

CROSS-GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS OF OUTREACH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRIES
WITHIN THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

BY

PAUL H. KOLANDER

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY

PROF. THOMAS KOCK, ADVISOR

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

MEQUON, WISCONSIN

FEBRUARY 2016

ABSTRACT: The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) has recently experienced a rapid expansion in the number of Early Childhood Ministries (ECM). These ministries which are spread across geographical boundaries have been greatly blessed by God. Enrollments of these ministries are on the rise. Attending these ECM are both members and non-members of the WELS. Congregations are exploring ways to connect families who have children in their ECM to the Word and Sacraments. This paper surveys a sample of congregations throughout the WELS and creates a database of strategies and attitudes being used by WELS ECM. These strategies are coded and trends are identified. The trends are identified with the hope that congregations may be able to improve ECM outreach strategies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. PARTICIPANTS	8
III. METHOD	10
IV. SURVEY	11
V. RESULTS	16
VI. SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE DATA	35
VII. DISCUSSION	36
VIII. CONCLUSION	48
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY	49
X. APPENDICES	
A. APPENDIX A	50
B. APPENDIX B	76
C. APPENDIX C	77
D. APPENDIX D	77
E. APPENDIX E	78

Cross-Geographic Trends of Outreach in Early Childhood Ministries within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Introduction

I propose that there are cross-geographic trends of outreach in Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). A survey was conducted to identify strategies being used throughout the synod. After the data was collected trends were identified. The following research supports the thesis that cross-geographic trends exist within WELS ECM. This paper includes motivation for the research, an explanation of the participants and method, an in-depth report of the results, a discussion of the findings, and a final summary. Also included in the appendices is the raw survey responses along with a database of results sorted into trends by the researcher. Before the thesis is examined, the motivation for the research is laid out in order to avoid a misunderstanding.

“May God grow his Church.” This is a prayer that all God’s children can pray. “For God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”(1 Timothy 2:4¹). How that happens, in some respects, is always the exact same: it is done through the Word and Sacrament by the work of the Holy Spirit. For, “No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3). He alone is the one who converts. He alone is the one who causes all people to turn from their sinful ways and to believe the true Word of God. He is the one that changes us from sinners who are dead in our sins, unable to do anything, to living sons and daughters of Christ. “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins”(Colossians 2:13). None of this work can be done by a human person, strategy, attitude, or event. It can only be done by God who chose us. The authors of the Formula of Concord state it this way:

However, God the Holy Spirit does not effect conversions without means, but he uses the preaching and the hearing of God’s Word to accomplish it, as it is written (Rom. 1[:16]), the gospel is a “power of God” to save. Likewise, faith comes from hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10 [:17]). And it is God’s will that people hear his Word and not plug their ears. In

¹ New International Version, 2011 (all Bible references will use this translation)

this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts that they may, like Lydia in Acts 16[:14], listen to it and thus be converted, solely through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, who alone accomplishes the conversion of the human being. For apart from his grace our “willing and exerting,” our planting, sowing, and watering, amount to nothing “if he does not give the growth’ [Rom. 9:16; 1 Cor. 3:7]. As Christ says, “Apart from me, you can do nothing” [John 15:5]. With these brief words he denies the free will its powers and ascribes everything to God’s grace, so that no one has grounds for boasting before God (1 Cor. [9:16]).²

Conversion is a word that can be understood in different ways. For the purposes of this paper, the definition given by Quenstedt:

Conversion is an act of the applicatory grace of the Holy Spirit by which He, together with the Father and the Son freely, namely, by grace based on the merits of Christ, through the preached Word of God delivers a mature man who is spiritually dead out of the state of sin into the state of grace, by stages, so far as the preparatory acts are concerned, but instantaneously, so far as the final act is concerned, by a power that is indeed supernatural and divine yet resistible, so that he, repenting, obtains forgiveness of sins by faith and becomes a partaker of everlasting salvation ³

Some distinctions are helpful. Lutheran dogmaticians have made a distinction between the magisterial and ministerial use of reason in our understanding of the Bible.⁴ The magisterial use would be placing reason over and above the gospel like a magistrate which judges the bible on the basis of argument and evidence. The ministerial use of reason submits to the gospel.

Our use of strategies work similarly. They should not be magisterial to the means of grace, standing above them. Rather, they should be ministerial, serving the gospel. God uses the means of grace to change the hearts of sinners to turn back to him. This paper focuses on using strategies ministerially, that is, using the Word and Sacrament to plant and water the seeds of faith God makes faith grow. “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Romans 10:14). What we preach will be the same, God’s true and

²Kolb, Robert, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, p. 492

³ John P. Meyer, *WLS Dogmatics Notes*, ed. John F. Brug et al., (Mequon: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Press, 2005) D.3.B.IV.2.3.3.b

⁴ Becker. *The Foolishness of God*. p. 197

holy Word, however, the way one approaches others to preach God's Word will change from person to person, from city to city, and from time to time. Paul preached differently to the Jews in the synagogue who were in Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13 than he did to the Gentiles in Acts 17. Paul preached to both groups, but the strategy for delivering the message changed based on demographics and culture. In Pisidian Antioch, he stood up in the synagogue on the Sabbath and preached a sermon full of Old Testament verses. In Athens, a city known for logic and philosophy, Paul appealed to the logic of the people. He does not cite scripture, rather he employs things like reason, logic, nature and poetry that these people are comfortable with. He does not preach to them in a synagogue, but in the Areopagus, the center for new ideas.

Paul's strategy changed in some ways, but his message did not. He told the Athenians to repent based on the fact the resurrection took place. "He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). He tells the Jews to repent and gives them the same wonderful news. Jesus has risen from the dead!. "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus."(Acts 13:32) In both cases, he spoke publicly to the people and laid out a specialized gospel proclamation that appealed to their hearts and minds.

There are cross-geographic trends in the outreach strategies used in WELS. The research presented in this paper is a compilation of these strategies being used by congregations throughout North America. This is not to imply that any of these strategies should ever change what is being preached by WELS churches. The use of the Word of God will not change. This paper identifies trends of ministerial applications WELS congregations are implementing in their ECM. The goal of collecting this information is that WELS congregations with ECM would consider using strategies that are widely and effectively being used throughout the WELS. If certain trends are used consistently by a large number of WELS congregations, it may be wise to consider, "Would this also work well in my congregation?"

The Church Growth Movement has been prevalent in Christianity of the last 100 years. The father of this movement was Donald McGavran. Born in 1897, McGavran later became a missionary in India. He was disturbed by the slow growth of his mission field. The rest of his life he dedicated to studying church growth methods. McGavran thought if he could find out what

worked out in one place, he could apply his findings to another place. Paul Kelm defines Church Growth in a paper analyzing the problems of the Church Growth movement:

The basic principle of church growth is that “it is God’s will that His Church grow, that His lost children are found.” Matthew 28:18-20 and John 17:18 are always adduced in support of the principle, together with a vast array of references from Acts and the kingdom parables of the Gospels. A.R. Tippett says that “church growth as a biblical concept is declarative, implicative (e.g. “You are the light of the world.”), precedential (cf. Acts), and, cumulative (incl. the prophetic assurances of the Psalms and Isaiah). While one could argue that “lost children” misunderstands what happened at the fall in the Garden of Eden, there can hardly be any argument against the statement that God wants His Church to grow. Against the claims that church growth is merely a “numbers game,” proponents offer this definition of growth: Growing Up (spiritual maturity and sanctification), Growing Together (Christian fellowship and unity in faith), Growing Out (evangelism and resulting new converts), Growing More (church planting).⁵

God makes his church grow. As Paul stated in 1 Corinthians it may be God’s servants, Paul or Apollos, who plant the seed or water it, but it is only God who makes the church grow. “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:6). It is only God who can change someone from being dead in sin to being someone who has been made alive in Christ. “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.” (Eph. 2:4-5) It is only He who gives us forgiveness of sins. It is only He that gives life and causes growth, but it is his servants who plant and water.

Ronald Muetzel, in a paper entitled “An Analysis of the ‘Church Growth Movement’ and Its Theology”, relays the definition of the Church Growth Movement provided by the North American Society for Church Growth:

Church growth is that discipline which investigates the nature, expansion, planting, multiplication, function, and health of Christian churches as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of God’s Commission to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28: 18-20). Students of church growth strive to combine the eternal theological principles of God’s Word concerning the expansion of the Church with the best insights of

⁵ Kelm “The Church Growth Movement”p. 3

contemporary social and behavioral sciences, employing as the initial frame of reference the foundational work done by Donald McGavran.⁶

There are many positives to this statement depending on the definition of a few of these words. Certainly it is good for a church to assess its nature. Many congregations have a mission statement to focus efforts within the church and in the community. Certainly churches want to expand. They want to be able to proclaim to more people the life-saving Gospel found only in the Word of God. Certainly one congregation cannot fulfill the spiritual needs of all people, therefore, it is fitting to plant more churches in different areas. God's children pray the Gospel will spread so rapidly that every church is overflowing and the priesthood of all believers multiplies. It is important to examine the function of the church so we are serving our Lord to the best of our abilities. And certainly one we want to identify if there are problems within our church so we may have a healthy congregation that serves well.

Having these goals is not the problem. The problem is by what means they are achieved and how success is measured. The emphasis of the Church Growth Movement does not seem to be the church, but the growth. Many followers of the Church Growth Movement define success by the size of the congregation, not what is being taught by the congregation. At least, that is the caricature that many have of the followers of the church growth movement. Paul Kelm explains:

While serious church growth adherents recognize that faithful ministry can occur without numerical growth (especially in churches characterized by the church growth "disease" called "old age"), theological faithfulness and love for God's people won't register high on church growth measurements of a church's ministry. In fact, the conviction that God wants His church to grow is easily reduced to formulism. The suggestion that failure to grow is simply a failure to apply church growth principles. "God builds the church" (with reference to Matthew 16:18) is frequently stated by church growth people.⁷

Success should not be measured by the growth of the church membership. Conversely, a lack of growth is also not a measure of success. Kelm explains that evangelism and orthodoxy can work hand in hand:

⁶ Muetzal, Ronald M. "An Analysis of the "Church Growth Movement" and Its Theology." *WLS Essay File*, July 22, 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/3386>. p. 4

⁷ Kelm "The Church Growth Movement" p. 3

I have no sympathy for those who expect little growth and minister with such self-fulfilling prophecy, those who demean pure truth by suggesting that orthodoxy is synonymous with slow growth. Those who canonize customs, traditions, structures and methods which inhibit growth, those who hide behind misapplied statements about the power of the Gospel and the work of the Spirit as if an obligation to HEAR the Gospel rests entirely with the lost. There is some truth to the statement that the obstacles to church growth are in the church.⁸

While the Church Growth Movement may offer us some practical suggestions, the key factor remains that the true doctrine must not suffer. More opportunities may present themselves because of the way we approach people, or in the way we present the means of grace to people, but we should never be apologetic for true doctrinal confessions.

This study surveys a number of Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) throughout the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The survey asks the called workers of these ministries to explain strategies and attitudes of congregations. None of these questions are intended to accurately measure the success of the congregations. None of these are intended to measure the health of the congregations. Valleskey warns against focusing only on these questions this when he says:

It's a sad and dangerous day for Christianity when a church or a denomination is evaluated by purely pragmatic questions like: "Is it growing?" or "Do its programs work?" This is especially frightening when we recall again how Jesus described the signs of the end: "...and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people." Jesus made it clear that growth in numbers is not always synonymous with spiritual health. And certainly not in these times!⁹

The use of this survey is intended to understand how churches across the country are using their ECM for outreach. The thesis is that there are cross geographical trends in congregations who use their ECM as an outreach tool. The ECM and the associated programs, events, and classes were examined in this survey as tools that congregations are using to spread the Gospel. Understanding what some congregations in the WELS are doing well may help others improve outreach opportunities. It is the responsibility of each congregation to act on

⁸ Kelm "The Church Growth Movement" p. 3

⁹ Valleskey, David J. "Outreach and Our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Pre-Schools." *WLS Essay File*,

these opportunities to the best of their ability. A number WELS congregations have ECM with high enrollments. There is a brief window of opportunity to reach many families through the ECM. Many families use ECM as stepping stones to another private school or to a public school. It is beneficial to examine strategies that WELS ECM use to support their ministry goals.

David Valleskey wrote a paper for the Ohio Pastor/Teacher/Delegate Conference in January 2014 entitled, "Outreach and our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Preschools." In this paper, he made the case that the WELS should use LES and ECM as outreach.¹⁰ It is beneficial to explore actual strategies that are being implemented by WELS congregations. By identifying trends that occur cross-geographically more congregations can use their ECM as a more effective outreach tool.

Congregations with ECM may not know how to effectively use them as an outreach tool. It may be helpful for those congregations to be aware of practices being used by congregations throughout the WELS that would aid in evangelism efforts. While it's true what works in one congregation is not guaranteed to work in another, it is valuable to examine what has worked well in some places, as it may benefit others.

Many churches with ECM have wrestled with the question, "How can we share the Gospel with as many people as possible using our ECM to its full potential?" The WELS has the opportunity to take advantage of its connection as a synod to collect and share these ideas.

A few assumptions were made in this study. The first assumption was churches want to use their ECM as an outreach tool to some degree. Another assumption is participants would answer honestly. A third assumption was the participants would understand the terminology used in the survey when the researcher used words like "outreach". A fourth assumption was that the ECM with the highest enrollments would have more potential to do outreach than ECM with lower enrollment.

¹⁰ Valleskey, David J. "Outreach and Our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Pre-Schools."

Participants

It is proposed that specific strategies are implemented cross-geographically to help congregations use their ECM as outreach tools. To create a database of strategies, the researcher sent out surveys to selected called workers serving in WELS congregations operating an ECM. (The database would be later sorted to identify trends.) The called workers surveyed were associated with an ECM that had one of the top enrollments in its district. The WELS is split up into 12 districts for order and governing purposes. The survey was sent to the ECM of each district with the highest enrollment. This information was gathered from the 2015 WELS Book of Reports and Memorials (BORAM)¹¹. The majority of districts had surveys sent to five churches. As stated earlier, the researcher assumed that churches with the highest number of students enrolled would theoretically have the highest number of opportunities to do outreach. The two districts where six churches were surveyed each had over 40 enrolled students in the sixth largest ECM in the district. The district that had only three churches surveyed had less than 10 enrolled students in its fourth largest ECM. The number of churches surveyed per district is as follows:

District	Congregations surveyed
California	5
Dakota-Montana	5
Michigan	6
Minnesota	5
Nebraska	5
North Atlantic	3
Northern Wisconsin	5
Pacific Northwest	5

¹¹ *Book of Reports and Memorials*. Report. Vol. 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://wels.net/about-wels/official-reports/>.

