings can be applied.

Implications of Main Values of DCMs and Volunteers

Volunteers and Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) both valued foundational and shared leadership competencies (though at different rates). They all believed that a team who represented the Trinity could help children see and engage in the church and their faith. Additionally, DCMs and volunteers thought the combination of rest, sacrifice, and empowerment—and the ability to offer these to others—was more valuable than the other main characteristics. Considering these findings, implications for the practice of ministry follow.

Volunteers.

According to this dissertation, volunteers strongly desire children to see and engage in a structure that reflects the interdependent perichoresis (movement together) of the Trinity. To achieve this, volunteers may need to be willing to change the structure of

children's ministry leadership. Some of them could be called upon to become TLs. Volunteers may need to take time to process and pray about how their involvement might change in order to support a different way of leading little ones. Some volunteers might want to take a step back, resting from ministry, in order to allow others to engage with the children or in leadership. Conversely, other church members should consider heeding the call to engage in a team for the sake of the children.

Additionally, volunteers should understand that they may long to be empowered by both rest and sacrifice—not one or the other. DCMs (Directors of Children's Ministries) may need to help draw this understanding out of volunteers by talking about and highlighting this longing. Volunteers might need to take on the responsibility of discovering this for themselves and communicating to their TLs and DCMs when they are ready for rest or sacrifice.

TLs.

The research solidly says that TLs have a challenging role. A TL who is competent in both the areas that DCMs value and those that the volunteer values will do well. This placement requires the skills to guide adults, children, and church leaders. Perhaps even more than DCMs or volunteers, TLs will want to understand their own role thoroughly in order to interface with directors, volunteers, children, and other church members in a way that shares leadership and empowers others. TLs empower others so that those people can rest and relax, away from ministry.

Volunteers could benefit from DCMs and TLs who offer them rest. They might be more willing to participate in children's ministry and follow directors and TLs if rest from ministry, other work, and life in general were part of the structure. While they want

to be empowered, and are often willing to sacrifice for the ministry, volunteers are also looking for TLs who expect them to take breaks and invest in their own spirituality and who allow them time for friendship with others outside of ministry.

The TL, who can communicate the issues surrounding any sacrifice being asked for, will also be valued by volunteers. This project suggests that TLs will do well if they can encourage and support, or empower, their volunteers toward the vision the church has for ministry with children. If a TL cannot do this, neither the DCM nor the volunteers will value them, and they will fail.

TLs need to be willing to call others into sacrificing for the children—not shying away from asking for help nor attempting to do it all by themselves. Like volunteers, TLs will need to step back and allow others to engage. They will need to practice letting others—who may have better or worse competencies than them—use their gifts and skills. If children are to see a team that works together like the Trinity—dancing among leadership—TLs are on the forefront of showing healthy ministry to children in this way.

Considering this, TLs may want to begin engaging children as part of their teams. This means not only allowing boys and girls to have roles in ministry with other children but also including them as part of the decision-making backbone of the leadership structure. These TLs will be the ones who will encourage volunteers *and* DCMs to take the voices of children into consideration.

DCMs.

According to the findings of this study, DCMs perform a key role in their churches. If building a team, directors could invest in understanding the perspectives of children, volunteers, and TLs. They have the responsibility of creating a structure (not

just curriculum and programming) that reflects the Trinity for children. Those directing children's ministries also have a duty to guide others in and implement empowerment, rest, and sacrifice.

Directors should be willing to take the opinions of volunteers, TLs, and children into consideration with equal value. This will require DCMs to spend time hearing what people have to say. They will also need to know how to interpret the actions and inaction of children, who cannot always verbalize their thoughts, to arrive at coherent decisions and ideas for children's ministry and the church. Directors could practice leading TLs and volunteers in understanding how to listen to children.

Times of rest and ways of sacrifice should be empowered by the DCM. Thus, directors will want to learn how to empower those they are leading and leading with. Like TLs, DCMs should also take time to rest, allowing others to move into leadership while they are away from ministry for refreshment.

Above all, this study implies that directors in particular must understand that sharing a vision is not only communication, but the act of asking others to make changes in life and ministry for the sake of the ministry. Developing vision, mission, goals, purpose, and values calls others into sacrifice. A call to sacrifice will be more highly valued if it is balanced by the offer of rest and empowerment to complete the mission that is laid out.

