



CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Leeward/ Virgin Islands District



Children's Ministry International



“Churches Uncovering Precious Souls”

A Childrens Ministry International Development Initiative

INTRODUCTION

This Ministry International initiative, “***Churches Uncovering Precious Souls***” (CUPS) was developed by a Team of Ministry stakeholders from the Leeward-Virgin Islands District on the Caribbean Field. Members of the Team spent time looking at where the District CMI was, where it needed to be and how best we could get there.

We were conscious of the challenges facing the ministry and felt that to sit back and not plan for revitalisation of our Children’s Ministries was not an option. There was too much at stake; too many of our precious children would be lost if our Districts and Local Church Organisation did not get to work immediately on restoring our numbers which had been severely depleted during the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

We were conscious that the population numbers, all across our Region, suggest that children represent a significant single block of human resources in our nations. They also represent the most vulnerable and the most potentially valuable of the human capital of all our peoples. Yet in many of our Churches, Children’s Ministries are struggling for resources and children’s programmes take a back seat to the ministries to other age groups. The CUPS initiative was developed to help change that.

This document sets out several ideas, targets and strategies for moving the Children’s Ministry from the background to the foreground in our Churches. It accepts that as a Church we should all be doing more to reach, encourage, teach, assist, inspire and nurture (RETAIN) the Children in our communities.

We implore Pastors and Leaders to embrace this developmental Plan for your Children’s Ministries and encourage you to throw the full weight of your Church into making it come to life in your area of the vineyard.

The soul you save may just be one that is precious to you!

Special thanks to Sis. Danielle Small, Sis. Junie Walkes (d’csed) and Sis. Shemica Joseph for your work on the original CUPS document.

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Our Vision for the CMI Ministry

The CMI Department across the Caribbean Field will be a diverse, dynamic ministry reaching the children of our communities with the love of Jesus.

Ministry Mission

Our Mission is to prayerfully reach the children of our communities with innovative programmes that encourage their immersion into our churches, nurture them in the ways of the Lord and prepare them for dynamic lives in Christ.

We aim to Reach, Encourage, Teach, Assist, Inspire and Nurture (RETAIN) the Children of our communities through prayer and a variety of dynamic evangelism and discipleship strategies targeted at this demographic!

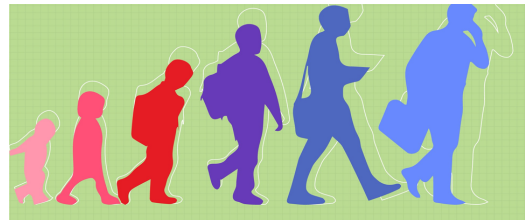
Ministry Focus Areas

We encourage each Local Church to organise its Children's Ministry to include the following eight (8) Areas of Focus:

1. ***Growth***
2. ***Outreach***
3. ***Diverse programme Offering***
4. ***Safety & Security***
5. ***Gifting & talents nurturing***
6. ***Intercession***
7. ***Fund-Raising***
8. ***Training of Teachers & Workers***

Each of these areas is expanded and given additional focus in the pages that follow.

1. Growth



AIM: *Each Local Children’s Ministry will show strong numeric growth.*

TARGET: Each Church will strive to grow its Children’s Ministry by twenty percent (20%) year over year

STRATEGIES:

1.	Identify a Children’s Ministry Growth Director	<i>The goal is to help the CM Department develop plans for outreach into the community to help uncover children of all ages who may be brought under the influence of the Ministry.</i>
2.	Introduce competitions to boost visitors	<i>Children love children and they know where to find other Children, especially those in their neighborhoods. Churches are therefore able to use the children they reach to reach others.</i>
3.	Provide incentives to children who bring un-churched friends	<i>Make reaching and bringing others a big goal of your CMI programme and devise ways to recognise Champion Recruiters!</i>
4.	Develop brochures to support programmes	<i>A well developed CMI recruiting strategy complete with brochures that tell of the Church and the benefits to parents, would do much to bolster the success that our programmes achieve. Remember to circulate these to visitors with children!</i>
5.	Do regular community visits targeting un-churched Children	<i>The Church that knows its community can grow its community! Use this maxim as a reminder to keep reaching into your communities with programmes and events. Easter and Christmas present great opportunities!</i>
6.	Execute quarterly children-attracting activities/ drives	<i>CMI Departments should plan to execute outreach activities at least once per quarter. This quarterly outreach can be as simple as a door to door “back to school” package distribution to a week-long VBS event.</i>
7.	Use VBS to boost numbers & to identify un-churched children	<i>VBS is a great way to mobilise and attract young people from our communities! Parents appreciate the benefits of VBS during the times when their children would be away from school and would readily support programmes in their communities. VBS is therefore a great way to uncover new souls and to teach, train and nurture the children in our communities.</i>

2. Outreach (into our Communities)



AIM: *Our Churches will plan active outreach programmes targeting the children in our communities*

TARGET: Churches will introduce children-focussed outreach initiatives featuring compassion, events and strategies that use “Kids-Reaching-Kids”.

SRATEGIES

1.	Do spiritual mapping of your communities	<i>The aim here is to develop an appreciation of the general spiritual condition of our neighborhoods and of the children who live there. We want to know where they are, what is their “condition” and what they are doing.</i>
2.	Develop a needs chart for identified homes	<i>Based on the information gathered above, we can develop “needs-analysis-charts” for those identified as possible targets of our ministries. Let us prepare to meet some needs that are physical, emotional and or psychological.</i>
3.	Try to reach parents first	<i>An important part of this strategy involves reaching out to parents of the children. We want programmes that attract children but also appeal to the parents; they will make the decision to send the children to our events.</i>
4.	Provide tangible help with identified needs of families	<i>A family which receives the support and or assistance of the Church is often quite open to attending our events or participating in our programmes. We should be prepared to “feed the needs” we find within the homes we visit across our communities. People remember and respond to the support given in times of challenge.</i>
5.	Do regular community visitations with groups of children	<i>Appreciate that a single visit within a section of our community or one type of event may not be enough to uncover all the children residing there. Let’s prepare for the long haul! It will perhaps take several visits and persistent knocks on some doors before we get a response. Keep knocking!</i>
6.	Ensure active follow-up and communication with targeted families	<i>A great strategy, once we get a response from a family or home, is to record a contact name and number for the parent or an adult in the house. This will allow for follow-up contact to be made whenever there is the need to invite children out; it is also a great way to simply reach out and be a friend to our community. A word of warning: try not to be too pushy or too aggressive with your contacts!</i>

3. DIVERSE PROGRAMME OFFERING



AIM: Our Ministries will reflect diverse programmes targeting the children in our communities.

TARGET: Each Church will develop multi-faceted ministries for children with programmes in a minimum of three areas, including:

- Music
- Sports
- Educational Tours
- Children’s Church
- Drama
- Multi-Media
- Dance
- Children’s Camp
- Science & Technology
- Caravan
- Quizzing
- VBS

STRATEGIES:

1.	Invite Adults to support specific Ministries based on their passions	<i>Children’s Ministries are not only fun, but they are also intense and often require alert and active supervision to ensure no one gets injured or hurt in any way. For these reasons, children’s ministries require many volunteers. We should actively reach out to members of the Church for support and assistance with our ministry activities. Parents usually make great volunteers!</i>
2.	Organise Ministry Meetings on Special Days	<i>As the ministry becomes more diverse in the programmes it offers, it will be important for Churches to consider which ministries will be retained and the best way to organize and distribute the various events across its weekly calendar. The good news is that parents are always looking for healthy activities that they can immerse their children into!</i>
3.	Make “Educational Tours” a Quarterly Feature	<i>Events such as tours to historic sites or other places of interest are great for generating interest and for breaking the relative monotony of our ministries. Plan and promote these well as part of efforts to hype our children’s ministries.</i>
4.	Execute Bible Quizzing during the Sunday School Hour	<i>One good way to use the time allotted for the Sunday School Class among age-appropriate children is to introduce Bible Quizzing as part of the curriculum. This way, children study the Bible and have fun while at the same time preparing to test their knowledge and memory against their peers.</i>
5.	Execute Annual Concert to showcase Talents	<i>There is absolutely no doubt that there exists a vast amount of talent among the young people who interact with our children’s ministries. One sure way to nurture and give some exposure to that pool of talent is to host occasional concert-type events.</i>
6.	Encourage Churches to train up Children Musicians	<i>A sure way to build up a great talent pool within our churches is to implement a programme of musical training. If resources are available, we should offer to train our children in every possible instrument group including drums, guitar and keyboard.</i>
7.	Establish a Children’s Choir	<i>A children’s choir is always a great investment in our children and one that parents are always eager to support! Great singers and musicians have had their beginnings in church. Who knows if we are entertaining the next star?</i>

4. SAFETY & SECURITY



AIM: Our Children’s Ministries will feature strong safety and security measures that protect children from harm.

TARGET: Each Local Church will implement and vigorously enforce the Nazarene Child Protection Policy.

STRATEGIES:

1.	Assign Safety & security to a Senior Member of the CMI Team	<i>The questions of safety and security of the children entrusted to our care by their parents must always be uppermost in the minds of the leaders of our CMI Departments. We have heard and read of the irreparable harm these can cause to children; we must act to ensure they do not happen in our ministries!</i>
2.	Execute initial workshop with all CMI Teachers & Workers	<i>The Church of the Nazarene has a comprehensive Child Protection Policy document which should be reviewed, discussed and endorsed by every person who works with children in our churches. We recommend that every local church institutes this policy without delay!</i>
3.	Conduct Church-wide SAS workshop	<i>In addition to the persons working with children across our churches, we recommend that the Safety and Security (SAS) document should be shared and discussed with the entire church to appraise members of the denomination’s policies and to ensure they are understood at all levels.</i>
4.	Set up systems to “police” SAS policy enforcement	<i>OF course, none of the above would be any good if the policies and safeguards are not policed across our ministries. This matter is important enough to justify the appointment of a person or Team of Persons who take responsibility for implementing and enforcing the policies.</i>
5.	Work with Pastor/ CB to make Church facilities disability ready	<i>Differently abled children or those suffering from disabilities of any type must be accommodated as much as possible within our ministries. This mandates all our local churches to work to make their facilities accessible and traversable by persons who use wheelchairs or other forms of assisted mobility devices.</i>
6.	Develop programmes to help Children understand & support colleagues with disabilities	<i>One of biggest challenges children with disabilities face is acceptance or the lack of acceptance from their colleagues. We also know that the real issue is a lack of understanding among children about disabilities. When children learn about disabilities, they become more empathetic towards those with disabilities; our job is to help them in this process.</i>

5. GIFTINGS & TALENTS-NURTURING



AIM: *We will work to identify and nurture the gifts and talents of the Children in our care.*

TARGET: Churches will design & implement programmes that help to uncover the gifts and talents of their children & help them maximise their potential through education and training.