South Atlantic	5
South Central	5
South-Eastern Wisconsin	6
Western Wisconsin	5

At least two people from each congregation were sent a survey; one was a pastor and one was either the ECM director, the ECM lead teacher or a teacher's aid. The participants' email addresses were gathered by accessing each of the church's web-pages. The researcher's preference was to e-mail the ECM director. If the church did not have an ECM director, an email was sent to the lead teacher. If there was not a lead teacher or an ECM director listed, the researcher emailed the ECM directly. In total 123 emails to participate in this study were sent out to 79 pastors and 58 directors or teachers who worked in 60 unique ECM programs. In some cases churches had multiple pastors. Three of these emails returned as faulty addresses.

Method

The research consisted of three steps: sending out the survey, compiling the data, sorting the data into trends and themes. First a survey was sent out on October 13th, 2015 to all participants via e-mail.¹² A follow-up email was sent after one week.¹³ An email was also sent on October 27th reminding¹⁴ the participants that it was the last day to complete the survey. The survey was closed on the morning of October 28th.

The survey consisted of 12 questions¹⁵ and an opportunity to submit any comments that the participant felt were necessary. Four of the questions requested basic information: name, title, church name, and location. There was one multiple choice question, one Likert scale, two quantitative questions and three qualitative questions. At the end of the survey, the participant was able to indicate if they would allow the researcher to quote the participants responses.¹⁶ Options for responses were “yes”, “yes but anonymously”, or “no”.

Responses were coded by the researcher. Data was sorted first by individual church responses, then by district, and finally combined into a full synod list. The data was sorted by trends that the researcher saw in the data. The comprehensive list is compiled of direct quotes and included in the appendices. The only changes which were made to quotes were to conceal the identity of participants. Names, titles, and locations were removed from the participants’ responses.

¹² Appendix B, p. 77

¹³ Appendix C, p. 78

¹⁴ Appendix D, p. 78

¹⁵ Appendix A, p. 51

¹⁶ All results will be presented in a later section of the paper

Survey

In order to identify cross-geographic trends a survey was conducted and the results were later sorted. The following are the questions from the survey along with the researcher's reasoning for the question, as well as, the perceived limitations.

Questions 1-4

What is your name?

What is your title?

What is your church's name?

In what city or state are you located?

The first four questions were factual questions about the participants. The first question was asked to guarantee unique responses were given. The second question, "What is your title?" was asked to validate that response came from a number of different positions. Having viewpoints from multiple positions will help construct a more accurate understanding of the outreach methods and attitudes throughout the WELS. Survey participants were asked to identify as one of the following: Pastor, Director, Teacher, or Other. The fourth question was asked to ensure that data was taken from a cross-geographical sample and also to distinguish between responses from participants belonging to churches with identical names in different locations. There does not appear to be a reason why the participants would not honestly respond to these four questions. All were given the option to keep this information anonymous at a later point in the survey.

Question 5

The reason our church has an early childhood ministry is..."

A.) ...Primarily to serve the members of the Congregation

B.) ...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

C.) ...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

D.) ...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

It was necessary to try to understand the mission of the ECM as perceived by the churches themselves. The researcher wanted to validate his assumption that congregations wanted to use their ECM as an outreach tool. He also was interested in exploring a correlation between the mission of the ECM and its outreach efforts.

In regards to possible limitations or biases in these four questions, in the e-mail inviting participants to complete the survey the researcher wrote, “I am writing my senior thesis paper about trends in outreach strategies for our Early Childhood Ministries,” along with, “Its information will be very helpful to me as I research this very important opportunity the Holy Spirit has given our church, to share the wonderful message of the Gospel through our ECM.”¹⁷ This could have created a bias in the data. Participants may have shaded their responses to fit what the researcher hoped to find. Along with that, the words “primarily” and “mostly” are subjective terms. Each participant may have interpreted these words differently. Another possible limitation to this survey is personal speculation of the participant. This question asks an individual to speak for an entire congregation. What one participant describes may not be reflective of the congregation.

Question 6

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

This [ECM] can include child care, Pre-School, K-3, K-4, K-5, Mommy's day out, Mornings with mommies, or any other pre-elementary school programs.

This question was asked in order to validate the numbers given by the WELS statistical report. While it is common to refer to ECM as preschools or kindergarten programs, this term is not limited to only educational ministries. The educational aspect of an ECM, such as preschool or kindergarten, is referred to as Early Childhood Education (ECE). Some churches do not distinguish between these two. An ECM could include many other aspects of ministry involving children before school age. Some churches seemed to only include enrollment numbers of their ECE. Other congregations included many other programs, as instructed by the survey, in their enrollment of the ECM. There were a few cases when multiple persons from the same congregation answered this question and their numbers were not identical. These cases will be discussed more thoroughly in the results section.

Question 7

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

¹⁷ Appendix B, p. 77

This is a key part of my thesis. Please explain in as much detail as necessary any and all programs that your Congregation has intentionally done to carry out this task. This can include such things as a newsletter, positioning the pastors office in a prominent and accessible location, requiring a Bible information class for parents... etc.

There were limitations to this question. One possible limitation was the statement in the e-mail invitation: “[This is] a short survey that should only take between 5 and 10 minutes to fill out.” It is possible that some participants did not allow themselves sufficient time to fill out the survey with detail. Another limitation is the survey assumes that the participants know of all the programs or strategies used by the congregation. It could also be safely assumed that some programs were overlooked by the participants or the congregation may be implementing a strategy that they do not realize is an outreach strategy. For example, a few participants wrote that their ECM used the curriculum and homework of the ECM students to reach out to families. The researcher assumes that all ECE programs of the WELS share religion to some extent. However, many congregations may not view the ECE curriculum or homework as a way to reach out to families.

First, all data was sorted geographically by WELS district. Next, the responses were deconstructed by specific thought. Some participants responded to the survey questions in paragraph form. The researcher divided the paragraph responses into separate ideas. For example, if a response was: “Our church at Saint Paul’s offers BIC classes, makes the students sing in church four times a year, and has a monthly newsletter.” The researcher would have divided this data into three separate responses using the words of the participant. In this example: “BIC classes”, “students sing in church four times a year”, and “monthly newsletter”. Similar responses were grouped together into categories the research generated. All the data was then sorted in this fashion. In total, the researcher found 22 categories of different outreach strategies. There are definitely cross-geographical trends of outreach that the WELS is using.

In the cases of multiple participants from a congregation, unique data was only recorded once. For example, if one participant responded. “At Saint Paul’s we sing in church, offer Bible information class, and have a monthly newsletter.” And a second participant from the same congregation responded, “Sing in Church, BIC, Christmas for Kids program.” The researcher would sort the data, “Sing in church,” “BIC,” “Monthly Newsletter,” “Christmas for Kids.” The

number of responses in each category was counted. The total number of congregations that used a specific strategy or program was then divided by the total number of congregations that submitted responses in order to find the percentage of congregations that use a specific strategy or program. The researcher felt that this was valuable so that the reader could easily see the strength of the trend established in the data. The researcher then grouped the trends into the following themes: Information, Programming, Staff, Family Building, and Structure.

Question 8

*What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?
(Please explain in as much detail as necessary why these are not currently used anymore.)*

The researcher hoped to find out not only what strategies are being used by many congregations but also what strategies were being abandoned by congregations. Both are trends that are valuable. The researcher thought this information would be helpful for congregations looking to start new programs for their ECM. If a specific program is being abandoned by many congregations throughout the country, congregations may want to reconsider if it is wise to start that specific program.

Question 9

Finish the sentence "What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is....."

The researcher hoped to not only understand what programs were being used, but which programs or strategies were perceived as most valuable. The researcher sorted the responses into five trends: Relationships, Staff, Culture, Programs, Unsure or Negative Response. The researcher does not have any reason to believe that the responses are unreliable.

Question 10

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

The researcher hoped to observe a correlation between people becoming members of a congregation and congregational efforts or strategies. The researcher believes some of this data may be estimated by the participants.

Question 11

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

The researcher hoped to see if there was a correlation between the confidence of participants and the rest of the data produced from the survey. The answer to this question is subjective. Besides this, there do not seem to be any other limitations.

Question 12

Please leave any additional thoughts or comments for the researcher to consider.

The researcher sorted this data into 6 different categories: Positive Comments, Staff Concerns, Congregation Concerns, Words of Advice, Obstacles, Further Explanation. All of these responses can be found in their entirety in the appendix. The researcher edited responses to exclude names, locations, or anything else that would violate the anonymity of the participants.

Question 13

May I quote your answers in my paper?

- A. *Yes*
- B. *Yes, but anonymously*
- C. *No*

The researcher wanted the participants to answer truthfully. The researcher assumed anonymity would help participants feel unthreatened when offering both positive and negative feedback.

Results

The results of the survey support the thesis that there are cross-geographic trends in strategies being used in WELS ECM..

Questions 1-4

What is your name?

What is your title?

What is your church's name?

In what city or state are you located?

Sixty-three participants completed the survey. Thirty-six were pastors, seventeen were directors, six were teachers, and three listed themselves as “other.” The participants who identified as ‘other’ later revealed that they were educational assistants. Out of the 60 ECM programs surveyed, 51 are represented by at least one participant. Twelve churches had multiple responses. Responses were collected from all twelve districts.

District	Congregations surveyed	Congregational responses
California	5	5
Dakota-Montana	5	4
Michigan	6	6
Minnesota	5	3
Nebraska	5	5
North Atlantic	3	2
Northern Wisconsin	5	3
Pacific Northwest	5	5
South Atlantic	5	4
South Central	5	4
Southeastern Wisconsin	6	6

Western Wisconsin	5	4
-------------------	---	---

Question 5

The reason our church has an early childhood ministry is...

- A.)...Primarily to serve the members of the Congregation*
- B.)...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.*
- C.)...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.*
- D.)...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.*

Responses were sorted alphabetically by district and then totaled. One participant did not answer this question.

District	Primarily for Outreach	Mostly for Outreach, partially for our Church	Mostly for our Church, partially for Outreach	Primarily for our Church
California	2	3	0	0
Dakota Montana	0	4	1	0
Michigan	1	6	2	0
Minnesota	1	2	0	0
Nebraska	1	4	0	0
North Atlantic	1	1	0	0
Northern Wisconsin	1	2	0	0
Pacific Northwest	5	3	0	0
South Atlantic	3	1	0	0
South Central	1	3	1	0
South Eastern	0	4	4	0
Western Wisconsin	1	3	1	0

Total	17	36	9	0
-------	----	----	---	---

Question 6

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

Church names are not given. Only one enrollment number from each congregation is listed. If there was a discrepancy between the number provided by the pastor and the early childhood director, the early childhood director's data was used. Data was sorted alphabetically by the district in descending order. The average of the corresponding district is given in the third column. The final column shows the percentage that each district is above or below the average of all districts' combined average (71.9).¹⁸ All responses were then totaled.

District	Responses	Avg	+/- % of Avg.
California	104, 75, 70, 49, 69	73.4	102%
Dakota Montana	115, 75, 35, 21	61.5	86%
Michigan	75, 73, 65, 60, 55, 50	63	88%
Minnesota	105, 57, 87	83	115%
Nebraska	70, 65, 60, 58, 47	60	83%
North Atlantic	47,24	35.5	49%
Northern Wisconsin	200, 54, 20	91.3	127%
Pacific Northwest	60, 56, 54, 53, 48	54.2	75%
South Atlantic	120, 79, 35, 29	65.75	91%
South Central	49, 30, 20, 15	28.5	40%
South Eastern	250, 230, 200, 135, 110, 74	199.8	278%
Western Wisconsin	130, 113, 65, 40	87	121%
Total	4,080	71.9	

¹⁸ The average was found by taking the sum of all responses and dividing it by the number of congregations.

Question 7

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

The data generated by this question is grouped into five categories so that trends would be evident to the reader.

Theme 1: Information

The theme “information” includes both advertising and newsletters. Both of these strategies are used to disperse information to families of the ECM. About one third of the churches surveyed employed one of these two methods.

Eighteen of the 51 congregations surveyed (35%) had a participant indicate that they used some type of advertisement. Two congregations mentioned that they advertised church services at the ECM or childcare area. One congregation responded brochures were handed out promoting church events. Eleven churches send out invitations to worship services. One church mentioned that they do a number of types of advertising: weekly canvassing, public and media advertising, and follow-up letters sent to former students as well as members. One church used e-mails to reach out to non-members. Two churches mentioned that they use a web page to connect with people. One church used Facebook to connect with ECM families.

Nineteen of the 51 (37%) congregations had participants respond that their ECM used newsletters. Two of the churches verified their newsletters were electronic. Three participants stated they used monthly newsletters, two indicated weekly newsletters were sent, one did both weekly and monthly, although the majority (14) did not indicate the frequency of newsletters. Most of the responses did not mention the content of the newsletters. Three mentioned that newsletters included worship services times. Three others included church events. Two had a note from the pastor. One participant responded that the newsletter included an adult explanation of the Bible lessons which the ECM students had been learning about during that week.

Theme 2: Programming

The majority of the responses included some type of programming. The researcher divided programming into seven subcategories; Orientation, Special Services, Singing in Church, Chapel, Sunday School, Church Events, and School Activities.

Orientation

Having some sort of orientation for the parents of ECM students was a clear theme of the participant's responses. 31 of the 51 congregations (61%) surveyed included some sort of orientation for the parents of the ECM students.

Twenty churches used a form of a Bible Information Classes (BIC) to introduce parents to the teachings of the church. None of the churches explicitly said they required BIC, only that it was offered. However, three participants made a point to respond that they do not require BIC. One church required a two hour Bible overview course that leads to an optional BIC. One church offered free childcare to parents who attend BIC. One church hosted a four-part date night series, with different topics addressed at each session: finances, parenting, marriage, and BIC. Two churches offered a month of free tuition to parents who complete BIC. Three churches offered free tuition to those who complete a BIC and become members of the church. One church offered ten dollars off of tuition when BIC was completed. One other church said free tuition is offered for members in their LES but not ECM. Three churches used a Bible class to introduce the parents of the ECM students to their teachings but not necessarily a BIC. Two churches use a meeting to introduce parents to the pastor.