Children.

The gifts, skills, and opinions of little ones cannot take a back burner in the life of the church. To allow this is to dishonor the inner workings of the Trinity itself. The results of this study imply that children should be included in the structure of ministry.

Thus, children need to be guided into leadership. This means that others may need to humbly submit to the understandings of a child, teaching the young people their value in the body of Christ by action instead of only didactically.

Additionally, children need to have a seat at the table when decisions are being made. Their voices should be heard as a part of the whole leadership team. Older children may be able to voice their understandings, but younger children may need help. Beyond ministry with children, children's voices could add to the wisdom of the church's leadership as well.

If a team is functioning in children's ministry in a way that empowers rest and sacrifice, young people will likely learn the importance of this balance. If a team is interdependent, as this study suggests, children will likely gain an understanding of the Trinity. If TLs practice both shared and foundational leadership skills, children will learn that these are important competencies for Christians, or at least Christian leaders. Thus, this study's main implication for little ones is that they will be more likely to learn who and what the church is, how to practice their faith, and how the Trinity works when their churches value TLs and shared leadership.

Implications of the Differences in Values Between DCMs and Volunteers

The main difference in what volunteers and Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) valued was the style or type of leadership offered by the Team Leader (TL). Volunteers valued a trustworthy and humble TL who would listen, encourage, and communicate well with them. Directors valued more interdependent skills: building friendship and community, managing emotions and rest, setting an example and discipling other volunteers, being vulnerable and building sacrifice, as well as

empowering others and building diversity. If directors were to pick one main characteristic they could have in a TL, they would choose someone who would empower others by *building diversity*. Volunteers, on the other hand, would choose someone who empowered them by being *trustworthy* (see Figure *38*: Foundations of Team leadership).

Based on this finding, when planning to begin shared leadership, DCMs will want to look for the skills and characteristics they would like in a leader, but also those that volunteers would value. Directors should be especially aware that if a TL is practicing leadership in ways that the DCM alone values, the TL will still be unvalued by volunteers. In other words, the TL will be receiving praise from the DCM but less cooperation from volunteers. On the other hand, volunteers may believe that TLs are doing everything right, while the director chooses to replace those TLs because they are not sharing leadership. Having knowledge of what volunteers value will help DCM choose a TL who will be able to succeed among volunteers and with the DCM.

Thus, directors who are starting an interdependent leadership structure will want to listen well to their volunteers. If a team structure already exists with TLs who do not have the necessary competencies, the study implies that DCMs will need to be able to build these abilities and gifts into them. They may also be forced to remove TLs from leadership who are not connecting with volunteers or are not able to share leadership.

The director must have a great deal of wisdom and the ability to act on it with kindness toward TLs and volunteers. If a team only functions but does not display fundamental characteristics of kind unity, children are likely to notice and discover a less unified version of the church. For the children's sake, the director should choose to make changes that reflect Trinitarian unity.

Strengthening Children's Ministry Teams

The best, and probably first, way to strengthen a team in children's ministry would be to empower rest and sacrifice. The ability to offer rest to each other shows that the team knows how to share leadership. The ability to sacrifice shows that the group is, in fact, a team—working toward a goal together. While any team can sacrifice, only a team that knows how to work interdependently can rest. This might mean enhancing how the team sacrifices before rest can take place, but a vision of rest would be the impetus for developing sacrifice.

For team leadership to work, volunteers should listen to directors (DCMs) and Team Leaders (TLs), and DCMs and TLs should listen to volunteers. Both are of equal importance. All of the groups, however, will enhance the team by listening to children. The ability to listen to each other is the most fundamental building block for a healthy team—without which children may struggle to see and begin understanding the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The sad implication of this research is that without a structure like this, children's ministries may fail in raising children who grow in the fullness of God.

Discipleship in Children's Ministries

The value of participating together in faith, or even setting an example of faith, was much lower than I expected. Only 54% of volunteers valued or highly valued being led in devotions as a team, and only 87% valued or highly valued TLs who showed that they were becoming more like Christ. Competencies that were rated higher than these included visioning, responding well to the emotions and choices of others, and rest

(which was the highest-valued question at nearly 99%: "offer help or let me know I can step away from ministry if it is becoming overwhelming or tiring").

