**Questions**

Stephen, as the Coordinator of CDM, how has your agency been engaging this crisis?

What role do you see CDM providing as we move forward through this transition time?

For each of the church leaders on the panel: Describe your plans for children with respect to re-gathering.

While there is no set protocol or single plan all should adopt, share with us what your church is doing.

(I ANSWERED THIS AS I AM ALSO CHILDREN’S DIRECTOR @ WESTMINSTER PCA IN ATLANTA)

FAMILY WORSHIP ROOM IN OUR FELLOWSHIP HALL FOR ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6. EACH FAMILY WILL HAVE AN ACTIVITY BAG APPROPRIATE FOR THE AGES OF THEIR CHILDREN AND WITH THEIR NAMES ON IT, SO THAT IT ALL GOES BACK IN THE BAG WHEN WORSHIP IS OVER. THIS HELPS THE DISTANCING REQUIRED IN THE SANCTUARY FOR BOTH SERVICES AND MOST NURSING MOMS (WE HAVE MANY) FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THIS SINCE OUR NURSERY AND NURSING ROOMS WILL NOT BE OPEN. FAMILIES WILL USE DIFFERENT RESTROOMS THAN ALL OTHERS. THEY WILL REGISTER WEEKLY AND HAVE AN ASSIGNED TABLE FOR SEATING. THE SERVICE WILL BE LIVE STREAMED INTO THE FAMILY FELLOWSHIP ROOM.

Sue Jakes is CDM Children’s Ministry Coordinator.

You communicate with CM workers all over the denomination from churches large and small. Our panel here is comprised of larger churches.

What advice do you have for smaller churches with volunteer staff?

SURVEY YOUR PARENTS -

1. WHAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE LEAVING YOUR CHILD IN A CLASSROOM OR NURSERY AGAIN?
2. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO CONTINUE TEACHING AND VOLUNTEERING IN CHILD CARE SITUATIONS?
3. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THE LEADERSHIP TO KNOW AS YOU THINK ABOUT BRINGING YOUR YOUNGER CHILDREN INTO WORSHIP, PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME?

What are the specific or unique challenges for those churches?

1. WHO WILL RUN THE SURVEY?
2. WHO WILL COMMUNICATE DETAILED PLANS TO THE PARENTS AND BE READY TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS?
3. IF THERE ARE ONLY A FEW CHILDREN, WHY NOT START THINGS UP AS USUAL?
4. HAVE THERE EVER BEEN ENOUGH SAFETY AND SANITARY GUIDELINES INFORCED – HOW DOES STRICT IMPLEMENTATION BEGIN NOW?

How are the re-gathering protocols different for children than for adults? What makes this its own challenge? CHILDREN MUST REMAIN WITH THEIR PARENTS, SOMETHING THEY DO NOT OFTEN DO AT CHURCH.

CHILDREN WILL NEED REMINDING NOT TO HUG, TOUCH, OPENLY COUGH, ETC.

What words of wisdom do you have for sessions and pastoral staff that may not be considered when it comes to children? PARENTS ARE DOING THIS FOR THE FIRST TIME AND NEED MUCH GRACE AND HELP. OTHERS CAN HELP AND COME ALONGSIDE PARENTS AT THIS TIME. SPEND TIME BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER WORSHIP ADDRESSING THE CHILDREN DIRECTLY. ENCOURAGE CONGREGANTS TO DO THE SAME WHEN APPROPRIATE.

How have you communicated your re-gathering plans with respect to infants and children to the congregation?

EMAIL WITH EMBEDDED VIDEO AND ON OUR PRIVATE CHILDREN’S MINISTSRY FACEBOOK PAGE.

How are you shepherding your families through this? \*\*WEEKLY EMAILS WITH SS LESSONS INCLUDED, REGULAR POSTS ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE, WEEKLY FAMILY CONTESTS (VIDEO OF FAMILY QUOTING MEMORY WORK, PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT, SUNDAY CELEBRATION CHALLENGE) PRAYFORME CAMPAIGN HAS MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION PRAYING FOR ALL OF OUR CHILDREN, GOING THROUGH THE PRAYER GUIDEBOOK TOGETHER.

What should other Dir of Children’s Ministries take into consideration as they navigate these waters? PARENTS ARE TIRED. SOME WELCOME IDEAS AND COMMUNICATIONS, BUT MOST ARE HOPING THEY CAN HAVE DAYS TO DO NOTHING BUT LET THEIR CHILDREN PLAY WHILE THEY CARE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE DAY. PRAY FOR THEM AND LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU ARE PRAYING.

Are you able to share any of the rough waters encountered on the staff level? No one section of the church operates independently, so how have you spoken into the whole? MY SENIOR PASTOR HAS DONE MUCH TO ENCOURAGE THE STAFF IN FORBEARANCE WITH ONE ANOTHER AND EVERYONE. WE HAVE PRAYED MUCH AND ASKED FOR PEACE THROUGH IT ALL WITH NO OVERTAKING SCHEMES OF THE ENEMY.

\*\*What have you, as Directors of Children’s Ministries done to reach out to the children, calmed their fears, assisted their parents during this time?

Thinking down the road…what are you looking at, what considerations will there be to open the nursery, hold children’s church, Sunday School?

What factors are you looking at? OVER CLEANLINESS, LOTS OF MASKS, GLOVES, AND HAND SANATIZER, AND MUCH VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND PRAYER, PRAYER, PRAYER.

Often in the summer churches have had VBS? For many churches that is understandably on hold for this summer.

Have any sought to do something different?

What alternatives are there for that kind of outreach?

1. BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB KITS FOR FAMILIES WHO SIGN UP - CAN BE DONE ALONE OR WITH TWO OR THREE WHO AGREE TO GATHER (LESSON MATERIAL, SONG CD, CRAFT KITS, AND MAYBE A VIDEO SKIT)
2. SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS AT THE CHURCH THAT FAMILIES REGISTER FOR. ONE OR TWO A WEEK FOR A FEW WEEKS
3. VIRTUAL BIBLE SCHOOL WITH ALL THE TEACHING AND SINGING ONLINE. PARENT GET A LINK FOR THE CRAFTS AND IDEAS FOR SNACKS. **MOST PARENTS DO NOT WANT ONE MORE THING TO DO!**
4. IF SCHOOL STARTS BACK ON SCHEDULE IN THE FALL, PARENTS SHOULD BE READY THEN FOR A BIG CROWD AT CHURCH – A TWO- OR THREE-DAY BACK TO SCHOOL VBS STYLE KICK-OFF COULD BE THE FINALE!

I asked those planting and pastoring churches of various sizes, considering these events, what will you keep, tweak, and stop when it comes to ministries?

1. WILL KEEP OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND WEEKLY EMAILS GOING
2. STRICT CLEANING POLICIES
3. CHILDREN NEED TO STAY WITH PARENTS WHILE AT CHURCH 😊.

Have you found anything that you did not do before that you will keep or adjust?

Is there anything that you did in the past, that you probably won’t do in the future?