One congregation distributes religious information in the "Welcome to Preschool" packet. One church distributes this information at parent/teacher meetings throughout the year. Five churches had a questionnaire for parents at enrollment with questions regarding church membership. For example: "When was your child baptized?", "What is your church home?", "Do you have an interest in becoming members of our church?" If the child was unbaptized, the family was without a church home, or they had an interest in becoming members, then they would be put on a prospect list and be contacted by the pastor.

Special Services

Ten out of the 51 congregations surveyed (20%) had some type of special church service. Seven churches had a Christmas or Christmas Eve service. One responded they had special services, but did not give details to the type. One response indicated that once a year they worshiped underneath a tent in the parking lot and rented a bouncy house for children to play in after church. One church responded they have a kid's service, but more detail was not given.

Singing in Church

Twenty-two of 51 congregations (43%) mentioned singing in church as a way of connecting families of ECM students with the church. Eleven did not indicate the frequency of singing. One had its students sing twice a year. Three had its students sing three times a year. Two had students singing in church four times a year. One church had students singing every month, but it seems that different classes sing each month. Two churches used singing in special services. One church had its students sing in 4 p.m. Advent and Lenten worship services. One church made a point to not have students sing on a Sunday when Holy Communion was observed.

Chapel

Eleven of the 51 congregations (22%) have a chapel service they use to connect ECM families to the church. Two of the churches have the students sing in the chapel for parents. One ECM has chapel every day, one has chapel four days a week, three have it weekly, and two have it bi-monthly. Three responses also indicated that this was a time that the pastor connected with the children and families.

Sunday School

Two churches said they use a Sunday school program to connect ECM families to their church.

Church Events

Thirty-one of the 51 congregations surveyed (61%), use some sort of church event to connect with ECM families. Twenty-eight of the thirty-one listed multiple events in their responses. Forty-nine unique events were listed. Out of the thirty-one churches that mentioned church events eleven had a VBS, ten had an Easter for Kids, nine had a fall festival or carnival, seven had a Trunk or Treat, seven had an ice cream social, seven had a Christmas for Kids, four

had a Thanksgiving dinner, four had a church picnic, three had a movie night, two had tea parties, and two had a pancake breakfast. There were a number of events listed only once.¹⁹ Two churches mentioned they have quarterly events but did not specify the details of the events.

School Events

School events were distinguished from church events. School events were tied in with an LES. Church events did not mention a connection to an LES. Nine of the fifty-one congregations surveyed (18%) responded their church uses school events to reach out. Three churches had field trips, one of them specified the ECM students went on field trips with upper grades to try and assimilate with older students. Two had plays. Two others use graduation as an outreach tool.²⁰

Theme 3: Staff

It was clear from the data the participants felt the staff played a major role in connecting the families of ECM students to the church. There may be bias in the response because all participants in this survey were either staff of an ECM or a church connected with an ECM. The researcher divided this trend into six sub-trends: Pastor as Evangelist, Director as Evangelist, Principal as Evangelist, Staff Minister as Evangelist, Teacher as Evangelist, Curriculum as Evangelist. While the curriculum is not a person working for the church, it is included in “staff” because it is the process by which the staff has decided to reach out to the students and families through assignments.

Pastor as Evangelist

Twenty-seven of the 51 (53%) congregations who responded had a participant state the pastor played a strong role in connecting ECM families with the congregation. It should be noted

¹⁹ Complete list can be found in Appendix A on p. 56. Events that only had one occurrence were: fiesta night, hikes, pumpkin patch, concerts, New Year welcome, fun fair, local fairs, spring sing program, art fair, walking in a parade, living nativity, soccer camp, church camp, turkey bingo, gingerbread house making night, Lenten soup supper, Easter brunch, coffee/donut day, Valentine’s Day party, game night, chili cook off, pajama party, Easter egg hunt, Winterfest, thankful Thursday/fanatical Friday, breakfasts with classroom families, parent info nights, Lego night, Muffins with Mom, Doughnuts with Dad, Advent By Candlelight, congregational bonfire and hayride, bowling, party at the park, happy birthday Jesus, Financial Peace University classes, Love and Logic classes, and New Life classes.

²⁰ Complete list can be found in Appendix A on p. 56. Events only mentioned once mentioned: tournaments, fundraisers, art fairs, special party days, career day, activities in the classroom, inviting family members (mom, dad, grandpa, and grandma) to different events, having two days a week where family can come and get Panera bread, open houses, family days, holiday dinners, parental gatherings, sharing the calendar of events with the congregation, parents night out, Christian education week, and a Scholastic Book Fair.

again that 56% of the responses were from pastors. Fourteen participants responded having the pastor visible and accessible is an important tool to connect ECM families to the congregation. Eight of those 14 said the pastor can do this by greeting students at arrival and dismissal. Some responded the pastor must be visible at all open houses, school events and throughout the school day. Six of the congregations have the pastor working in the classroom of an ECE. Participants mentioned multiple responsibilities of the pastor: read with the children, substitute for/assisting the teacher, sing songs on a weekly basis, and teach Bible stories. The frequency of these actions varied, some on a weekly basis and others on a monthly basis. Two congregations said the ECM director meets with the pastor to discuss outreach opportunities. Two responses said the pastor sent out devotions to the parents. This was done by email or in a letter. One of those congregations said the pastor occasionally writes notes on the ECM students' papers. One congregation had the pastor visiting with families within 36 hours of their first church visit. One congregation has added another pastor to help with ECM outreach.

Director as Evangelist

Four responses (8%) stated the director was a key part of outreach. Two of the responses directly mentioned the director, and two of the responses were written by directors describing their role. One response said that the director “offers Christian guidance and encouragement to parents, workers and children as she interacts with them on many different levels.”²¹ Another response said the director after inviting a new family to church “offers to meet the family outside of the church and walk in with them at first until the family feels more comfortable.”²² One response said the director invites students to Sunday School programs. One response said the ECM staff conducts home visits to all of the students.

Principal as Evangelist

Only one participant mentioned the school principal as an evangelist. Not every ECM is associated with a Lutheran Elementary School and therefore not every ECM would have a principal connected with their ministry. The one response said the principal communicated

²¹ Appendix E p. 106

²² Appendix E p. 96

Christ's love and forgiveness to the students, as well as built relationships with the students and parents on a daily basis by being there to greet at the doors at the beginning and end of the day.

Staff Minister as Evangelist

Only one church said that a staff minister was a tool they used to reach out to families. Many WELS churches do not have a staff minister as part of their staff. The scope of the job of a staff minister depends on the congregation. The response said that families are sent to the staff minister with questions.

Teacher as Evangelist

Three survey participants (6%) said the teacher was key in connecting families of ECM students with the church. There are two responses listed under director which could also apply under this trend. Two of the three responses explicitly said that the main evangelists to the ECM families were the teachers. Both of these responses said that the teachers were trained or instructed to do evangelism as well as build relationships.

Curriculum as Evangelist

Five of the responses (10%) to this survey question mentioned the curriculum of the ECM as a tool to connect ECM families to the church. All five of the responses mentioned that the Bible is being taught to the children. One of the responses said songs are taught so that the children repeat them to their parents. Two participants responded children are the best advocates/witnesses for our church.

Theme 4: Family/ Community Building

Another theme the researcher observed was the intentional attitude by a number of churches to improve the family or community of the ECM students. These are programs lead by either the church or school to help improve family or community relationships.

Family Building Classes

Twelve of the 51 churches (23%) offered a class to ECM families that was intended to strengthen the family unit. There was a variety of different classes mentioned. Programs included: Power hour for families, Mommies and me, mom and tots day, parenting classes, marriage enrichment classes, and parent sharing night, faith stepping stones workshop, and finally baptism seminars. One congregation offered a class called "Preschool Partners". This was

a three part class focusing on the spiritual needs of a preschooler, the physical needs of a preschooler, and the emotional needs of a preschooler. Aside from program title, no additional information was given about the class content.

Community Participation

Four churches (8%) had a participant state they connect with families of ECM students through community participation programs. One church participates in community awareness fairs. One church started a monthly community seminar with guest presenters. One church involves families with charitable giving opportunities. One church serves as a host for a neighborhood program. Aside from the names of the program, no additional information was given in the surveys about the content of the programs.

Theme 5: Structure

The final theme the author saw in the responses to Question 7 was the structure of the congregation or ECM. Many responses mentioned they had created a church structure or strategy that allowed them to effectively reach out to ECM families. The researcher divided this theme into five sub-trends: Positions/Committees, Intentional Outreach Attitudes, Written Outreach Strategy, Outreach Software, and Physical Building.

Positions/Committees

Six churches (12%) said they had a church committee or position tasked with reaching out to ECM families. Some seemed to have a unique committee and others seemed to include this responsibility with an already established church committee or board. Two called this the evangelism team. One called the committee a ministry team. One refers to this group of people as a connections committee, another as an outreach team. One church has a position called an outreach director.

Intentional Outreach Attitudes

Eight churches (16%) mentioned intentional outreach attitudes are fostered in the church. Four of the congregations said they instruct or remind called workers to make it a top priority to be evangelists through the ECM. Two participants said they focus on building relationships using an ECM. One church said all teachers are excited to share the love of Jesus with kids so that the

kids are excited to share it with the parents. One church has a program that provides baby's first Bible to all families with a newborn.

Written Outreach Strategy

Three responses (6%) mentioned that they had written and implemented a strategy for outreach using the ECM ministry. All of these churches called it a harvest strategy. These strategies explicitly describe the goals and plans of the congregation. One congregation's strategy has three key areas of emphasis: building relationships, sharing God's Word, and exploration of ideas. Each of the key areas is explained in detail in the outreach strategy.

Outreach Software

Only one church (2%) said their church uses outreach software to aid the outreach efforts. The participant said, "Our childcare management software allows me to send messages to families that are listed as prospects so I can invite them to BIC, special worship services, etc. very easily."²³

Physical Building

Five responses (10%) indicated that the building that houses the ECM or church was specifically designed to aid in outreach efforts. Three of the churches mentioned having the pastor's office in a high traffic area so parents could easily interact with him. One said the kindergarten room was very visible to all parents bringing children to ECM. One participant responded the ECM is in the basement of the church so that families feel comfortable entering the church building. Another said that a new large facility directly across from the church serves as a positive advertisement for the church.

Question 8

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Twenty-seven congregations responded no programs have been abandoned. Eight churches mentioned programs or classes that they have abandoned. Seven churches have abandoned a mandatory BIC for parents. The main reasons listed were either poor attendance or wanting to build relationships before talking about deeper topics such as spirituality. Other

²³ Appendix E p. 120

responses included coffee station by pastors office, open house night, kids' Sunday school program, member discounts for Pre-K, parenting seminars, a coffee hour while children are in class, family BBQ, and Faith stepping stones materials. Reasons for these were either poor attendance or congregational cost. Three churches have abandoned "every family visitation." According to the participant, the number of visits became too great. One church has abandoned sending out newsletters. Two churches have changed expectations of staff members. One church no longer expects the director to handle the both the business side of the ECM and the mission/teaching side. In response to the previous survey question, one pastor said, "Very little. This is the rub. In order for ECE to be a useful outreach tool, there has to be a pastor who serves as the bridge through which prospects will connect to the church. It is incredibly time intensive to build those relationships, and most churches are not staffed properly to do it. You'd like to expect the ECE teachers to do it, but it's often beyond their training and call."²⁴ As a result, this participant said that his congregation no longer expects Martin Luther College trained teachers to carry out evangelism efforts.

Question 9

Finish the sentence "What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is....."

Relationships

Fourteen of the 63 participants (23%) believed the most important factor for the ECM outreach efforts was building relationships. Both staff members building relationships with parents and congregation members building relationships with families were mentioned as being the most important factor. One participant finished the sentence with this response:

"Personal connections. Outreach at its core is still way more about the people work than program. God's plan for mission work hasn't changed. He's always intended people to share their faith with others. Programs can help us find ways to share our faith with others, but no program is really going to automatically make disciples. We use program

²⁴ Appendix E p. 159

to give us opportunities to do the people work of sharing our faith. Our ECM gives us some good opportunities to connect with people and share our faith.”²⁵

Staff

Twenty-five of the 63 participants (40%) felt that staff was the most important factor when connecting families of ECM students to the church. Five responses directly mentioned the pastor and nine responses directly mentioned either the director or teachers. One response mentioned connecting the families with a ministry team. The responses described the work of the staff using words such as: encouraging, deliberately interacting, outreach mindset, outreach orientated, specifically speaking, actively engaged, willing to work, faithful, strongest people I know, constantly seeking to connect, making a conscious effort to connect, noticeable efforts.²⁶ These words present a detailed picture of what a valuable staff member looks like for a congregation.

Culture

The next identifiable trend is culture, with a good amount of overlap. Eight of the 63 (13%) responses included culture. This was distinguished from staff because the researcher felt this was not exclusive of the staff, but included the entire congregation to which the ECM was associated. Creating a culture where outreach is done is a difficult process but one that these churches felt was most important when reaching out to ECM families. Culture included work in the classroom. The classroom culture that the children were used to in the ECM was that shared with the parents. Culture may start with the staff or with the congregation.

Programs

Fourteen of the 63 responses (21%) mentioned a program the church or school organized as the most helpful way to connect with families of ECM students. Four of these responses mentioned singing in church, two of them were BIC. One response highlighted the importance of these events when supplemented by a well-trained staff:

Events designed to bridge church and school (preschool singing, Trunk or Treat, VBS, Easter 4kids etc..) accompanied by a staff that I would describe as AWARE (of the unchurched families), AVAILABLE (make time for the families during drop-off and

²⁵ Appendix E p.124

²⁶ Appendix A p. 71

pickup), and willing to ASK (if such families would be interested in learning more about our church).²⁷

Unsure or Negative

Two participants were said they were unsure what was most helpful. One survey participant said “there is no effort”²⁸ done by the church to reach out to ECM families.

Question 10

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?”

Data was sorted by region and then in descending order. The average of each district was calculated by taking the sum of the responses in every region and then dividing by the number of responses. The total number is the sum of all congregational responses. The average was calculated by taking the sum of the responses (923) and dividing by the number of responses (43). Eight churches did not know and were not included in this data. One church in the data set responded “5 families”. The researcher assumed the family to be four members on average and then multiplied by 5. Data was entered into the chart below as 20. This data is marked with an asterisk. Some districts, including California, Northern Wisconsin, South Central, Western Wisconsin, and South Eastern Wisconsin had a large disparity between the largest and the second largest ECM. These may be considered outliers.