This is disconcerting. What is the purpose of children's ministries if not to guide children, and each other, toward Christ? The purpose of a team in a church is not only to develop a healthy leadership structure, but to engage a diverse group of Christians who are unified by friendship and action *within the Missio Dei*. Guiding others toward Christ or in the mission of God is not possible if there is little emphasis on discipleship of children and team members. Volunteers and DCMs value being on teams, but do not particularly value being perichoretic teams that lead toward and in Christ.

Children's ministry directors may need to take a step back and redirect their efforts from leading ministry to investing in spiritual intimacy for themselves and those they lead. I imagine one of the reasons this lack of spiritual intimacy is happening is because children's ministries are often implemented without teams that know how to rest and offer sacrifice in a balanced way. This causes leaders to be overwhelmed and inhibits intimacy with Jesus because there is little time available to pursue it. Setting aside time for two practices may help: (a) simply engaging with each other and with Christ alone in Scripture, and (b) thinking through how sharing leadership in children's ministry could lead to more time to offer discipleship.

The data clearly connote that spiritual growth is not as valued as leadership growth. This is a serious deficiency. Without the intimacy they had with the Father, none of the biblical figures who developed great leadership—Moses, Jesus, or Paul—would have been able to sustain their teams. Scripture is also clear that bringing children to Jesus or closer to him is of the highest importance. I cannot imagine Jesus saying that a

TL should be, for example, more communicative than Christlike! If a DCM, TL, or volunteer is not placing Christ first, they may even need to consider taking time away from ministry in order to reconnect with their loving Father.

Relational Connection as Team Building

The reason for the low value placed on having fun together as a team eludes me. Three questions were asked regarding this; all of them were valued at 51% or less by volunteers, and directors did not often mention it as important. However, when directors did mention it, they seemed to already have a robust and dynamic team. Thus, as part of a mature team, being able to connect with one another in ways that provide happiness should not be underrated. If volunteers do not rate this highly, getting them to attend anything outside of ministry that is just for fun community building will be difficult.

DCMs and TLs may want to consider taking a few hours a week to visit volunteers at their children's sports games or their places of work or to invite them to dinner, lunch, or coffee. In larger churches, DCMs will rarely be able to do this with everyone, so they should ensure that their TLs are on board with this kind of personal connection with their team members. DCMs may need to take time to teach and lead their TLs in why and how to simply enjoy the volunteers on their teams.

Implications for Families and Churches

This research may affect leadership within the structure of entire churches, including the health and sustainability of volunteers and staff, especially those mostly comprised of young families. Churches with many children may more highly value leaders who display foundational leadership characteristics, since many of those in the congregation are likely to be children's ministry volunteers. Pastors, DCMs, and laity

should understand that they see TLs differently. Lead pastors of churches comprised mainly of families ought to consider leading their churches toward shared leadership, since this is a healthy way to allow children to see and participate in the Trinity.

This study also has implications for how family and intergenerational ministries can be conducted and understood. For instance, it is possible that teams could *enable* intergenerational leadership in children's ministries. Intergenerational ministry may not need to comprise the *entire* church serving, worshipping, and learning alongside children, as is often assumed. I am not advocating for or against this view; more research is needed to discover if it could be true. However, this research does seem to indicate that team leadership could enable a certain type of intergenerationality to take place that is valuable for children.

Lastly, this research may change which people are chosen to become paid or unpaid DCMs. Directors will need to be willing to develop teams, share leadership, and invite TLs to participate who have both foundational and interdependent types of skills. A change in one church ministry usually affects other ministries. A plan for change—both churchwide and for the children's ministry—should be created and implemented before leadership moves toward teams.

Limitations of the Study

One subject—a director—dropped from the study while it was being carried out. However, the number of directors was still more than what was needed to complete the study. Thus, this loss unlikely affected the project in a major way.

In writing the volunteer survey, I could have used different ranked questions. More or different questions might have helped balance that part of the survey.

Nevertheless, the questions asked did assist well in discovering new insights, especially

regarding Team Leader (TL) skills.

