

Leadership

Where are those leaders?

At this time of the year, I can hear the mutterings across the country, of Pastors and Ministry Co-ordinators and Roster Administrators. They are staring at blank areas of paper and saying to themselves “Now where are all my leaders? I’m sure we should have some somewhere...did I put them down somewhere and forget them? Did they wander off while I wasn’t looking? Now where can they be...?”

Not sure where to look next?

Here are a few places to try...

Hiding by the coffee urn wearing a T-shirt that says:
“Random Bay Beach Mission”

Cruising the literature stand, oozing “I tried being a Sunday school teacher in the 70’s and was a failure: They ate me alive!”.

Chasing her toddler around the carpark thinking “Could probably cancel my gym membership!”

Behind the PA desk, reading a mag titled “Creativity for dummies”

Behind the pulpit surfing on his ipad thinking “I went into ministry really wanting to make a difference in the world”



So, of course I’m joking – but only a little bit. One of the causes of a leadership shortage in children and families ministry is that we have narrowed the field of what we think the job description looks like.

On the whole, we mostly have a **teacher model mindset**.

Leadership

Where are those leaders?

But **Sunday School is out**. Sunday School was a social justice movement for the educationally marginalised child labour force of the industrial revolution.

I would be very confident that all of the children in your community have access to free, secular compulsory education.



Which gives us some clues about what the focus of children and families ministry is (making disciples in the kingdom of God) and who can accomplish this task (anyone who is already on the discipleship road in the kingdom of God.)

So here are some steps to finding more leaders:

1. Stop looking for leaders, **start looking for disciplers**.
2. Tell people what you are **looking for** – someone who will be a fellow traveller with others, someone who will pray for and with others, someone who will open the Bible with others.
3. Find or facilitate some **training** that directs your disciplers in this model – not in an “education” model.
4. **Spread the word** amongst your parent community, that **school is out** and **discipleship is in**. Help them recognise this as a biblical model and address any anxieties they have about their kids ‘learning enough.’*
5. Print coffee cups that say ‘**The question isn’t are our kids learning** – they learn 24/7 by watching and listening and doing life with us – **the question is what are they learning?**’
6. Remind yourselves as a community that the way to be fed and grow as an adult disciple is to **engage in serving others**. We grow and are nourished in our own faith when we are trying to articulate and demonstrate our faith with others.



This whole question of what kind of process your community offers (and subjects) your children to is an important one. It is worth some discussion as a whole community.

It is worth asking what kind of process is helpful for adult disciples as well.

*Another paper to come that will address this issue in more detail.