District	Responses	Avg	% of Avg.
California	80, 30, 12, 10, 5	27.4	127%
Dakota Montana	30, 24, 8, 0	15.5	72%
Michigan	32, 14, 6, 4, 3	11.8	55%
Minnesota	10, 10, 3	7.6	35%
Nebraska	20, 15, 12, 10, 2	11.8	55%
North Atlantic	0, 3	1.5	7%

²⁷ Appendix E, p. 150

²⁸ Appendix E p. 128

Northern Wisconsin	83, 20, 10	37.6	175%
Pacific Northwest	39, 38, 20, 25, 0	28.5	133%
South Atlantic	100, 33, 25, 8	41.5	193%
South Central	60, 10, 0	23.3	108%
South Eastern	57, 20, 20*, 15, 10, 6	21.3	99%
Western Wisconsin	50, 5, 0	13.75	64%
Total	923	21.5	

Question 11

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

Confidence rating was sorted by region and then in descending order. The average of each district was calculated by taking the sum of the responses in every region and then dividing by the number of responses. The total number is the sum of all responses. The average was calculated by taking the total number and dividing it by the number of responses. Results were then sorted in descending order. Results are as follows.

District	Responses	Avg	% of Avg.
California	9, 5, 4, 3, 2	4.6	81%
Dakota Montana	8, 6, 6, 6, 6	6.4	112%
Michigan	8, 7, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3	4.6	81%
Minnesota	5, 5, 3	4.3	75%
Nebraska	8, 8, 8, 6, 4	6.8	119%
North Atlantic	6, 1	3.5	61%

Northern Wisconsin	7, 5, 2	4.7	82%
Pacific Northwest	10, 9, 8, 8, 8, 7, 3, 2	6.9	121%
South Atlantic	9, 8, 8, 7, 5	7.4	130%
South Central	9, 5, 3, 3, 2	4.4	77%
South Eastern	10, 9, 8, 7, 7, 5, 5, 2	6.6	116%
Western Wisconsin	10, 7, 5, 3, 2	5.4	95%
Total		5.7	

Question 12

Please leave any additional thoughts or comments for the researcher to consider.

Positive Comments

Eight participants added additional positive comments. Five of the responses talked about the wonderful blessings for outreach the church has had through the ECM. Three mentioned the wonderful opportunity to reach out to so many children who are happy to hear God’s Word. One church mentioned reaching out to many different ethnicities, and one church commented this is the best avenue of outreach in the community. Three others commented how the churches need to expand because of the ECM: two said they were looking to call a second pastor, and one did not specify how they were going to expand.

Staff Concerns

Seven participants had additional comments about the current staff serving the ECM in their congregation. One participant was concerned about the training that WELS teachers receive at Martin Luther College. This participant felt that students graduating this program may not be equipped to handle being a director of an ECM and this could cause the ECM to suffer.

I am concerned that our teacher training college (MLC) appears to only aim at preparing students to teach in an early childhood center or, at most, guide a small group. It is disconcerting to be told a graduate is not prepared to begin handling the administration a

larger center like ours requires and is not being equipped to manage the many workers in a larger center who might not necessarily be members.²⁹

Another response recognized the skill set for being a teacher and a director are different and in order to remedy this the congregation created a new position to complement the work of the director. This position is titled mission director. Three participants had commented on problems within the congregation because the staff was comprised of non-WELS trained teachers. One participant had this to say:

The effort to teach children about Jesus and model Christian faith to parents and children alike is compromised with the majority of our teachers hired from outside our fellowship. The child care has become more of a side-business at our church than it is a ministry.³⁰

Two others commented that the staff who is currently involved with the ECM is not taking advantage of the opportunity placed before them.

Congregational Concerns

Ten of the 63 participants responded with congregational concerns in the other comments section. Nine of those ten mentioned some sort of financial expectation that was laid on the ECM by the congregation. Participants described this in many different ways including: us vs. them attitude; side business; two missions, not one; Child Care ministry is...to create revenue for the congregation's budget; the preschool needs to be 'self-supporting'. Another concern was the church ignoring the constitution to call or hire teachers. Others thought the congregation was pushing to get baptisms rather than being concerned for the spiritual well-being of the soul. Another participant thought the reason outreach had not been done well is because of the congregation's lack of organization and failure to create or implement a strategy. One participant said:

The ECE has been open for 20 years. The older membership has taken a long time to come on board with the need for an early childhood program since 'children should be at home with their mother'. The church also has a huge responsibility of supporting the

²⁹ Appendix E, p. 107

³⁰ Appendix E, p. 128

elementary school. So since the preschool opened it was supposed to be ‘self-supporting’ financially, which means operational expenses not rent or capital improvements.³¹

Mission Statements/ Words of Advice

Eleven participants gave additional information about positive things their ECM has done. Every response in this area had an outreach minded theme. While not every response said those exact words it was the overwhelming theme. One response seemed to summarize the other responses:

We don't twist arms. We don't get caught up in numbers! We simply value every child and their family as individuals created by God who are walking in different phases of life. Many of these families come into the program with absolutely NO intention of making it anything more than that, but by God's grace, they connect emotionally to our school.³²

Things that are Holding us Back

Three responses addressed what was hindering the ECM program at their congregation. One thought it was financial resources. One perceived it be a multi-campus approach that left a disconnect between the church and ECM. Another participant thought a barrier in connecting with an ECM student is the time barrier:

I think the difficult aspect of this topic is that we only have the students in our care for a year or two. We strive to make connections, but we need to be careful that we're not being too forceful as we reach out. One of our goals here is to get the Preschool students into the elementary grades. That, in theory, exposes them to God's Word for a longer period of time.³³

Further Explanation

One participant clarified the number of students in their ECM. He explained that there may be some overlap between students in an ECM program like kindergarten or preschool and another ECM program like Mommies and Me.

Question 13

³¹ Appendix E, p. 127

³² Appendix E, p. 141

³³ Appendix E, p. 108

Seventeen of the 63 participants of this survey requested to remain anonymous. The researcher believed, because of the small sample size, that anonymity could be better protected if all participants remained anonymous. Therefore, all names and locations of participants were left anonymous in the results.

Summary of the Quantitative Data

A number of correlations in the quantitative data were generated by the survey. The averaged data from figures one, two, and three are listed in the chart below.

District	Average Confidence	Average Enrollment	Average New Members
California	4.6	73.4	27.4
Dakota Montana	6.4	61.5	15.5
Michigan	4.6	63	11.8
Minnesota	4.3	83	7.6
Nebraska	6.8	60	11.8
North Atlantic	3.5	35.5	1.5
Northern Wisconsin	4.7	91.3	37.6
Pacific Northwest	6.9	54.2	28.5
South Atlantic	7.4	65.75	41.5
South Central	4.4	28.5	23.3
South Eastern	6.6	199.8	21.3
Western Wisconsin	5.4	87	13.75

Churches with a higher quantity of new members whose first contact was with the ECM had higher confidence levels than churches who had fewer members join whose first contact was with the ECM program. The South Atlantic district averaged 41.5 new members in the last five years per congregation and also had the highest average confidence of 7.9 out of 10. The North Atlantic district had the lowest average of new members in the last 5 years (1.5) and also had the lowest average confidence, 3.5. The Minnesota district participants reported the second fewest new members 7.6 and also had the second lowest confidence 4.3. Nebraska did not follow this

trend. While it had the third lowest number (11.8) of new members whose first contact with the ECM, it had the third highest confidence that it was using its ECM effectively (6.8).

Discussion

Cross-geographic trends in strategies exist in WELS ECM. Throughout the WELS, many new Early Childhood Ministries have been established. ECM are also growing in enrollment as seen in the data collected from the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) reports from the last 30 years:

1985-86	798 enrolled	(Number of ECM not reported)
1990-91	1999 enrolled	(Number of ECM not reported)
1995-96	4146 enrolled	(Number of ECM not reported)
2000-01	5775 enrolled	313 ECM (238 with an LES, 75 stand-alone)
2005-06	9131 enrolled	386 ECM (253 with an LES, 133 stand-alone)
2010-11	10,019 enrolled	388 ECM (225 with an LES, 163 stand-alone)
2015-16	10,911 enrolled	403 ECM (219 with an LES, 184 stand-alone) ³⁴

ECM have grown from under 800 students to more than ten times that amount in just thirty years. There are 110 more stand-alone ECM than there were just 15 years ago. There are currently 403 ECM in the WELS. Fifty-three (13%) of them participated in this survey. The ECM surveyed are serving 4,080 students, and according to the responses of this survey over 900 new souls in the last 5 years have entered into the church whose first contact was with one of our ECM.

There is also a large opportunity to do outreach. These ECM enroll many who are not members of the WELS church connected to the ECM. According to CLS these are the opportunities across WELS for outreach in ECM outreach efforts. ³⁵

WELS Member from Governing Congregations	WELS Member from Other WELS/ELS Congregations	Members of Other Christian Congregations	Non-Christian	No Church Affiliation or Membership (Mission Prospects)
2,629 (24.09%)	689 (6.31%)	4,543 (41.64%)	377 (3.40%)	2,673 (24.50%)

³⁴ "Quote." E-mail message to author. Cindi Holman. December 1, 2015.

³⁵ Cindi Holman document presented at mission and ministry at WLS February 2016

The data collected from question #7 shows trending strategies WELS congregations use to connect people to the church. The data shows these are the most popular trends:

TREND	% CONGREGATIONS USING STRATEGY
Introduction to Religious Ideas	61%
Church Events	61%
Pastor as Evangelist	53%
Singing in Church	47%
Newsletters	37%
Advertisement	35%
Family Building Classes	23%
Services (Specific Church Services)	20%
Chapel	20%
Intentional Outreach Attitudes	16%
Church Appointed Committees/ Positions	12%
Building as Outreach Tool	10%
Curriculum as Evangelist	10%
Director as Evangelist	8%
Community Participation	8%
Teacher as Evangelist	6%

Written Strategy for Outreach	4%
Principal as Evangelist	2%
Staff Minister as Evangelist	2%
Using outreach Software	2%

There were three categories used in over 50% of the churches surveyed: Introduction to Religious Ideas, Church Events, and Pastor as Evangelist. “Introduction to Religious Ideas” is being upfront about the beliefs that you are going to share with the children. This was done in multiple ways, either through a BIC, through handouts given at parent-teacher conferences, or through a short formal meeting at the beginning of the school year. It is very fitting that this is at the top of the list of trends. Since the mission of many ECM was for non-members, it is appropriate to educate families regarding what makes a WELS ECM unique compared to other preschool or kindergarten programs.

One aspect of “Introduction to Religious Ideas,” was not only the strongest upward trend but was also the strongest downward trend. That aspect was the use of a Bible Information Class (BIC). Fourteen percent of congregations said they are no longer requiring BIC. Only one church mentioned that they require a BIC for parents of non-members. This does not mean churches do not see value in having non-member parents in a BIC, but it may show non-member parents do not see value in attending a BIC. This may be because the parents belong to a different church body, or because the lives of the parents are busier than they used to be, or parents may not be looking for a congregation, but just a preschool that teaches good morals. Perhaps, it may be that parents do not want to listen to a church share its religious beliefs until they have reached a certain level of confidence with the members or staff. But in any case, it appears churches are feeling the need to go beyond just requiring BIC of new parents. Three churches in the survey offered a monetary incentive to take a BIC; two received one-month free tuition, and one received a year of free tuition. One church indicated that many attend a BIC and a key reason for

that may be because they have a waiting list for non-members to attend. In that church non-member parents take a BIC and become members of the church then they can enroll the child with preference before non-members.

A significant number of responses cited “Church (or school) Events” as their strongest strategy for outreach. ECM participate in advertising campaigns, newsletters, BIC, chapels, Sunday school, special services, singing in church, and a whole list of seasonal yearly programs done by congregations. Some of these programs are used across geographical barriers like Christmas for Kids, Easter for Kids, or Vacation Bible school, and others of them are very regional, like BBQ night.

These events are not necessarily effective outreach in and of themselves; rather, they provide an opportunity to do outreach and evangelism. According to data collected in Question #9, 21% of the participants thought that programs were most helpful in connecting people from the ECM to the congregation. This is just slightly less than the 23% of participants who thought relationships were the most important when connecting with ECM families. The questions asked in the survey may have led to these responses. When someone is asked, “What has your church done?” It may have been easier to name the tangible events than to think of the welcoming smiles that lead to relationships built at those events. Events can be a great way to get new members onto church property. They can be avenues to talk about the Bible and share the Gospel message.

The third strongest trend was using “Pastor as Evangelist.” The pastor is able to train his congregation to evangelize at church events. Fifty-three percent of participants mentioned work done by the pastor was important. However, this could be because 56% of the participants were pastors. Eleven of the 26 responses wrote about the value of the pastor being visible. Even opening doors at the beginning or end of the day allowed the pastor to be a part of the student’s daily life. Six other churches saw great value in the pastor being involved in the classroom. This could lead families to identify him as a spiritual leader even if they were not members of the church.

The other positions of the staff were mentioned far less often by survey participants in the question asking, “What has your church done?” Only 8% mentioned the director specifically

doing evangelism, 6% mentioned teachers, 2% principals, and 2% staff ministers. This data is surprising because the directors and teachers are in contact with the students much more often than the pastors. Forty percent of participants thought the staff was the most important thing that connected ECM families to the church. Twenty-nine participants answering the question asking “What is most important?” mentioned either a teacher, director, pastor, and/or a ministry team. While there may be many programs that the congregations run, almost half of the participants believed the staff was the most important thing connecting ECM families to the church. The staff was mentioned in 11 of the 12 districts. This is clearly a cross geographical trend. It should not be a surprise that servants of God’s church would want to share the message of the Gospel. It is the staff who regularly communicates, and has opportunities to share, with students and families of the ECM or ECE. The staff is the ones who are called by the congregation to serve in the ECM. They are able to devote more time to the ECM than any other member of the congregation because it is their career.

