



# Sixteen Steps to the Next Level

By Barney Kinard

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What follows are my Sixteen Steps that will provide a basis to move your children's ministry to the next level. It is, admittedly, impossible to work on all these steps at one time. However, if you would make it your ambition to seriously work on these steps you will see upward movement in your children's ministry. Plus, those in authority over you will take notice.

## **1. Get a personal ministry Coach and get an accountability relationship.**

This is the most active way to take your ministry and leadership to the next level. Find a person, usually older and more experienced, who will get to know you and your ministry. Together you will forge an accountability relationship that challenges you to work on your dreams and vision. Wish I had done it years earlier.

## **2. Read one book a month on leadership or children's ministry.**

To begin to change your mindset that takes you to the next level of leadership, I recommend that you begin to take seriously the mandate to become a reading leader. You must surround yourself with input so that you are not just resting upon former academic work. Make it your goal to be a life-long learner.

## **3. Develop your middle management team.**

This is the group of leaders that oversee all the large areas of your ministry responsibility. They become your leadership team. You regularly plan, confer and delegate the execution of the ministry. This team could manage the ministry should you be ever be unavailable or should you get the Call to leave.

## **4. Take as many leadership skill assessment tests as possible.**

I maintain that the better you know yourself and your own leadership issues, the better you will be in adjusting your leadership style of those over you and under you. You will be able to discern who to ask for what and who is competent and capable to lead and serve. (For example: DiSC, Myers Briggs, Leadership Styles, Taylor Johnson, Modified Houts Spiritual Gifts, and Strength Finder, to name a few.)

## **5. Adopt a Mentor, someone that you aspire to emulate.**

This may be a real person, or a person whose work you read about and emulate. It might be a person from whom you seek wisdom and ask questions. This person is not your coach. However, this person is one to whom you look up to, respect and admire. Maybe you only know this person second hand, not in person.

## **6. Expand your skill set by learning more performing arts skills.**

Typically, these are the up-front stage skills, i.e., storytelling, drama, clowning, puppetry, ventriloquism, juggling, gospel magic, object lessons to name a few. The more you increase your skill set the more you can attract and hold the attention of children that you want to influence for Christ. You must add to your skill set deliberately, at least, you should learn enough so that you can encourage and support interested leaders under you.

## **7. Learning the art of pre-thinking, negotiating, and brainstorming.**

These three disciplines will move your ministry ahead because they all involve the dynamics of problem solving. You do not come unprepared for events and meetings. You understand what you want and how to meet the needs of others. And you have learned how to illicit the ideas of others so they will own outcomes and your process. This is the planning and process of getting things done.

## **8. Conduct monthly one-day (over night) retreats with God.**

You will absolutely be amazed at how much a concerted time away can be for you, your family and your ministry. Set an appointment with God at a designated place and time so that you can work on a written in advance agenda of things you need to work through so that you are keeping short accounts with important things in your life and ministry.

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## 9. Improve your ability to set achievable goals in writing.

A goal “in your head” is not enough processing. You need rather to write out what the goal includes, obstacles, opportunities, and what could go wrong with a plan. Further, you enlist a person to assist you by being accountable for certain steps that you plan on following to accomplish this goal in a series of events in a timely way.

## 10. Ask more questions, try to understand, and look for wisdom.

Try not to assume, conjecture or jump to conclusions too fast in your ministry, get feed back by asking questions, try harder to understand issues and problems. Ask God to give you wisdom to help you assess and get insight from what you are experiencing.

## 11. Make it your practice to evaluate every ministry opportunity.

This is the written part of the former investigation. There is something just magical that happens when you make the effort to write what you are thinking. It actually allows your thoughts to go much deeper and not so superficial. Filing this evaluation serves to help you save a lot of time to not reinvent the wheel when you repeat this type of ministry next time.

## 12. Learn how to delegate, train and build your team of volunteers.

Our mandate is not just to “do” the ministry rather to equip others to do the work of the ministry. So finding your team, developing your relationship, working with them, training their skill set, helping them accomplish and be successful in ministry. Partner with them to create your game plan to accomplish the vision. It is impossible to take your children’s ministry to the next level without your team going too.

## 13. Partner with parents to help them be spiritual leaders of their own children.

We must clearly understand that parents will be held accountable for the spiritual growth and development of their own children. Our best role is to partner with them to

assist in making their passion and vision for their own children. Making a concerted effort in this direction will put you miles ahead of other ministries. You will find the support of parents for your ministry by working harder to support the parent’s role.

## 14. Find the balance between discipleship and evangelism.

I really believe that if you concentrate more of your energy at making your ministry attractive to the non-Christian children you will learn skills on how to do that sort of ministry. Nothing will get your teachers more excited about teaching than to let them teach a new convert. So outreach will fed your discipleship ministry. Assimulating new Christians into your ministry using such resources as Awesome Adventure and new members classes will signal to the congregation that something is happening in your ministry. This will have a huge impact on raising the level. Concentrating on the teachers and their teaching ability will enhance your education program.

## 15. Rewrite your own job description and submit it for approval.

It has been my experience that those who typically write Kidmin Job Descriptions do not know the job, nor what it takes to accomplish the ministry. So I recommend that you rewrite your own job description. Run it by some other CM friends or your coach, then submit it for approval. This is important because your performance review should be based upon this document. If it is out of date or obsolete, you are being evaluating on the wrong criteria. So raise the level by making an annual review of this document.

## 16. Concentrate on a few select constituencies in your ministry.

I maintain that if you will concentrate on a few select constituencies in your ministry, you will find that you initiate a maximum amount of change in your ministry. Here are few of the key constituencies: Boys, Fathers, Fatherless, Janitor, Visitors, Young families, and Home Schoolers. (see Focus on Constituencies on [www.Kidhelper.com](http://www.Kidhelper.com))

If I can help with these steps, let me know.