

KIDS MINISTRY — ATMOSPHERE — CHECKLIST

When it comes to encountering God, atmosphere plays a huge role. Just think about the atmosphere that God created on Mount Sinai for his encounter with the Israelites.

"On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

"Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him." Exodus 19:16-19 (NIV)

In Kids Ministry, setting the atmosphere is crucial to helping prepare kids for an encounter with God. No, we don't need thunder and lightning (remember how the Israelites reacted), and we also don't need to break the budget in order to create an awesome atmosphere where kids can have life-changing encounters with God.

What's the atmosphere like in your Kids Ministry? And I don't mean having brightly colored walls and balloons in your areas. If you do that's great, but atmosphere is MUCH more than that. Are you intentional about helping prepare kids to encounter God?

Below is an atmosphere checklist for your Kids Ministry.

Are Families Being Greeted?

Are happy people in place ready to welcome kids as they arrive, greeting them by name, and prepared to answer any questions? Greeters are your "front line" in creating atmosphere in your Kids Ministry.

Are Volunteers Present?

Is your volunteer team present and ready to interact with kids? Are they smiling, greeting, and engaging the kids as well? Have they put their phones away? Relational engagement is key to adding atmosphere.

What's The Noise Level Like?

Fun music playing as kids arrive. Is it too loud? Is it too quiet? What's the background music to kid noise ratio? The right amount of ambient music can drastically change the atmosphere.

What Does The Area "Feel" Like?

There's a difference between energy (having fun things prepared for kids to do) and chaos (kids creating their own fun). Have you prepared the kids' area to be energetically engaging, but not chaotic?

Is Every Area Clean?

A clean area speaks volumes about the importance of kids in your church. Is the area clean and free from clutter? And if you have multiple back-to-back services, are you tidying up between services?

Is There Clear Directional Signage?

Of course you know where everything is in your Kids Ministry, but what about others? Do you have clear, up-to-date directional signage, pointing people, especially visitors, in the right direction? Are your rooms properly labeled?

Have I Intentionally Prepared The Space?

In your Large Group area, having too few chairs is better than too many. Have kids sit closer to each other rather than spread out. It helps focus the energy in the room. You can always add chairs if needed.

Is There A Clear Security Presence?

This may not seem like something for the “atmosphere” checklist, but the safer kids feel the more engaged they’ll be, the more fun they can have, and the more open they can be to God working in their hearts.

Have I Put On “Visitor Goggles?”

Have you walked through your Kids Ministry areas asking yourself, “How would a first-time visitor feel here?” “Would they know where to drop off and pick up their kids?” “Are there areas that need more life?”

Am I Ready For First-Time Visitors?

Do you have a way to identify first-time visitors (like maybe a special sticker or wristband)? Is your team prepared to make them feel at home? Is your team well informed and can help answer parents’ questions?

Is My Team Ready To Connect To Kids?

Are you and your team looking out for kids on the fringe, and prepared to connect them with other kids in your Kids Ministry? Are all your “to-dos” done so that you can freely interact with the kids without distractions?

Atmosphere Is Not About Decorations and Fixtures

As you can see in this checklist, atmosphere has less to do with the decorations and fixtures your Kids Ministry has and much more to do with how service-ready and relational you and your team are when kids arrive.

I'm reminded of what Walt Disney said. "You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it requires people to make the dream a reality." This is so true in regards to your Kids Ministry and atmosphere. You could have a state-of-the-art venue that would rival any Disney park, but if you and your team aren't focused on building relationships and having fun with kids your atmosphere will be lacking.

On the flip-side, your Kids Ministry may not have enough funding to build an elaborate venue with amazing decor, but if you and your team are intentional about having that space ready, and being intentional about building relationships with those kids, you and your team will bring the atmosphere into whatever area your Kids Ministry is in.

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