One reason why outreach is not done in some ECM was due to the fact that some ECM has staff members that are not WELS members. This is something that is uncommon to the educational program of WELS LES. Nearly all of teachers in WELS schools received their positions through a divine call. However, this is not always true in ECM. There are teachers, educational assistants, and, in some cases, directors who are not WELS members. With this structure, it seems difficult to do ministerial work when not all of the staff members are part of the same church body. One participant commented, “I would suggest including the importance of having a trained called worker in your preschool who is at the very least WELS certified. We don't have one and it's a been a total mess.”³⁶

Another reason why ministry may not be done well is the director or teacher may not be able to do it well. This may be because they do not have the gifts for the position to which they are called. As the statistics show, there has been a boom in the enrollment of WELS Early Childhood Ministries. More governmental standards have been implemented upon ECM and ECE programs in recent years. Jennifer Mehlberg, a professor at Martin Luther College, confirmed this in a phone interview. She explained to the researcher that more and more time

³⁶ Appendix E, p. 94

may have to be sacrificed from the classroom, lesson preparation, or extracurricular events in order to satisfy the regulations of our government. Some teachers who are now being asked to be directors may not have the gifts to do this. Churches are asking them to move from a teaching role to an administration role. In some cases staff who were trained and called to be teachers are now being asked to oversee a whole staff. For this reason, one church has created a separate position called “mission director” to help compliment the director’s duties and ensure that ministry does not fall through the cracks.

The WELS is blessed to have a teacher training school. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota is supported by WELS for the purpose of training men and women to serve as teachers or administrators within synod schools. When new opportunities like the ECM program arise, the teacher training school is able to educate the next generation of teachers to be prepared for that ministry. Having a teacher training school for all teachers means that all teachers will be trained in the same way. The advantage is the strengths of the teacher training program can be consistent strengths for the teachers. It also means the weaknesses of the program may be consistent with the teachers.

Teaching and administrating are a different set of gifts. One individual may be qualified for one and not the other. Jennifer Mehlberg commented on this in a phone interview when the researcher asked her a question about this concern. The researcher asked: “The role of ECM in our church seems to be evolving. How has that changed how you teach the students you are training as they become ECM directors or teachers rather than just kindergarten or preschool teachers?” Prof. Mehlberg agreed that the role of the early childhood director has changed. She herself was a director of an ECM. This ECM was used primarily as an outreach tool. As she teaches future ECM directors and teachers she is able to draw on her years of experience bringing in practical experience whenever possible. In her last few years heading this new major at MLC, she has reworked the curriculum to keep up with the changing needs of ECM throughout the synod. Specifically addressing the role of director, Prof. Mehlberg has reworked a three credit administration course required of all ECE majors.

In a different interaction with Prof Mehlberg through an email, she explained how she teaches evangelism methods in her classroom:

I speak to the purpose of an ECM where we talk about mission statements and the roles that directors and teachers have with this. We talk about working relationships as early childhood educators work with pastors, committee members, ECM staff to fulfill the mission and purpose of their ministry. Evangelism would(should) certainly be the focus of those relationships. We also spend a good deal of time on the topic of partnering with parents. We discuss outreach efforts and programs/events that ECM's are currently having success with.³⁷

In two other classes, “Primary Curriculum” and “Infant and Toddler Educare,” the ideas of Christian education and evangelism go hand in hand. In these courses, students discuss the rationale for why congregations might choose these types of programs as part of their mission.

Martin Luther College realizes the importance of specialized training for Early childhood directors and teachers. The reason for this is not only because of the rigorous state standards that are needed, but also because there is an opportunity to use this ministry to witness. That opportunity is given to the church, but Prof. Mehlberg concurs with many of the survey participants that staff are one of the most valued tools for outreach.

I certainly agree that a main contributor to evangelism in Early Childhood Ministries is the ECM staff. When the staff are all well-trained educators who have a strong faith life, they model this to all the children and families in their care. In order to fulfill the mission of the Early Childhood Ministry in which they work, it makes sense that the staff would model Christian living in all they do and make it their mission to build relationships with the families they serve in order to reach out to them with the gospel. It is always my hope that this drive to reach out, not only [to] young children but also their families, is what drives undergraduates to enroll in the Early Childhood program.³⁸

These improvements to the curriculum and a more in-depth focus of the ECM will certainly be helpful for the future generations of teachers along with all of the churches that they serve. Giving teachers better training and more directed instruction will help give them the tools to serve the Lord in many new and exciting ways.

The mission of the students preparing to be teachers is clearly defined. Every Early Child Education (ECE) student at MLC student-teaches during their college career. They receive a student teaching handbook during for the purpose defined in its preface:

³⁷ Mehlberg, Jennifer. 2015. Interviewed by author, via. E-mail. November 23, 2015

³⁸ Mehlberg email 2015

The handbook is intended to assist in coordinating the efforts of all those working in the Martin Luther College student teaching program. The information and guidelines it contains are directed toward helping to make the student teaching experience contribute significantly to the training of competent teachers and caregivers who will be ready to serve in the church's ministry.³⁹

Prof. Mehlberg and MLC are not just training teachers to teach children; they are preparing them for the church's ministry. The handbook is very useful for understanding what the WELS teacher training college strives to see from its teachers. The philosophy of having a WELS ECM is explicitly defined:

God specifically gives parents the primary responsibility for nurturing their children. Christian early childhood ministries provide for the Christian nurturing of young children which are a necessary aspect of the mission of the church. This unique ministry strives to meet the spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of young children in a developmentally appropriate manner.⁴⁰

The handbook is used and referred to throughout a number of classes according to Prof. Mehlberg. The college does as much as possible to prepare ECE teachers to serve in future ECM. Yet, the process is not perfect. “The reality is they might be a director and they have a B.A. in Education and we try to throw in administration. We realize what they are stepping into. Congregations are also realizing that ECMs are a big deal and need support.”⁴¹

Congregational support was a concern of the survey participants. Concerns with the congregation were the most talked about topic in the “other comments” section. Seven responses talked financial struggles between the congregation and the ECM. In many of these cases, the congregation was relying on the ECM to produce enough revenue to support at least itself and, in some cases, the rest of the congregation's budget. Other participants responded that the congregation lacked a plan or motivation to carry out any ministry using the prospects gained by the ECM. Others said there was an attitude that devalued or under appreciated the work done by

³⁹*Early Childhood Student Teaching Handbook*. Revised 2015. Martin Luther College.

⁴⁰ Handbook p. 7

⁴¹ Mehlberg e-mail 2015

ECM. Some of the participants felt unimportant or ignored.⁴² Some said that members did not agree having an ECM was a beneficial thing because “children should be at home with their mother”⁴³ One response said there seemed to be a separate mission between the church and the congregation.

The tool of an ECM cannot be used effectively if the congregation does not want to use this tool effectively. The responses in the previous paragraph indicated struggle and frustration. The responses were written by called workers who wanted to do more but did not feel that is what the people they were serving wanted. One comment left in the other comments section says:

A church with a childcare has one ministry, not two. If the child care is regarded as a separate entity, there will be relational problems between it and the church. Operate as one ministry, with one budget, and one mission and purpose. The separation will only create division in the congregation.⁴⁴

The WELS has responded to the concerns that there is a greater need for the training of directors. In 2015 at the WELS synod convention the synod passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS 1) the Ad Hoc Commission 2 (AHC2) studied the growing need in our church body for strong, well prepared, and highly capable leaders for early childhood ministry (ECM), specifically the issue of how we prepare early childhood directors for their work; and WHEREAS 2) the AHC2 study revealed a need for WELS congregations to have a well-defined ECM mission and purpose that is a part of the overall mission of the church and that the congregation, its leaders, and the ECM staff understand that purpose and support it; therefore be it

Resolved, a) that the synod in convention supports the AHC2 recommendation to encourage congregations of WELS that have an early childhood ministry to review their ECM mission and purpose and to provide adequate support to carry them out, especially regarding the director position; and be it finally

Resolved, b) that the synod in convention support the AHC2 recommendation to encourage congregations of WELS that wish to add an early childhood ministry program to have a clearly defined ECM mission and purpose that flows from and supports the mission of the

⁴² Appendix E. p. 127

⁴³ Appendix E, p. 129

⁴⁴ Appendix E, p. 129

church and that members, church leaders, and ECM staff understand them and support them.⁴⁵

The synod believes that the staff not only needs to be equipped in its pre-service training, but it also needs to be supported by a congregation who has the same mission. The only thing that can get everyone on the same page is God's Word. However, clearly defining the mission can help. Having a strong church structure to support both the congregation and its staff can lead to a strong ECM. Seven congregations mentioned in the survey that the staff makes an effort to evangelize. This attitude is something that is encouraged by the leadership of the congregations. Five churches said they do some sort of evangelism training to help make this attitude evident. Five of these congregations said they were instructed or trained to do so. Six congregations had some sort of church appointed committee or position that was in charge of evangelism and outreach. The congregations with these things in place have made it obvious to the staff and the church members that they are actively using their ECM as an outreach tool.

Church structure is also a point of emphasis for WELS. In July of 2011, WELS has added a new position to the Commission of Lutheran Schools (CLS) to help support this growing ministry. Cindi Holman is the Coordinator of Early Childhood Ministries. CLS exists to guide and assist WELS congregations in advancing the Gospel by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools.⁴⁶ Coordinator Holman, when asked by the researcher, described the role of her position. Holman writes the role includes:

- consulting with congregations looking to start, revitalize, or expand an early childhood ministry.
- consulting with individual EC teachers and directors.
- working with CLS to develop resources for WELS early childhood ministries.
- revising *Building Blocks: A Handbook for Beginning and Operating a Christian Early Childhood Ministry*
- developing a weekly devotion series for early childhood educators.
- developing support and mentoring programs for WELS early childhood directors, especially those who have recently been assigned as an early childhood director.
- developing a one-year cohort program for individuals with leadership gifts to help prepare them for potential roles as an early childhood director.

⁴⁵ *WELS Annual Report*. Report. June 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://wels.net/about-wels/official-reports/>.

⁴⁶ CLS webpage, <http://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/education/lutheran-schools/> (February 2nd, 2016)

- coordinating our WELS Early Childhood District Coordinators who serve in each district.
- providing presentations/workshops to congregations, groups of pastors or principals, teacher conferences, and parent groups on a variety of topics related to an ECM.
- collaborating with MLC on the mentoring of new teachers, directors, and principals.
- working on a new program in collaboration with the Commission on Evangelism. We are developing a one-day workshop for congregations regarding using their schools and early childhood ministries for outreach⁴⁷

The resource *Building Blocks* was highlighted by Coordinator Holman as a great resource for churches looking to start, revitalize, or expand their ECM program. In an interview found on the WELS webpage, Cindi Holman discussed the challenges facing the ECM programs. When asked, “What are the problems facing your early childhood ministries?” Holman responded:

Supplying our congregations with people trained to serve in early childhood ministry is definitely a critical issue. There are not enough people qualified to fill all the positions at this time. It’s something the Commission on Lutheran Schools and MLC are concerned about and working on. It’s one of the reasons I’m excited about the new Early Childhood Learning Center at Martin Luther College in New Ulm. The new center will be a wonderful facility to train students who are already considering early childhood, but I’m hopeful it will also spark interest in early childhood.⁴⁸

Only 10% of congregations said that the curriculum of the ECM was a way they connected to families. This appears to be an under-appreciated aspect of evangelism to the participants of the survey. “Children make the best witnesses,”⁴⁹ one participant said. As children sing hymns at home or memorize Bible passages, or in other religion homework the parents will also work with the messages of God’s Word. They, the children, are the ones the ECM is have a larger portion of time with. While the hope is that through the children the congregation will reach the whole family, it is the children attending the ECM we have the opportunity to share the message of God’s Word with every day.

Children who come to an ECM will hear God’s Word. And the church is able to tell children who do not know Jesus about the love their Savior has for them. What an amazing blessing! Participants mentioned ways of getting the children into the church to worship their

⁴⁷ "Quote." E-mail message to author. December 1, 2015.

⁴⁸Early Childhood Ministries." WELS. Accessed February 2, 2016. <http://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/education/lutheran-schools/early-childhood-ministries/>.

⁴⁹ Appendix E, p. 160

Lord. They can do this through singing in church as 47% of surveyed churches do, chapel services as 20% of the participants mentioned, or through special services that 20% of surveyed churches hold. In all of these cases, there was an intentional effort by the congregation to connect the children to God's Word in the church. Family members may or may not attend chapel or church services, but the children will hear the precious Word of God.

Along with staff, the participants felt that the staff was important because it helped create relationships with the church. Thirteen of the 25 responses that said the staff was the most important explained the staff was important because of the relationships they built. The 13 responses (23%) categorized under relationships did not specify who was building the relationships. Building relationships is by far the strongest trend of cross geographical outreach strategies. Every category can be grouped underneath this trend. The church has an "Introduction to Religious Ideas" to build a relationship with the church. "Church Events" allow a non-threatening way to get ECM families mingling with other members of the congregation so stronger relationships are built. The pastor needs to be involved with the ECM so that they can build a strong relationship with the children and the family. The staff is most important because they are the ones with the closest relationships with the family. Advertising, writing newsletters, having family building classes, being involved in community events, all are ways of connecting with people so that strong relationships can be built. This is a trend that we support with all of our efforts. How can we build relationships with people to help them build relationships with their Savior? This is the reason we have an ECM. This is the reason we have a church body. This is the reason why we are here on this earth.

Conclusion

It is clear there are trends in strategies WELS congregations are using cross-geographically. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the staff of the majority of the ECM is trained at one of the WELS worker training schools. The value of this paper is not the insightful comments of the researcher, but rather the responses of the participants. Appendix A shows a database of results collected in the research. It is listed so that churches who are looking to start an ECM, or churches looking to improve their current ECM, may have access to a database that shows what strategies are trending in the WELS.

The goal of each of these strategies is evangelism, that is, announcing the Gospel. We are all sinners. “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10). “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). We deserve punishment for our sins. Yet, God loves us. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but inherit eternal life” (John 3:16). This is the goal of our ministries: to announce to sinners that there is a solution for their sins. An ECM gives us a wonderful platform to announce these truths found in the Bible. We can announce these truths in many different ways through many different strategies.