The scope and time limits of this study did not make it possible to embrace

children's opinions of their leaders or the ideas of teenagers who might be serving as

volunteers. Since some youth attempted to take the volunteer survey, the study possibly

lost some data by not being able to include them. In fact, some of the Directors of

Children's Ministries) DCMs mentioned that their volunteers, and even some of their

TLs, were adolescents.

The project was limited to churches in southern Ohio and Kentucky with a regular

attendance of 120–1000 that were part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance

(C&MA). Because of these limitations, the results may not be useful outside the OVD

(Ohio Valley District). The results are not likely to be useful for very small or extremely

large churches. While they may have implications for denominations other than the

C&MA, denominations that are not very similar to the C&MA will not be able to build

on these results.

<div align="center">**Unexpected Observations**</div>

I expected volunteers and directors to value a growing spiritual life less than other

characteristics, though I hoped otherwise. Even some of the nonbiblical research

indicated that a connection with something bigger than oneself was important for healthy

Team Leaders (TL). However, as expected, volunteers and directors did not value

growing toward Christ as highly as some of the other characteristics—like

communication. This is a strange result for a ministry whose supposed purpose is to help

children grow in faith.

When asked directly, volunteers valued the characteristics of being Relational and Encouraging. When asked indirectly, however, they valued Sacrifice and Power Sharing. Discovering this disparity was surprising. The literature review seemed to exalt relationality, especially for shared leadership. I am still at a loss as to why volunteers ranked Relational and Encouraging as valued, but somehow did not value these characteristics when asked about the aspects comprising them.

I did not expect that having a TL—and thus a team—to lead children would be as highly valued and spoken of as it was. This was important in the literature, to the volunteers, and for the majority of the Directors of Children's' Ministries (DCMs). Those involved in the spiritual nurture of young people in the church understood that the structure of leadership was just as important as the performance of leadership. Structuring a ministry with children in a way that reflected the Trinity was highly valued.

<div align="center">

Recommendations

</div>

In general, Directors of Children's Ministries (DCMs) and volunteers need to be aware that they value different characteristics in Team Leaders (TLs). Children's ministry personnel should take time to consider how the structure of their ministry is leading the boys, girls, and infants. Children's ministry teams need to empower rest and sacrifice so that children can see the body of Christ and so the team can work well together.

Differing Values

Findings suggest that those who are assembling children's ministry leadership in their churches should be aware that volunteers and directors generally value people with TL skills and character traits. Churches may want to consider the characteristics valued by volunteers in this study: the ability to share leadership, disciple, encourage, relate well

to others, and sacrifice as well as build sacrifice. Additionally, church leaders should be aware that what they value in a TL may not be the same as what a volunteer might value. TLs will be valued by volunteers if they have foundational skills, but DCMs are looking for people with the skills to share leadership with others. The research suggests that both sets of competencies should be present in a TL. Both volunteers and DCMs may end up engaging the wrong people as TLs if the characteristics that each group values are not present.

The Structure of Leadership with Children

Churches should structure children's ministries in ways that reflect how they want children to grow. Children need visible examples of what the church looks like and who God is. Not only do TLs need to show children how to become more like Jesus, but the teams themselves ought to exemplify the Trinity.

Offering Rest, Empowerment, and Sacrificial Leadership

The literature review seemed to suggest that empowerment included being able to rest and offer rest, being able to sacrifice and offer chances to sacrifice. Since empowerment, rest, and sacrifice were all highly valued by the study participants, TLs should be empowering volunteers in ways that balance rest and sacrifice. If rest and sacrifice are not present, healthy empowerment is also lost. Churches need to discover how to give the gift of rest to their congregations, especially their volunteers. They also ought to understand that communicating change, values, vision, and mission challenges volunteers to sacrifice. This needs to be balanced with the challenge to rest if empowerment is to take place.

Areas of Further Research

Studies on ministry with children are few; thus, many understandings are yet to be discovered. Further research could attempt to discover why rest, sacrifice, and power sharing were all valued at a similar rate. Studies could be done on why volunteers explicitly say that they value TLs who are encouraging and relational but imply differently in answer to indirect questions. Studying why directors and volunteers value different competencies in TLs could also be an important contribution to the field.