STRATEGIES:

1.	Devise and implement talent-spotting programme	<i>CMI Departments are encouraged to develop systems and activities that help them spot talents among the children under their care. This helps to align the children into events and activities where their talents and their aptitudes are best suited.</i>
2.	Train CMI Teachers and Workers in talent spotting	<i>The process of talent-spotting very likely involves some special training to which our Teachers and Workers must be exposed. It is important to appreciate that this process and what it uncovers may well represent critical milestones in the lives of our children.</i>
3.	Expose children to various ministries of the Church	<i>We recommend that each local church implements several ministry-offerings so as to expose our children to a variety of ministries. Children come with talents and giftings as varied and different as they themselves are; our job is to recognise and nurture the talents that we are able to identify.</i>
4.	Develop programmes to assist and counsel children with issues	<i>As we might expect, not all of our children run at the same pace; some are faster than others and some prefer not to run at all. We will also find that some of our children have challenges and need counselling to help them cope. Our CMI Departments must be able to identify such children and be ready to help.</i>
5.	Develop programmes to incentivise outstanding academic and other performances	<i>We want to participate as much as possible in the lives of our children. We want to pray for them, teach them, support them and generally nurture them as they grow. Often this will involve being aware of what is happening with their education and their lives at school. We must be sure to recognise and applaud them for outstanding performances whenever the chance arises!</i>
6.	Create links with Sports programmes & Clubs to further develop talents	<i>As our children grow, it is likely that talents may become more pronounced and better developed. It is also possible that nearby Sporting Clubs and other Organisations may be able to help our children develop their skills and talents further. We must be willing to support our children through this process, perhaps taking the opportunity to get involved in the administration of the clubs themselves if this will help provide some oversight and some comfort.</i>

6. INTERCESSION



AIM: Prayer & intercession will be cornerstones of the CMI Department

TARGET: Each local CMI Department will host at least three Prayer events focussed on intercession for the children in their ministries & communities.

STRATEGIES:

Not very much needs to be said about intercession...we simply need to do it! The needs in our communities are many and the issues are varied, deep and sometimes gut-wrenching. Yet as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, we are the ones specifically called upon, specially called out, gifted and purposed to serve in these areas. Our Lord expects us to not only be the difference but to make a difference in the lives of these children whom our heavenly Father loves so very much!

It is our prayers and our supplication that result in the numerous small and large miracles the children of our communities experience every day. We dare not stop praying for them collectively; we must especially pray for the ones we know and reach with our programmes and events.

1.	Plan for at least 2 Seasons of Prayer for the children of your Church & Community	<i>Make Prayer for Kids part of our Annual Plan and invite Parents, Grandparents, other Adults and Youth to join in the effort to intercede on behalf of the children in our communities and those who attend our Services and events.</i>
2.	Invite Exam-Class Students & Parents from nearby Schools to Church on designated Day of Prayer	<i>Students who are in “Common-Entrance” and other exam-focussed classes along with their parents are especially anxious about those examinations and their futures which can be linked to the results they achieve. We encourage our Churches to forge relationships with nearby public schools and to use events such as impending exams as opportunities to provide comfort through prayer.</i>
3.	Encourage community visitation Team to give reports on special needs uncovered during outreach	<i>The idea is for Outreach Teams to create a list of needs uncovered during their visitations and interactions within our communities, especially where children’s welfare and wellbeing are discovered. We want to ensure that we can reach such children and their families with the love of Jesus.</i>

7. FUND-RAISING



AIM: CMI Departments will devise innovative ways of raising the funds needed to support their work.

TARGET: Local CMI Departments will work with their Church Board to develop Plans for raising the funding needed to carry out their work in the Church itself and in their communities .

STRATEGIES:

1.	Fund-Raising is discipleship in action; it is not begging!	<p><i>As we seek to raise funds to support our CMI Ministries, it is important that we appreciate that we are engaging a programme of disciple-making. We are not begging; we are asking our people to give into those areas of ministry which God has called them to support!</i></p> <p><i>We must see the CMI Ministry for the potential that it has to yield the biggest net result for the Church, the community and the nation in the long run! The lessons children learn in morality, justice and love impact generations and never grow old.</i></p>
2.	Share CMI Programme with the Pastor & Church Board & plan to raise the funds	<p><i>We encourage local Churches to embrace CMI as a matter of urgency and with the full weight of the resources of the Church. Pastors and Church Boards are encouraged to devise innovative means of raising the money needed to fund the Plans of your CMI Ministry</i></p>
3.	Invite Teachers, Workers and Parents to set the example of support by giving sacrificially	<p><i>People put their treasure where their hearts are. When and where our children’s ministries reflect the heart of our Churches, we will get the support of the treasure of our people. We invite Churches to intentionally target teachers, workers and parents for some of the funding needed to run the programmes of our children’s ministries.</i></p>
4.	Seek out Field, Regional and Global funding programmes that support Children’s ministries	<p><i>The Church of the Nazarene has several programmes that provide funding support for Children’s Ministry initiatives at the Field, Regional and Global church levels. Among these are the Kids Reaching Kids (KRK) and the Nazarene Childhood Resource Centre (CRC) programmes. We encourage local Churches to explore these funding options diligently.</i></p>
5.	Seek out “in kind” donations from Members and business partners	<p><i>While cash donations allow a great amount of flexibility, it is important that our Ministries also seek out in-kind contributions from our members and business partners alike. Especially in tough economic times, many individuals and businesses are more open to supporting our ministries with items instead of cash. While such donations can be very specific (such as pencils and rulers) they expand the range of items a ministry can use in its outreach efforts (like distributing school supplies).</i></p>

8. Training of Teachers and Workers



AIM: CMI Departments will continuously train Teachers and Workers.

TARGET: Each local Church will conduct a minimum of two Training Courses annually for Children’s Teachers & Workers.

STRATEGIES:

1.	Recruit persons who have a passion for Children’s work	<i>While almost all of us enjoy playing with children, not everyone has the patience and the empathy it takes to work with them. Our ministries must find members who are enthusiastic and who enjoy working to see children grow “in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and their fellow men”.</i>
2.	Target parents of children who attend CMI activities	<i>A great place to commence the recruitment effort is among the parents of the children we currently have participating in our programmes. Many of these persons have grown to understand the issues involved in child development and with training, can grow into excellent Workers and Teachers across our department.</i>
3.	Target Teachers/ other professions who work with Children	<i>Another place to look for CMI Workers and Teachers is among those members who work in the industries associated with childhood development. These include teachers, school administrators and others involved in Child related industries.</i>
4.	Execute training to share “best practices” for handling Children	<i>As mentioned above, we cannot neglect the training of our Workers and Teachers to help them better understand the rudiments of teaching and training children. Such Sessions must also allow for reviews of the Nazarene Child Protection Policy guidelines and must secure the commitment of our people to the provisions of the document.</i>
5.	Make worker recruitment & training a continuous activity	<i>Not only must we train our Workers and Teachers; we must keep training our people at all levels. We want our people to be on the cutting edge of new and emerging techniques, technologies and methodologies for dealing with children.</i>
6.	Execute annual awards & recognition event to appreciate our Teachers & workers	<i>While we are building a team of dedicated Workers and Teachers, we must be sure to applaud and appreciate those who stand out, who make extraordinary sacrifices and who go above and beyond the call of duty in the service of our Children’s Department.</i>

CONCLUSION

Across the region, children between the ages of 4 through 14 represent a significant portion of our demographic and are a critical component of our human capital. Without a doubt, the potential is there; the harvest is ripe and ready!

The Childrens Ministry International (CMI) departments of the Church of the Nazarene on this Field must plan and implement programmes that enable us to reach and engage this important age-group. This must be seen as a critical success aim of our ministry!

This CUPS initiative was designed to assist in that process. It sets out strategies, programmes and projects which may be undertaken by our local ministries in the quest to reach the children in their communities. Yet, like every other initiative developed for use by our ministries, CUPS will not implement itself; it requires diligent, deliberate and dedicated action from a committed, praying team of ministry workers.

We commend this programme for implementation within your CMI department and can't wait to receive your feedback on how it impacts the Children's Ministry in your neck of the woods.

With love!

Clovis St. Romain
Dionne Gordon