Bibliography

- Book of Reports and Memorials*. Report. Vol. 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://wels.net/about-wels/official-reports/>.
- Becker, Siegbert W. *The Foolishness of God: The Place of Reason in the Theology of Martin Luther* Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Pub. House, 1982.
- "Early Childhood Ministries." WELS. Accessed February 2, 2016. <http://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/education/lutheran-schools/early-childhood-ministries/>.
- Early Childhood Student Teaching Handbook*. Revised 2015. Martin Luther College.
- Kelm, Paul E. "The Church Growth Movement: An Explanation and Evaluation." *WLS Essay File*, June 24, 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/2475>.
- Kolb, Robert, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000
- "Mehlberg Phone Interview." Telephone interview by author. November 30, 2015.
- Meyer, John P. *WLS Dogmatics Notes*. Edited by John F. Brug et al. Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Press, 2005.
- Muetzal, Ronald M. "An Analysis of the "Church Growth Movement" and Its Theology." *WLS Essay File*, July 22, 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/3386>.
- "Quote." E-mail message to author. Cindi Holman. December 1, 2015.
- "Senior Thesis Help." E-mail message to author. Jennifer Mehlberg. November 23, 2015.
- Valleskey, David J. "A Brief Look at the Church Growth Movement." *WLS Essay File*, June 11, 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/1302>.
- Valleskey, David J. "Outreach and Our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Pre-Schools." *WLS Essay File*, June 11, 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/1331>.
- WELS Annual Report*. Report. June 2015. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://wels.net/about-wels/official-reports/>.

APPENDIX A-Summary of Data

Participants

Survey was sent to 58- Directors or Teachers, 79 Pastors via email

Three bad email addresses were sent back

60 congregations were surveyed

51 responded with at least one staff member

12 with multiple 63 total responses

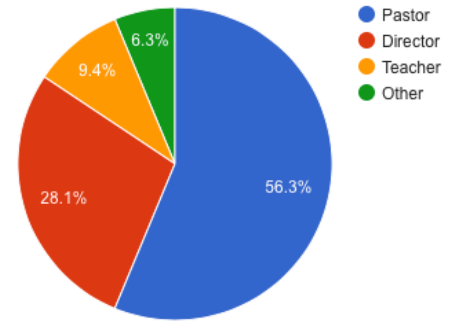
Survey

1. What is your name?
2. What is your title?
3. In what city and state are you located?
4. Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is.... A.)...Primarily to serve the members of the Congregation. B.)...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach. C.)...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation. D.)...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.
5. How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?
 1. (This can include child care, Pre-School, K-3, K-4, K-5, Mommy's day out, Mornings with mommies, or any other pre-elementary school programs.)
6. What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?
 1. (This is a key part of my thesis. Please explain in as much detail as necessary any and all programs that your Congregation has intentionally done to carry out this task. This can include such things as a newsletter, positioning the pastors office in a prominent and accessible location, requiring a Bible information class for parents... etc.)
7. What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?
 1. (Please explain in as much detail as necessary why these are not currently used any more.)
8. Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....
9. How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?
10. On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?
11. Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.
12. May I quote your answers in my paper?

Cumulative Results

Responses: 36 Pastor, 17 Director, 6 Teacher, 4 Other
Churches Represented: 51

Count of What is your title?



Enrollment- Average 71.9

District	Enrolment	Avg	+/- % of Avg.
California	104, 70, 49, 69, 75	73.4	102%
Dakota Montana	115, 75, 35, 21	61.5	86%
Michigan	75, 73, 65, 60, 55, 50	63	88%
Minnesota	105, 57, 87	83	115%
Nebraska	70, 65, 60, 58, 47	60	83%
North Atlantic	47,24	35.5	49%
Northern Wisconsin	200, 54, 20	91.3	127%
Pacific Northwest	60, 56, 54, 53, 48	54.2	75%
South Atlantic	120, 79, 35, 29	65.75	91%
South Central	49, 30, 20, 15	28.5	40%
South Eastern	250, 230, 200, 135, 110, 74	199.8	278%
Western Wisconsin	130, 113, 65, 40	87	121%
Total	4,080	71.9	

Listed below are the districts sorted alphabetically with their data sets sorted from highest to lowest.

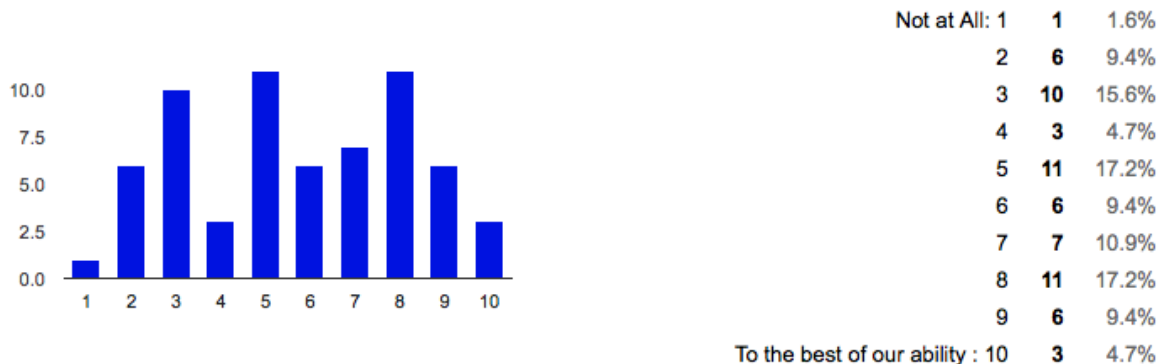
First Contact through ECM: 21.5 AVERAGE

Responses are sorted by district. Each district's data sets are sorted from highest to lowest and then averaged.

District	Responses	Avg	+/- % of Avg.
California	80, 30, 12, 10, 5	27.4	127%
Dakota Montana	30, 24, 8, 0	15.5	72%
Michigan	32, 14, 6, 4, 3	11.8	55%
Minnesota	10, 10, 3	7.6	35%
Nebraska	15, 20, 12, 10, 2	11.8	55%
North Atlantic	0, 3	1.5	7%
Northern Wisconsin	83, 20, 10	37.6	175%
Pacific Northwest	39, 38, 20, 25, 0	28.5	133%
South Atlantic	100, 33, 25, 8	41.5	193%
South Central	60, 10, 0,	23.3	108%
South Eastern	57, 20, 20, 15, 10, 6	21.3	99%
Western Wisconsin	50, 5, 0	13.75	64%
Total	923	21.5	

Used highest given number, for unknowns did not count in average, family value assumed 4, percentage is average of 5 year period x percentage(59.6)

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?



Confidence: Avg. 5.7

Data was generated by asking the question: On a scale of 1-10, 1 being low and 10 being high, how well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach? Data sets are sorted from highest to lowest and then followed by their average.

District	Responses	Avg	+/- % of Avg.
California	9, 5, 4, 3, 2	4.6	81%
Dakota Montana	8, 6, 6, 6, 6	6.4	112%
Michigan	8, 7, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3	4.6	81%
Minnesota	5, 5, 3	4.3	75%
Nebraska	8, 8, 8, 6, 4	6.8	119%
North Atlantic	6, 1	3.5	61%
Northern Wisconsin	7, 5, 2	4.7	82%
Pacific Northwest	10, 9, 8, 8, 8, 7, 3, 2	6.9	121%
South Atlantic	9, 8, 8, 7, 5	7.4	130%
South Central	9, 5, 3, 3, 2	4.4	77%
South Eastern	10, 9, 8, 7, 7, 5, 5, 2	6.6	116%
Western Wisconsin	10, 7, 5, 3, 2	5.4	95%
Total		5.7	

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is.....:

Primarily for outreach (A)

Mostly for outreach partially for our church (B)

Mostly for our Church partially for outreach (C)

Primarily for our Church (D)

District	Primarily for Outreach	Mostly for Outreach partially for our church	Mostly for our Church partial for outreach	Primarily for our Church
California	2	3	0	0
Dakota Montana	0	4	1	0
Michigan	1	6	2	0
Minnesota	1	2	0	0
Nebraska	1	4	0	0
North Atlantic	1	1	0	0
Northern Wisconsin	1	2	0	0
Pacific Northwest	5	3	0	0
South Atlantic	3	1	0	0
South Central	1	3	1	0
South Eastern	0	4	4	0
Western Wisconsin	1	3	1	0
Total	17	36	9	0

Below are the responses alphabetically by each district organized with responses displayed (A,B,C,D)

Question 7: What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

The responses were sorted based on key themes. The five main trends of the responses are **Information, Programming, Staff, Family Building, Structure**. Sub-trends are outlined with percentages of responses that fell under each theme. Each point indicated with a capital letter is a sub-trend. Each numbered point is a unique response (or paraphrase) from a congregation. In cases where a congregation had a participant/participants give multiple responses that fell under the same theme ‘multiple responses’ is listed. Each Roman numeral under ‘multiple responses’ is from a congregation.

As the reader examines this outline, he/she can quickly observe:

Trends, which are in large font,

-
- A. Sub-trends and the percentage of congregations using those strategies, indicated with a capital letter and a percentage 100%
1. the number of congregations from the survey that had a response which fell under this sub-trend, indicated by a number
 - i. the number of different strategies that each congregation used, indicated with a roman numeral.

Information

-
- A. Advertisement 35%
1. Advertise activities and posters in child care area.
 2. We advertise church services at school
 3. Brochures of up coming activities in the community
 4. Invitations are extended to some elementary school events where we hope to have members interacting with ECC parents.
 5. Invitations to worship, especially when kids are singing / part of the service
 6. Worship Invitations
 7. send out invitations to church/school events
 8. We have an outstanding invitation written into our preschool newsletters and calendars.
 9. Multiple Responses

- i. We have signs up
- ii. we talk about what we do at church
- 10. Students are regularly invited to God's Service
- 11. Invite to church
- 12. special invitation to Christmas and Easter worship
- 13. worship service invites throughout the year
- 14. During Christmas, Easter, Sunday School seasons the parents are sent a invitation.
- 15. Multiple Responses
 - i. In a number of cases, the connection begins before enrollment through our outreach ministry.
 - ii. ECM is obviously a focal point in our outreach ministry
 - iii. which consists of weekly canvassing
 - iv. friendship witnessing
 - v. public & media advertising
 - vi. special outreach events/activities) In addition, our school's growing, good reputation -- especially in the last few years -- has made it more attractive to prospective parents/students.
 - vii. We are also completely re-doing our internet presence and message and hope to use it not only for outreach, but also to try to passively assimilate non-churched parents into our church community.
 - viii. We periodically send follow-up mailings to parents of former students who are non-churched (we don't and won't proselytize those who are churched) inviting them to worship -- especially to special, seasonal services.
- 16. Multiple Responses
 - i. Website
 - ii. Having our own website but having a link to our church and school site
- 17. non member families go on outreach email list
- 18. and we also have a Facebook page that we keep updated and invite our families to join

B. Newsletters 37%

- 1. Newsletter (monthly), Online news & notes (weekly)
- 2. Newsletters and e-letters to churched and non churched ECM's
- 3. Eventually our director will do a monthly center-wide newsletter and church activities will be prominent in it, including an article from me each month.
- 4. Newsletter
- 5. Newsletter
- 6. monthly newsletter to each family
- 7. Pastor/principal newsletter
- 8. teacher newsletter
- 9. We use the Center newsletter for informational articles
- 10. Advertise in weekly newsletter church services
- 11. Weekly Classroom/School Newsletter
- 12. We send out a email newsletter every week, with an adult explanation of the Bible Lesson.
- 13. We include our Church service times in our Little Lambs newsletters that the staff writes, a
- 14. We have newsletters with church times in it.
- 15. Church times and dates, Sunday School and events are listed in the Learning center newsletters.
- 16. All EC students receive the grade school news letter.
- 17. They send out a newsletter on a regular basis including information on our school and church events and programs.
- 18. She keeps constant contact with the families by regular newsletter and updates

Programming

A. Orientation 61%

- 1. Bible Overview Course (2hrs) that leads into an optional BIC Class.
- 2. Bic
- 3. Bic

4. BIC.
5. BIC classes when they show interest.
6. offer BIC to our families
7. The pastor conducts a BIC class in the second semester (Jan. -May) especially for non-churched preschool families. We provide babysitting to make it easier.
8. Over the years we have had several families take Bible information classes with Pastor and become members.
9. I don't see us ever requiring BIC; my goal is to invite people to BIC so many times that they succumb to sheer volume!
10. Most of the families are attending bible information classes
11. Multiple Responses
 - i. We do inform them of a B.I.C
 - ii. Pastor also holds a Bible Information Class a 1-2 times each year which we invite our parents to.
 - iii. we began offering a weekly tuition discount if they attended the class, and then continued the discount if they became members of the church. P
12. Multiple Responses
 - i. We invite all non-member parents to take BIC class.
 - ii. We require all non-member teachers to take BIC class-the pastor holds class during the day when they are on the clock.
13. We do not require a BIC class. Without building a relationship with the family first attending a BIC is very difficult. Non-member families make up about 90% of our ECE program. About 40% would be considered unchurched.
14. Multiple Responses
 - i. Non-members interested in our K-8 program are treated as members for tuition for the first year and
 - ii. several opportunities to attend Bible Information classes during that y and by k5 most have taken bic and joined the church.
 - ii.1. Likely the primary motive is knowing that our church has a waiting list for school and members are not turned away.
15. The childcare program is covering its own costs for building debt and operation, so the church does not subsidize the childcare students. Non-members interested in our K-8 program are treated as members for tuition for the first year and have several opportunities to attend Bible Information classes during that year.
16. require non-members with children in our LES to take our Bible Information Class,. If they join, we are overjoyed. If they do not join, they pay tuition. We do not require this of our ECM non-member parents, but they are all encouraged to attend a BIC.
17. Multiple Responses
 - i. BIC offering a month off of tuition if families are willing to take the entire class.
 - ii. This includes our own members Someone asked, "What would we do if all 56 families took us up on this? This would be the entire evangelism budget for the year!" My response, "I'm sure the congregation would reallocate the entire evangelism budget into tuition discounts in order to get over 100 people in our Bible Information Class."
18. We invite preschool families to participate in the Bible Basics Class and after completion of the class, families receive 1 month of tuition reimbursed.
19. By building at relationship daily it opens the opportunity to invite to BIC classes and worship later on.
20. special invitation to BIC for those families who have attended an event - billed as a "date night" for mom and dad now that the kids have had their event.
 - i. In process of planning a two-year "Equipping Parents" curriculum that would involve, finances, parenting, marriage, and BIC (which would be offered every year).
21. Every enrollment packet has a church information from included so we can identify prospects easily. That sheet asks if the child is baptized and that is often the "point of entry" for contact with me.
22. Resources Distributed at Parent/Teacher Conferences
23. Information Class for parents sending children to preschool
24. One of the questions on our enrollment form is "when was the child baptized" and "what church are a member of". We use this information to focus on these families and inviting them to be part of our church family on Sunday morning.
25. Multiple Responses
 - i. Intro to Kindergarten
 - ii. They meet the pastors
26. all families that indicate no church home are added to prospect list are contacted

27. upon enrollment a questionnaire on Name, address, phone, e-mail ,church affiliation (If any) baptism, if they would like the Pastor to visit or call. If not affiliated with a church there info. is given to the Lay Evangelist and put on mailing list.
28. Multiple Responses
 - i. Pastor also contacts all families interested in learning more about the church(we ask on the registration form about interest and if the family is a member of a church).
 - ii. Pastor is in touch with parents who put on their registration form that they would like more info about our congregation.
29. We invite parents to join us for our evening/family Bible studies (for women, men and children) on Wednesdays.
30. Bible Study for Parents
31. Early morning Bible devotions

B. Special Services 20%

1. Christmas Program
2. Christmas Services
3. A brief (20-minute) Christmas Service
4. Christmas
5. Christmas Program
6. We also have Christmas services for the kids.
7. and participate in Christmas Eve service.
8. special services
9. We have church under a tent outside and eat lunch and have a bouncy house.
10. Kids Church

C. Singing in Church 47%

1. sing in church
2. Singing in church
3. Schedule Sundays for the children to sing in church.
4. Children periodically sing in church
5. Singing in Church
6. Singing for church
7. Children sing in church and parents come along.
8. The children sing in church several times a year and then are followed up on.
9. We sing in the church service several times a year.
10. Have Children Sing in Church
11. The preschool children sings 2 times a year in church.
12. The kids sing in church 2-3 times a year
13. The children sing in church three times a year, and that is an open invitation to the families to check us out and see what we are about.
14. We also invite the early childhood students to sing in church 3 times a year
15. sing in church four times during the school year
16. school children are included one per quarter to participate in the worship service by singing
17. we have the preschool kids sing in church once a month with the K-2 grades.
18. We also have children sing in 4 pm Advent and Lenten services.
19. We also have the kids sing in church three times a year to expose them to the gospel.
20. sing in church every other month. Our first singing is in September when the whole school sings.
21. Sing in Church (Christmas, Ascension, Reformation?)
22. Our School children are scheduled to sing in a Sunday service (we purposefully schedule this on Sundays when we don't have Communion).