Team-based children's ministry is a new field of research. Many more aspects of it should be considered, including intergenerational ministry, how to encourage the spiritual growth of children through shared leadership, and how to structure team leadership for and with children.

This project holds implications for the study of leadership and ministry in children's, family, and intergenerational ministry. Specific ministries that could be newly researched are family and intergenerational ministries. TLs working in conjunction with parents, staff, and those volunteering with children may lead to new research of family ministry and how parents can be supported in their role as children's spiritual guides. TLs as spiritual guides for children who do not have Christian parents could also be a healthy area of study. Additionally, since the research introduces a team leadership form of intergenerational ministry, studies regarding how this might work within both large and small churches could be helpful.

This dissertation broadens the number of those caring for children within churches that use a shared leadership model. Because more of the church will be able to follow Jesus's command to allow children to come to him with their spiritual gifts and

skills, this may change how the church understands its participation in the command. Additional study is needed to clarify, understand, and confirm the possibilities in this area.

How team leadership affects the spiritual growth and health of children would also be an important study. Since children's spiritual growth may change due to the addition of TLs, research in this direction is certainly needed.

This study could be a springboard for different structures of ministry with and for children. A model for team leadership in children's ministry developed through this project could be of significant service to many churches in relation to other areas: leadership, laity, church and ministry structure, and spiritual and numeric growth. Discovering *how* to interdependently share the guidance of children could be helpful, as could researching the question of how to introduce team leadership into children's ministry.

Since the literature review, volunteer survey participants, and DCMs all indicated that including the opinions of children was important, a study to understand how children view leadership structure and what they value in a leader could enhance the current results.

Team leadership in other similar settings might benefit from this research. For instance, schools or youth groups might find this information valuable when they are looking for TLs. Children's ministries in similar denominations or geographic areas might also be able to use these results.

Postscript

Through the process of writing this dissertation, I learned to value grey areas. I learned that sometimes more wisdom is found in things that are less stark, mostly because often more compassion exists when one is living outside of the black and white. This helped me build new levels of humility, which I greatly lacked. It also made me a better and deeper listener to the heart of what people are trying to say, valuing their opinions not because *I* agree or disagree, but because their ideas are part of their humanity.

While waiting for inspiration gives a feeling of desperation, the final reception of eagerly awaited understanding is life-giving. Forcing an idea or opinion when it does not exist leaves a general feeling of anxiety and decay. The rush of discovery should not be rushed. Though clichéd, patience is a virtue—and it leads to contentment and fruit. I still have a lot to learn regarding patience, but I am glad to say this process of dissertating has helped a lot!

I also learned that receiving feedback from others on almost anything is important to success. Not only should responses be asked for, but they should be garnered. A safe place where feedback is invited is important for personal and ministry growth. I suppose this was an inevitable result if I was to personally learn from a study on team leadership. Sharing leadership, in its simplest form, is just the act of fruitful listening.

Sadly, practicing self-care was very difficult during the process of writing such a stress-inducing, tome-ish work. I learned I would rather work than find ways to play and rest. Hopefully, I will now be more able to practice re-creation. I plan to make play a more important part of my life.

Overall, the last four years have changed my outlook on life and on my character. That was worth it for me, even if the work leads to nothing else. Of course, it is also delightful to have scratched the itch that had plagued me for so long. Knowledge is a good salve.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Volunteer Survey Questions

Children's Ministry Volunteer Survey
Q1. Please read the following statement in order to give your consent to take this survey: Because you serve in children's ministry at a church in the Ohio Valley District of the C&MA, you are invited to be in a research study. The study is being conducted by Jessica Fleck from Asbury Theological Seminary. Your participation provides key insights on how teams in children's ministries can be led more effectively. If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out the following online survey, which will take about 25 minutes. The data collected in this study is completely confidential. The questions are not asked in any particular order. You can refer any questions you may have about this study to Jessica Fleck (jessica.fleck@asburyseminary.edu) at any time. While there is minimal risk in participating in this study, if something in the study is concerning to you, please inform Jessica Fleck. You may choose at any time to discontinue your participation in this study without penalty. If you do not want to be in the study, click "I disagree", below, and you will be removed from the survey. By clicking "I agree", below, you agree that you have been informed about this study, what it entails, and that you are willing to participate. I agree I disagree
Q2. What is your age?
Q3. What is your gender?
Q4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
Q5. What is your marital status?
Q6. What is the name of the church where you are volunteering in children's ministry?
Q7. How long have you served in children's ministries at your current church?
Q8. How often do you volunteer in children's ministries at your church?
Q9. What age group(s) of children do you generally volunteer with? (Check all that apply)
Q10. Please indicate that you have read and understand these instructions:
Q11. Spend informal time outside of ministry with me

