PURPOSE

The Program Kick-off is an event that draws the congregation to the church for a celebration of the upcoming school year’s programs.  The purpose of the event is:

* To pass out the information individuals/families need about the year’s events and programs.
* To give people an opportunity to sign up (possibly at a discounted price) for trips and other events that require early registration.
* To put important dates for the year on the calendar.
* To introduce all the members of the staff and their positions to the congregation.
* To give the staff a setting in which to cast the vision for the direction of the next calendar year.
* To have fun together as a church family!

Individuals/families should leave the Program Kick-off not only informed and excited about being a part of the church, they should leave feeling like they received way more than they expected at the gathering. The attention to detail that the staff and volunteers give to the event and to the individuals/families present will create an atmosphere that leaves everyone excited about being involved in the ministry.

TEAM MEMBERS

It takes a committed team to make an event like the Program Kick-off happen successfully. Because so many details need to come together for the party, the team usually has members with all kinds of gifts and strengths! The team might include, but is not limited to the following (job descriptions below list):

* **PROGRAM KICK-OFF CHAIR**
* **DECORATION CHAIR**
* **SET UP CREW**
* **CLEAN UP CREW**
* **INVITATIONS CHAIR**
* **FOOD CHAIR**
* **STAFF:** **PROGRAM PLANNER**
* **STAFF: ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITES**

TEAM MEMBER Job Descriptions

**Program Kick-off Chair**

**The Program Kick-off Chair meets with the leaders to grasp a vision for the purpose of the program kick-off event and to get clarity on the theme throughout the program, into the coming school year. The Chair remains the connection between the children’s ministry/youth ministry leadership throughout the planning. The Chair is also responsible for helping recruit volunteers to fill the positions listed below and will work closely with them before and during the kick-off weekend. The Chair is available as much as possible to with help kick-off needs, and is present as a resource as the other crews pull the event**

**together. The Chair keeps everyone organized and on-task, and with the help of the**

**staff, comes up with deadlines by which invitations should go out and by which the**

**details should come together. The Chair also keeps a running list of volunteers and**

**their positions so that the staff will know whom to thank after the event.**

**Decoration Chair**

Works with the Program Kick-off Chair to create the theme of the event by decorating the venue in ways that will make guests feel a sense of “Wow!” as they walk into the meeting space. The decoration chair should get a clear sense of the budget and should communicate with leadership about how much of it needs to be reserved for program needs and food. Also, the decoration chair will pull together a team of people who can work before the kick-off to create whatever decorations they may need to transform the kick-off space. The decoration chair will need to communicate with the leadership about when the space will be available for set up to decorate. Also, the decoration chair may come up with fun hat or costume ideas to identify both the leadership and the team.

**Cleanup Crew**

Though the kick-off leaders may feel free to suggest at the end of the program that any available hands to clean up would be appreciated, a crew of about 5 people commits prior to the event to staying until the space looks “normal” again. Responsibilities usually include putting up tables and chairs, throwing away trash, and cleaning up decorations.

**Invitations Chair**

Responsible for creatively inviting families to attend the Program Kick-off event. The invitations should be engaging and catch the eye of the recipient. The invitations chair will communicate with the Program Kick-off Chair to make sure that the theme of the event is reflected in the invitation and to make sure the invitations contain accurate details including time, date, place, and purpose of the Program Kick-off event. If signing youth up for trips, please remember to ask families to bring calendars and checkbooks.

**Food Chair**

Responsible for the snacks and drinks at the event. The food chair makes the phone calls/store runs necessary to ensure that there is food at the party for guests to enjoy. The chair may build a team of volunteers if he or she feels it’s necessary. The Program Kick-off Chair will communicate the vision and needs for the food to the chair at least two weeks prior to the event.

**Staff: Program Planner**

The staff creates an agenda for the Program Kick-off event, including whatever skit they may want to pull together to entertain their guests. The staff also knows best what to communicate to children, youth, and families for the upcoming school year and will use this event to spread the word about the upcoming programs, classes, trips, service projects, etc. they’re excited about within the program. This is a great chance to introduce the leaders to families, so it works well to have everyone have some sort of recognizable role in the program.

**Staff: Administrative Responsibilities**

If your youth ministry is large enough to have a separate administrative person, ask that person to make sure that invitations are received by all the youth on your youth mailing list. (This person may be able to take on the responsibilities of the Invitations Chair or work closely with that person.) He or she also works closely the leadership to pull together the necessary forms and information to pass out at the event, and comes up with a way to track event attendance.

TO CONSIDER FOR THE BUDGET

* Invitations
* Postage
* Directories and whatever forms the staff want to hand out during the event
* Food
* Decorations, including plastic tablecloths and fun centerpieces
* Costumes or hats for staff and volunteers (if the church chooses to do so)
* Program needs (to be determined by the staff)
* Thank you notes for all the volunteers

LOGISTIC SUGGESTION FOR HANDOUTS/ATTENDANCE TAKING FOR LARGE CHURCHES

* Put all forms and directories in 8 ½ x11 envelopes and run labels with names and addresses to be placed on the front of the envelope.
* Have individuals/families go to a designated section to pick up their info.
* On Monday morning, take attendance based on the packets that are left over and mail the extra envelopes to those who were not able to attend the Program Kick-off so that they have the information they need as well.

A SAMPLE TIMELINE for PROGRAM KICK-OFF EVENTS

**Four months prior:** Staff recruits a Program Kick-off Chair and reviews the process.

**Three months prior:** The Program Kick-off Chair has recruited any additional members of the team and reviews their roles. Staff sometimes helps with this recruiting. Sometimes, roles can be combined. For example, one person might take on the responsibility for both set up and clean up—but you’re more likely to get people to volunteer again next year if you give them bite-sized jobs that don’t wear them out. The team has met to brainstorm themes and other creative ideas.

**Two months prior:** The heads have recruited their specific teams of helpers.  The Program Kick-off Chair is available to help with this. A simple “Save the Date” message has gone out via the church bulletin, email, and other communications.

**One month prior:** Invitations are complete and given to the youth staff (or appropriate volunteer) to be labeled to mail.

**Three weeks prior:** Invitations mailed.

**Three weeks prior:**  The staff has the program planned for the Program Kick-off and works with other staff and volunteers to make sure they know their roles in skits or in relaying information to individuals/families. S/he also lets the Program Kick-off Chair know if there are any program supplies s/he needs help finding.  Examples could include costumes for the staff, a spotlight, music needs, etc.

**Two weeks prior:** Staff has all printing of forms and directories completed.

**One week prior:** Staff creates packets for each individual/family of all docs.

**A week or two prior:** Decoration Chair plans a few work sessions for volunteers to help create props and centerpieces for the event.

**The day before:**  Decorating crews at work! Food Chair sets up food in space. The staff “dress rehearses” for the event.

**The day of:**  Program Kick-off event! Enjoy!

**Within a week or so after:** Leadership (perhaps the Invitations Chair?) sends thank-you notes to all volunteers.