D. Chapel 20%

1. Singing in chapel services.

2. chapel services
3. chapel services
4. I have chapel every day.
5. host a children's devotion 4x's each week at the end of the school day - parents are encouraged to sit in when they come for pick-up
6. Weekly Chapel Services
7. 3once a week and we have chapel in church
8. We have "Chapel Time" with Pastor twice a month. We invite the parents to be a part of this. Again, this time they are seeing Pastor "in action".
9. We invite and encourage parents to join us for our twice a month chapel times that are led by the Pastor.
10. Multiple responses
 - i. preschool singing
 - ii. We have Preschool Church the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month in the chapel.
 - iii. Families are invited to stay and worship with their preschooler. This is about 15 min. long and the kids sing the songs they have been working on.

E. Sunday School invites go out to all students and Sunday School

1. Sunday school

F. Church Events 61%

1. Multiple Responses
 - i. Father Daughter Dance
 - ii. Ice Cream Social
 - iii. Fiesta night
 - iv. Trunk or Treat
 - v. Pancake breakfasts for all
 - vi. Thanksgiving dinner ECM puts on for congregation members
 - vii. Christmas tea parties for the Women of the church put on by ECM's
2. Multiple Responses
 - i. Christmas for Kids
 - ii. Easter for Kids
 - iii. Summer VBS
3. Vacation Bible School
4. Multiple Responses
 - i. special events
 - ii. like Fall Carnival 9
 - iii. and Hikes.
 - iv. Pumpkin Patch
5. Multiple Responses
 - i. Trunk or treat
 - ii. VBS
 - iii. Concerts
6. Multiple Responses
 - i. Ice Cream Social/New School Year Welcome
 - ii. Trunk-r-Treat
 - iii. Fun Fair
7. Multiple Responses
 - i. church fellowship events throughout the year.
 - ii. Easter for Kids
 - iii. Christmas for Kids
 - iv. VBS.
8. Multiple Responses
 - i. all of our Center events are joint events with the congregation.
 - ii. We hold monthly events at our church and encourage members to mingle and interact with non-members.

- iii. The events are sometimes educational, like the importance of reading,
 - iv. and sometimes simply entertaining, like everyone coming in pajamas, eating popcorn, and watching a movie.
9. Multiple Responses
- i. We have a Pizza Night
 - ii. We do the same thing for Parents' Evening Out (essentially a 3 hour Christmas for Kids, billed as fun child care while the parents go shop at the nearby department stores).
 - iii. VBS
 - iv. Easter for Kids
 - v. Trunk-or-Treat .
10. Multiple Responses
- i. Grandparents night
 - ii. Movie Nights 3
 - iii. Local Fairs
 - iv. Spring Sing Program
 - v. Art Fair
 - vi. VBS
11. Multiple Responses
- i. We currently have a Fall Festival that we offer in connection with Safe Kids and reach out to the community.
 - ii. We also have a good turnout for our VBS of past and current families.
12. Multiple Responses
- i. We have a Fall Festival/Trunk n Treat event
 - ii. and we take the time at the Christmas Programs
 - iii. and Easter
 - iv. and the end of the school year to highlight and invite the families to join us for these special services and
 - v. programs like VBS.
13. invite families to "family-friendly" fellowship events (pastor to mingle with them as much as possible)
14. Multiple Responses
- i. We hold several "community events" each year with target invitations to our ECM families-
 - ii. Fall Fest
 - iii. Christmas for Kids
 - iv. Easter for Kids
 - v. Vacation Bible School.
 - vi. Events designed to bridge church and school
 - vii. Trunk or Treat
 - viii. VBS
 - ix. Easter 4kids
 - x. accompanied by a staff that I would describe as AWARE (of the unchurched families)
 - xi. Walking in a Parade
 - xii. VBS.
15. Our congregation puts on a Living Nativity for the community each year. We invite the preschool families to attend and have the preschoolers sing right after the 1st performance.
16. Multiple Responses
- i. - Meet the Teacher Night (Pastors scoop ice cream and greet PreK families)
 - ii. Thanksgiving Party - kids "help" make meal for their families. Congregation members help with setup cooking and visiting
 - iii. direct invitation to all "come" events (Soccer Camp
 - iv. VBS
 - v. X-mas and
 - vi. Easter 4kids
 - vii. Fall Festival
 - viii. Turkey Bingo
 - ix. worship services
17. Occasionally a member of the church council will come to the preschool staff-led monthly movie nights after much cajoling.
18. Multiple Responses

- i. Preschool families are invited to various fellowship activities like:
 - ii. gingerbread house making event in Dec.
 - iii. Fall Harvest Festival
 - iv. annual church picnic
 - v. Lenten soup suppers
 - vi. Easter brunch.
 - vii. Preschool families are invited to attend VBS
 - viii.5) Creating a "movie night" once per month where we show a movie that is suitable for young children (this month's is Charlie Brown Great Pumpkin) in the sanctuary on the overhead projector.
19. Multiple Responses
- i. We also provide experiences for them and their children to participate in various events on our campus and through our youth group ministries within our church
 - ii. Coffee/Donut Day
 - iii. Mother's Day Tea
 - iv. Father's Day Ice Cream Social
 - v. Thanksgiving Meal
 - vi. Trunk or Treat
 - vii. Valentine's Party
 - viii. Church/PreK picnic
 - ix. September Game Night/Chili Cook-off.
20. Multiple Responses
- i. several "come events"
 - ii. Fall Festival
 - iii. Spring Festivals
 - iv. Christmas for Kids
 - v. Easter for kids events
21. Multiple Responses
- i. We have monthly church sponsored events
 - ii. pizza party and ice cream social on a Saturday afternoon.
 - 1. All currently enrolled students were invited to come socialize with their families, as well as recently enrolled students and of course members of the congregation.
 - iii. pajama party
 - iv. pancake breakfast.
22. Multiple Responses
- i. The church invites ECE (Early Childhood Education) to several events throughout the year—
 - ii. Sunday morning worship
 - iii. Fall Festival
 - iv. Easter egg hunt
 - v. Thanksgiving program
 - vi. Christmas program every year in the church 2
23. Multiple Responses
- i. School and church have a number of fellowship' activities throughout the year
 - ii. Fall Carnival
 - iii. Winter Fest
 - iv. School picnic
 - v. summer church camp
 - vi. church meals
 - vii. We also strive to invite them to fellowship opportunities within our church home.
24. Multiple Responses
- i. Quarterly Outreach Activities
 - ii. Thankful Thursday/Fanatical Friday Breakfasts with Classroom Families
25. Multiple Responses
- i. invite them to activities at the church
 - ii. ice cream social
 - iii. picnic
 - iv. parent info nights
26. We have an ice cream social in September
27. Multiple Responses

- i. We use Christmas for Kids
 - ii. Easter for Kids to get families across the street to our church/school.
 - iii. other programs in our church several times per school year.
28. 3 or 4 major congregational family events per year are attended by most families
29. Multiple Responses
- i. lego nights
 - ii. all fellowship activities
30. Multiple Responses
- i. We host a large number of connecting events
 - ii. Muffins with Mom
 - iii. Doughnuts with Dad
 - iv. Advent by Candlelight
 - v. Congregational Bonfire/Hayride
 - vi. Bowling Events
 - vii. Party at the Park
 - viii. Spring Picnic
 - ix. Happy Birthday Jesus Party
 - x. Financial Peace University Classes
 - xi. Love and Logic Classes
 - xii. New Life Classes

G. School activities 18%

- 1. Multiple Responses
 - i. Different School Events
 - ii. field trips
 - iii. tournaments
 - iv. fundraisers
 - v. Plays
 - vi. Art fairs
 - vii. Special party days
 - viii. Jobs to come and teach
 - ix. activities in the classroom
 - x. inviting mom's, dad's and grandma's and grandpa's for different events
 - xi. Having 2 days a week where families and members can come and get Panera bread and communicate
- 2. Multiple Responses
 - i. Congregation members are invited to be apart of all Learning Center events.
 - ii. Open houses
 - iii. Family Days
 - iv. Preschool Graduation
 - v. Holiday Dinner (This is to help enrolled families build relationships with members outside of the Learning Center)
- 3. graduation
- 4. We have parent gatherings to welcome everyone.
- 5. Calendar of events shared with congregation
- 6. Multiple Responses
 - i. various field trips, included our families in all our activities
 - ii. We have a parent's night out each month
- 7. Christmas Play - kids put on this event, families invited (church lobby filled with tables for coloring, cookies, coffee, etc. School Board members all serve at this event.
- 8. We have joint field trips with upper grade classes.
- 9. February we have Christian Education Week where we hold an annual Scholastic Book fair sponsored by our childcare center/preschool

Staff

A. Pastor as Evangelist 53%

1. Multiple Responses
 - i. The pastor comes into the classroom once a week to read to the children.
 - ii. Promoting pastor as good counselor for unchurched home ""issues""
2. Multiple Responses
 - i. Pastor has almost daily contact with children
 - ii. sometimes substituting/assisting in classroom
 - iii. Many children recognize him as "my pastor."
3. Multiple Responses
 - i. Our pastor takes a little time to sing songs with the children once a week.
 - ii. He also tries to contact each family with an s,offer to learn more about our Savior.
4. Pastor works in our classrooms daily
5. He visits each classroom once a week to tell them our Bible story and sing songs with them.
6. Pastor does object lesson for children / teaches Bible Story once a month
7. Multiple Responses
 - i. The pastor usually greets parents in the hallway before school.
 - ii. Pastor greeting parents either at the beginning or end of the day
 - iii. Children greeting pastor on walks through the campus in morning
8. Visibility of Pastor at events
9. I spend mornings in the childcare office rather than my own so that I can greet parents as they come in. I try to be around at pick up too, and parents usually have more time after work to talk than before.
10. Pastor at door at opening and closing of school sessions
11. One of our pastors greets at the door for about 20 minutes in morning
 - i. once a week and another tells a Bible lesson in one of our 5 rooms
12. Our pastor makes himself "known" from the first time we meet the parents at our Open House.
13. The pastor keeps a regular presence with the preschool families by wandering the hallway as they are dropping off their children.
14. Multiple Responses
 - i. Our pastor is always around during drop off greeting the families.
 - ii. Pastor is actively greeting parents before/after preschool.
15. at least one pastor always tries to be out in Lobby for pick up and drop off times each day.
16. being present at opening and closing time where I try to build a relationship with the families.
17. Multiple Responses
 - i. The pastor also needs to be present, visible, and active with the school.
 - ii. Teacher encourage parents to attend counseling with Pastor
18. The Pastor comes in and out of the building periodically. He talks to the teachers and children.
19. I meet and greet them regularly so I can create a personal relationship from the day they enroll to the day they graduate 8th grade.
20. Outreach pastor (me) meets with parents in January to "evaluate the preschool program "
21. Multiple Responses
 - i. Connect with Pastor: Make sure Pastor is available a few times a week to greet and strike up conversation with the parents. This 'small talk' often leads to 'bigger talk.'
 - ii. Make sure his office is in line with preK OR that he is up to greet when the kids come in (For us Monday morning, Wed Morn, Thur Evening and Friday evenings are the best for talking)
22. Multiple Responses
 - i. Pastor sends out devotional emails once in a while...
 - ii. invites them on a one on one basis to church
 - iii. meditations, sermons, forward in Christ out for them to pick up
 - iv. occasional note in the child's paper.
23. Pastor Devotions
24. Pastor works with preschool teacher to identify children who have no been baptized and parents who have no church home.
25. Multiple Responses

- i. "Bread of Life" visits (friendly visits made 36 hours after worship) are made to parents who worship with us for the first time.
 - ii. Members also make follow up visits on preschool families throughout the year.
 26. This year we added a third pastor
-

B. Director as Evangelist 8%

1. Our ECC director offers Christian guidance and encouragement to parents, workers and children as she interacts with them on many different levels.
 2. The Administrator/Director personally invites unchurched families
 3. We also encourage the families to have their child attend Sunday School, as part of a Jesus' Lambs "package".
 4. home visits by staff
-

C. Principal as Evangelist 2%

1. Our Principal is a major factor in communicating Christ's love and forgiveness
 - i. Our principal, pastors and teachers regularly greet children & parents for a period of time as they arrive every morning in order to help them become more familiar with us.
 - ii. One key for us is having a called worker overseeing each level (infant, toddler, preschool). The called workers are critical in forming relationships with parents and then connecting them with me.
-

D. Staff Minister as Evangelist 2%

1. We send our families to our staff minister with questions
-

E. Teacher as Evangelist 6%

1. Our teachers are the main evangelists.
 - i. They are trained and equipped to make connections with parents and be a bridge between the school and the church. It is essential that they form relationships with the parents and then encourage and invite parents to come to worship or Bible study or events.
 2. Our main component is though the excellent teachers we have. They are instructed to invite, invite, invite. We train our teachers and discuss with them how encouraging these families to attend is a valuable tool.
 3. Regular encouragements from staff to non-churched children to attend worship and Sunday school.
-

F. Curriculum as Evangelist 10%

1. Bible stories in each of the classrooms-
 2. Devotion--Bible Stories w/ sheets to go home with parents
 - i. Songs (for them to repeat to their parents)
 3. The children are being taught the word of God.
 4. Share God's Word with the Kids:
 - i. above all else- keep Christ at the center of the classroom. The children make the best witnesses.
 5. We also send home worksheets with our Bible stories for the week. The children are often the best advocates for our church.
-

F. Nothing-(quotes presented in entirety)

1. Very little. This is the rub. In order for ECE to be a useful outreach tool, there has to be a pastor who serves as the bridge through which prospects will connect to the church. It is incredibly time intensive to build those relationships, and most churches are not staffed properly to do it. You'd like to expect the ECE teachers to do it, but it's often beyond their training and call.