Q12. Spend time listening carefully and respectfully to the team's challenges regarding children's ministry
Q13. Ask about specific aspects of my life that are important to me
Q14. Ask questions that help me express my opinion about children's ministry
Q15. Often invite volunteers onto the team who have various life experiences and opinions
Q16. Show or tell parents how well they are raising their children spiritually
Q17. When appropriate, take time to talk with team members who are feeling angry/hurt/happy/excited, etc.
Q18. Have a natural ability to foster friendship among team members
Q19. Lead short devotions with the team
Q20. Intentionally interact with children in ways that allow me to see how to better serve kids
Q21. Offer help or let me know I can step away from ministry if it is becoming overwhelming or tiring
Q22. Provide informal time and space to have fun with other adults during ministry
Q23. Show or tell me I am a valued part of the children's ministry
Q24. Develop times for volunteers to be together as a team
Q25. Often show me through their actions that they are becoming more like Christ
Q26. Stop a meeting to talk about any team tension or excitement because of a major event or change
Q27. Communicate coming changes and/or events in several different ways
Q28. Know how to articulate instructions for volunteering in children's ministries
Q29. Almost always respond to me in a kind way, even if I made the wrong choice
Q30. Allow me to do tasks that I am better at than they are
Q31. Share their past failures as an example of what to avoid in ministry
Q32. Help me relate to the direction in which the ministry is moving
Q33. Show me how to use my passions for children's ministry
Q34. Appropriately share their real feelings

Q35. Encourage me to attend adult worship or classes even if it sometimes interferes with my ability to volunteer in children's ministries
Q36. Can admit when they are wrong
Q37. Include the opinions of children when making decisions about children's ministries
Q38. Let others teach or lead other volunteers
Q39. Enable me to use my gifts and skills as a part of ministry, even when the team leader is better at them than I am
Q40. Support me when I implement activities that are innovative
Q41. A team leader in children's ministry should be able to . . . 1=most valued; 5=least valued
Q42. A team leader in children's ministry should be able to . . . 1=most valued; 5=least valued
Q43. A team leader in children's ministries should be . . . 1=most valued; 5=least valued
Q44. Do you have any final comments you would like to share?

Appendix B

Director Focus Group Demographic Questions

Director Focus Group Demographic Survey

TEAM LEADERSHP: CORE COMPETENCIES IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

1. What is the name of your church?
2. How many individuals attend your church?
3. How many children attend your church?
4. How long have you served as the Director of Children's Ministries at this church?
5. What is your level of education?
   - ☐ Middle School (grade 8)
   - ☐ High School
   - ☐ College
   - ☐ Graduate School
   - ☐ Doctoral Program
6. Do you have any other comments?

Appendix C

Director Focus Group Questions

Director Focus Group Questions

    (1) What have been, or may be (if you do not have team leaders)
        (i) Some of the best characteristics/skills displayed by volunteers functioning as team leaders?

        (ii) Some examples of these characteristics and skills as they relate to team leaders leading other volunteers?

    (2) What have been, or may be (if you do not have team leaders), some of the challenges of establishing a team?

        Please share some examples.

    (3) Children often learn and grow through watching how leadership leads. In other words, children often learn by observing the structure of leadership. For instance, children may see volunteers praying together about a program and conclude that volunteers pray together, talk about issues together, etc., and they may conclude that this is a part of spiritual maturity. What children see, regarding how leadership leads, can be spiritual formative for them.

        (i) Based on this, what do you think is, or may be (if you do not have team leaders), the impact on children of how leadership teams lead?

