

# Appendix C

## What Do We Do With the Kids?

Childcare is a legitimate obstacle to Community Groups meeting in homes. However, there are lots of options—so with some creativity on your part it's not an insurmountable challenge. The most important thing is to talk about it early on as your group is being formed and develop a plan. Making sure that the care of the children is seen as a priority will go a long way in establishing the value and buy-in of your group participants.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

Use these guidelines to shape your initial planning for childcare. It is recommended that you come up with several options to begin with that you can present to the group and get their input. Then move forward in establishing a plan.

**Safety:** You as the leader are responsible for making sure the childcare provided is safe and all parents feel comfortable with the arrangement. There should be requirements established which the group agrees upon, such as the number of childcare providers per a certain number of children, references and/or background checks for childcare providers, and a diaper-changing policy.

**Training:** Depending on your group's child care solution, will there be training provided for the teens or adults that are taking care of the kids? Who will communicate this?

**Expense:** Will the childcare providers be paid? What is the process for handling that?

**Resources:** What resources will be provided for childcare providers and who will arrange for acquiring those materials? Whether or not children are active participants in your group, be intentional about making sure they are well cared for. This will encourage both parents and children to consistently attend the group.

### CREATIVE CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS

All solutions will have both advantages and disadvantages. Find one that is functional, sustainable, and agreed-upon by the entire group.

1. All participants are responsible for arranging their own childcare outside of the group through family, friends or sitters.

2. Have everyone in the group who has children pitch in financially to hire a baby sitter or two every week. When all of the parents give a little the cost is surprisingly minimal. If you have another house available in the immediate area, kids and sitter(s) could be in one location while the group meets in another.

\*Contact Betty for list of available, pre-screened childcare workers (mostly teens).

Individual groups are responsible for making and maintaining these arrangements. Be courteous by setting up arrangements well in advance of your group meetings, and be very generous with your sitters.

3. Group participants rotate caring for children each group meeting. Make sure it is a full rotation, so that not just one or a few are always missing group time.
4. Develop a meeting schedule which includes the children in your group time once a month. This could be more of a fellowship oriented meeting, or a chance to engage in an on-going service project together as families.
5. Coordinate with another group who meets on a different day to trade off childcare. On your group's meeting night, a couple of adults from the other group take care of your group's kids. Then on their night, people from your group take care of their kids. Only a couple adults will probably be needed each time, so the extra time commitment should be reasonable, possibly once a month. This is a great way to foster building relationships between kids and adults within the church body.
6. Consider a meeting rotation that includes whole group meetings, and just men's/women's sub-groups. For example: 1st week—entire group, 2nd week—men only, 3rd week—entire group, 4th week—women only. This effectively cuts the need/cost of childcare in half, as it wouldn't be needed on sub-group weeks. Note: This arrangement works best with established groups and is not recommended for a new group just starting.
7. If you have a range of ages in children and some of the older teens are willing to assist in caring for the younger children, this can be a great way of helping them feel like they are needed and serve a significant role.

Get creative....there may be another arrangement that works for your group. If so, be okay with it as long it meets the established guidelines.