        (ii) What are some examples you have seen, or might see (if you do not have team leaders), of children learning through observing leadership teams?

    (4) Do you have any other thoughts or comments?

Appendix D

Ethical Considerations Worksheets

Director Focus Group Consent Forms Template

WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT FORM
TEAM LEADERSHIP: CORE COMPETENCIES IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

You are invited to be in a research study being done by Jessica Fleck from the Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you serve in children's ministry at a church in the Ohio Valley District of the C&MA. Your participation will provide key insights on how effective teams in children's ministry can be led, assisting other directors in caring for children in biblical and practical ways.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group with other children's directors. The focus group will take about one hour to complete and will be recorded. You may not discuss the Focus Group or any questions or comments made during the focus group with anyone participating or not participating in the group.

Information gathered in the focus group will be kept confidential by the researcher. A code and pseudonym will be used instead of your name and your church's name. The confidentiality of what you share with other participants cannot be guaranteed.

You can refer any questions you may have about this study to Jessica Fleck at any time. While there is minimal risk to participating in the focus group, If something within the study is concerning to you, please inform Jessica Fleck. You may choose at any time to discontinue your participation in this study without penalty.

By your signature, below, you indicate that you have read this statement, or had it read to you, and that you would like to participate in this study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not place your signature below. By signing below, you agree that you have been informed about this study, what it entails, it's confidentiality, and that you agree to participate.

_____
Name of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study..
....Date Signed

Contact Information for Principal Investigator:
Jessica E. Fleck
Jessica.fleck@asburyseminary.edu
509-859-4851
200 Hutchins Dr, Wilmore KY 40390

Volunteer Survey Informed Consent Template

ONLINE INFORMED CONSENT FORM
TEAM LEADERSHIP: CORE COMPETENCIES IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Please read the following statement in order to give your consent to take this survey:

Because you serve in children's ministry at a church in the Ohio Valley District of the C&MA, you are invited to be in a research study. The study is being conducted by Jessica Fleck from Asbury Theological Seminary.

There is minimal risk in participating in this research and your participation provides key insights on how teams in children's ministries can be led more effectively.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out the following online survey, which will take about 25 minutes. The data collected in this study is completely confidential. The questions are not asked in any particular order.

You can refer any questions you may have about this study to Jessica Fleck (jessica.fleck@asburyseminary.edu) at any time. If something in the study is concerning to you, please inform Jessica Fleck. You may choose at any time to discontinue your participation in this study without penalty.

If you do not want to be in the study, click "I disagree", below, and you will be removed from the survey. By clicking "I agree", below, you agree that you have been informed about this study, what it entails, and that you are willing to participate.

o   I agree
o   I disagree

Confidentiality/Anonymity: GoTranscript Non-Disclosure Agreement

03\08\2018

Confidentiality agreement between GoTranscript - Parker Corporation LP & the client

Jessica Fleck

1. I hereby undertake to keep all information and files received from the client confidential and agree to non-disclosure of all information and files received from the client during the term of my agreement or after its termination for any reason unless expressly authorised by the client, or required by law to disclose information to any unauthorised person, nor use any of the confidential information related to or received from the client.

2. Such information includes but is not limited to financial information, client personal files and research data. Information is also confidential information if it is clearly marked as such or by its very nature is evidently confidential.

3. I understand that the use and disclosure of all information about identifiable living individuals is governed by the Data Protection Act. I will not use any personal data I acquire during my work for any purpose that is or may be incompatible with the purposes specified in this agreement.

4. I understand that I am required to keep all confidential and personal data securely.

5. I hereby undertake, during the term of my agreement to provide consultancy services to the client, to store all the records and materials related to the client in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.

6. I hereby undertake to ensure that all records provided for the purposes of this agreement, including any back-up records, are deleted as directed, once I have received confirmation that the contract has been satisfactorily completed and all the required information has been provided in accordance with the client's wishes. I also confirm that the client will be able to personally remove the completed transcriptions from our database, and that the records and all the information and data related to them will be completely removed from the translators ' computers once the contract is satisfactorily completed.

7. I understand that the client reserves the right to take legal action against any breach of confidence, and will proceed with upmost speed to protect its interests in the event of any such breach.

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