2. Unfortunately my congregation does not try to reach out to the preschool other than those involved in the preschool. The first two weeks of school, the pastor and a member of the church who often subs for the teachers had a table and gave out coffee and offered parenting classes to the parents. Occasionally a member of the church council will come to the preschool staff-led monthly movie nights after much cajoling.
3. Really nothing...It's quite sad the ministry was started before my time here and there was no extra planning to strategize how to engage the families walking through our doors. We do inform them of a B.I.C. or other congregational events and the kids sing in church but I have been pushing for a 3rd pastor to nurture these prospect families and pursue other mission opportunities.

Family Building

A. Family Building Classes 23%

1. Power Hour Program for families
2. Mommies and me
3. a mom and tots day per month
4. Parenting Class
5. Once our new sanctuary is complete I'd like to start offering parenting workshops
 - i. and marriage enrichment opportunities.
6. We also have parent sharing once a year at night
7. We do a Parent's Night about four times a year. The parents meet in the church and Pastor picks a topic that he will talk to them
8. We hold about 4 Parent Nights throughout the year where we offer Parenting Pep Talks from a Christian/ Gospel focused agenda. In the Parent Nights I also highlight and invite them to attend the BIC that is going on at that time.
9. Multiple Responses
 - i. We offer a Preschool Partners class 3 times a year.
 - ii. The Spiritual needs of the preschooler is in Sept.
 - iii. The Physical needs is in Nov.
 - iv. and the Emotional needs is in Mar.
 1. These are done in the evenings with child care offered.
10. The first two weeks of school, the pastor and a member of the church who often subs for the teachers had a table and gave out coffee and offered parenting classes to the parents.
11. In the first several years we offered Faith Stepping Stones workshops for parents.
12. Pastor also holds baptism seminars regularly

B. Community Participation 8%

1. participating in Community awareness fairs
2. we are starting a monthly community seminar with guest speakers and that will be another tie-in for our families
3. we involve the families with the churches charitable giving opportunities.
4. serves as a host site for the neighboring program.

Structure

A. Church appointed committees/positions 12%

1. The pastor or evangelism team should work strategically on harvesting families from the school.
2. Ministry Team Calls to New Families
3. Our Child Care Director and School Staff alert the Evangelism Team of those who are not members information gleaned from applications and conversations with the families.
4. We have a Connections committee

5. outreach teams
 6. We have a position called "Mission Director".
-

B. Intentional outreach attitudes 16%

1. Our education pastor guides a short Christian Character study for all our workers as we begin our ECC staff meetings.
 2. We are training and encouraging our teachers to be evangelists who specifically seek to engage these non-churched families in law-gospel discussions and encourage them to attend a BIC.
 5. Multiple Responses
 - i. They are instructed to invite, invite, invite. We train our teachers and discuss with them how encouraging these families to attend is a valuable tool.
 - ii. We also encourage our staff to engage the parents one on one to encourage them to have their children baptized;
 - iii. Also, pastors and teachers intentionally get to know the parents and look for opportunities to reach out.
 3. But the primary approach we have used is simply by employing all WELS teachers that make it a top priority to encourage our families to get connected to Christ through our congregation.
 4. We are excited to share the love of Jesus with the kids so they are excited to share with parents.
 5. personal contact, child involvement at church.
 6. Building one on one relationships between preschool staff and families
 7. One of our women's groups at church provides "Baby's First Bible" for our families with newborns.
-

C. Writing a Strategy for outreach 4%

1. "Harvest Strategy
 2. Harvest Strategy
-

D. Using Outreach Software 2%

1. Our childcare management software allows me to send messages to families that are listed as prospects so I can invite them to BIC, special worship services, etc. very easily.
-

E. Building is an outreach tool 10%

6. Multiple Responses
 - i. Our addition was built with our separate Kindergarten room right by the entrance so parents bringing their children to our ECC notice the Christian character of our Kindergarten teacher and her room.
 - ii. Our addition located the Education pastor's office and our Principal's office by our ECC entry so we regularly interact with people coming and going
2. our pastors office is right when you walk in.
3. Pastor his office at Location.
4. Our Learning Center is in the bottom half of the Church. (Purpose is to help families feel comfortable in entering the church building.
5. 8,000 square foot facility we built after purchasing several acres of land across the street from our church.

What has been abandoned?

The responses were sorted based on key themes. The five main trends of the responses are **Mandatory BIC, Programs Visitation, Newsletters, and Structure**. Sub-trends are outlined with percentages of responses that fell under each theme. Each point indicated with a capital letter is a sub-trend. Each numbered point is a unique response (or paraphrase) from a congregation. Roman numerals are other responses from the same congregation that fall under the same theme. Roman numerals do not describe the numbered points, rather they are another unique strategy which a congregation used.

A. Mandatory BIC 14%

1. Mandatory Bible Information Classes
2. Info classes were poorly attended
3. require families to come to a Parent Sharing or Bible class to have their child enrolled.
4. We've tried to have a mandatory "class" for all parents for one or two night
5. Mandatory Bible Information Classes Mandatory Bible Memory work. We have found that the unchurched families respond better when we build relationships with them and then as the trust grows they become more open to hear about Jesus. We do teach the Bible verses and Bible truths to the children and send a copy home with the child. We have found that many Parents are picking up on what the children are teaching them and then using our information that is sent home to reinforce what their children have learned here at the Learning Center.
6. Requiring BIC. It is essential to build a relationship with the family first.
7. We never have and never will require a BIC class to be in our school. We never have and never will pressure people to come to church. I wouldn't say there is anything that we have "abandoned" in our strategies. By the way, the question is difficult to answer because technically you wouldn't assimilate a non-member family into your congregation. First you do outreach/evangelism. Then you do teaching/discipleship (BIC), then you do assimilation of new members into the congregation.

B. Programs

1. Coffee Station by pastor
2. Inviting members to open house night
3. a Kids Connect program held during Sunday School that was oriented toward bringing those kids in,
 - i. No member discount for preschool families.
4. We have lessoned the amount of Parenting Seminars we do,
5. We offered a coffee hour for parents while the kids were in class. This just didn't seem too beneficial.
6. We've tried offering parenting classes. Sometimes these work, sometimes they don't.
7. Family BBQ-- ECE put it on for-- our families, church and elementary school parents. Too much work and money for director to put on every year alone.
8. We stopped using Faith Stepping Stones materials, primarily because of the membership cost.

C. Visitation 6%

1. one year we coached and scripted a Pre-k Board member to meet with all of the PreK parents to check-in once a year and do a mini Law/Gospel presentation. May try it again.
2. We no longer have the director make in home visits on all of the children. The number of visits became to great.
3. When there were fewer preschoolers (there are currently 90) one of the pastors would try to talk to the unchurched families. I happen to have a fairly high number of families from India.

D. Newsletters 2%

1. We no longer send monthly newsletter to our unchurched families. Some follow up is dependent on having certain individuals in place and when those individuals leave (term done or call elsewhere), that particular way of communication may end up going away.

E. Structure

1. Mainly we have abandoned the idea that the Director is able to handle both the "business" aspect of the child care with licensing, staffing needs, food, etc, and also have the time to adequately oversee the mission of the child care.
 2. Expecting the MLC trained teachers to do it.
-

Finish the Sentence



Word cloud was generated from responses to this question.

The responses were sorted based on key themes. The five main trends of the responses are **Relationships, Staff, Culture, Programs, and Unsure/Negative**. Sub-trends are outlined with percentages of responses that fell under each theme. Each point indicated with a capital letter is a sub-trend. Each numbered point is a unique response (or paraphrase) from a congregation. Roman numerals are other responses from the same congregation that fall under the same theme. Roman numerals do not describe the numbered points, rather they are another unique strategy which a congregation used.

A. Relationships 23%

1. building relationships and introducing new families to church/congregational events together.
2. Getting to know those families and matching them up with other families in the congregation. Personal connections are the best!
3. the friendliness and invitations of other members to those who are not members.
4. people contact; caring about them
5. Creating as many opportunities to bridge building meaningful relationships with the children and the parents or guardians and also continually over time feed them information of Bible truths and of our Church.
6. ..personal connections. Outreach at its core is still way more about the people work than program. God's plan for mission work hasn't changed. He's always intended people to share their faith with others. Program can help us find ways to share our faith with others, but no program is really going to automatically make disciples. We use program to give us opportunities to do the people work of sharing our faith. Our ECM gives us some good opportunities to connect with people and share our faith.
7. Events designed to bridge church and school (preschool singing, Trunk or Treat, VBS, Easter 4kids etc..) accompanied by a staff that I would describe as AWARE (of the unchurched families), AVAILABLE (make

time for the families during drop off and pickup), and willing to ASK (if such families would be interested in learning more about our church).**

8. church members with preschoolers practicing friendship witnessing.
9. -friendship evangelism. Parents becoming friends with members who have children in PreK. They prove that we aren't weird or attempting a bait and switch. Feel more comfortable coming to our church then when they know someone.
10. Personal interaction. It takes a lot time and a lot of effort but it is time and effort well spent.
11. One on one connections between members or staff and the parents.
12. Relationships. Simply talking to them and showing an interest in them. This is HUGE!
13. Face-to-face conversations with parents specifically asking/encouraging them to explore the life, faith, and family enriching opportunities at our church.⁸
14. building a relationship with the families.

B. Staff 40%

1. One of our pastors deliberately interacting with the families from outside the church
2. Pastor involvement and the whole staff having the outreach mindset.
3. The pastor specifically speaking with these families and inviting them to church and class. Also having the kids sing in church.
4. Calling a pastor and making it a part of his called duties to farm it.
5. That our Pastor is a big part of our program.
6. making sure the know who the pastor is (and his wife) and getting them comfortable enough to approach him/her
7. the close working relationships between our staff The ministry is very different from many, and challenging at times, as it is a separate campus from the church and school. Our church was built in a newly developed residential area as an outreach tool for the families in the area. Our outreach ministry would not survive without strong communication between our three campuses. Fortunately, one of our Pastors has his office which helps tremendously. Continuous meetings between the staff have ensured that all events between the three campuses are advertised at each. The constant exposure our childcare families have to events at our church and school really help to bridge the gap and make the connection clear!
8. having our Pastor and church members actively engaged in our Learning Center.
9. People (primarily our principal, partly our pastor and director, in some cases a member parent) who are willing to work with parents when their children or they themselves encounter troubles of various types.
10. Personal conversations from director and teachers to parents inviting them to our church or encouraging them to get their children baptized. We have 11 out of 49 children that do not go to a Christian church.
11. faithful called teachers who understand the spiritual purpose of our childcare and preschool.
12. the staff. Called & hired alike.”
13. a preschool teacher who is outreach-oriented and works with the pastor to identify families in the preschool who are prospects.
14. Making sure the staff members are in church on Sunday and giving the families a warm welcome if they come.
15. Our strong preschool staff. These women are the strongest people I know. They do not give up and are always showing Christ's love in everything they do.
16. The outstanding work of our preschool teacher, whose program is well-known throughout the community.
17. The Preschool Teacher
18. Our director, who is constantly seeking ways to connect parents with our congregation and works closely with our school faculty and pastors to make that happen.
19. Singing in worship; Bible Information Class; personal contact and encouragement from our teachers. *
20. the teachers being salt and light and taking advantage of opportunities to encourage and invite. Also, simply making conscientious effort to harvest prospects. ***
21. our teachers and current families.
22. Day in and Day out personal contact and connections established by our staff with parents and children, as well as the consistent Christian witness of those staff members and the instruction in the Word (that often has very noticeable "effects" on the children). In the final analysis, our key effort is tied to the personal contacts that we help the children establish with Christ and with our staff.
23. Staff connection.
24. Teachers that proclaim the Gospel to the students and families entrusted to their care. ****

25. Connecting families to the ministry team. The ministry team is able to cater to specific needs and asks. On the school end, I would say tracking baptisms is a quantitative way to track spiritual connections and one that happens frequently throughout the year.

C. Culture 13%

1. Presenting the truth of the Gospel and not being ashamed or cautious about proclaiming this truth even to young families and parents who have a very varied and skewed concept of religion. Most who have connected with the congregation through the preschool have done so, because they were led by the Holy Spirit as they heard the Word being shared in its truth and purity in all aspects connected with our Preschool and our congregation.
2. Our congregants zeal to reach the lost. From all my interaction with members, they are eager to continue the outreach work of the preschool. They own the work by coming to events, financially supporting events. Supporting events with their time and energy. They want to meet and reach out to the lost that come through our doors via preschool. I know that kind of culture is hard to imitate, and believe me, I haven't had anything to do with creating that culture. But the ownership of the congregation has been pivotal in making our preschool the outreach tool that it is.
3. the teachers being salt and light and taking advantage of opportunities to encourage and invite. Also, simply making conscientious effort to harvest prospects. ***
4. the students asking their parents to bring them to church.
5. The Gospel at work every day in the classroom. The children want to come to church and bring their parents.
6. Our love for the people we serve. In surveys, non-WELS families mention how loved they feel and how sure they are that this is the best choice for their children.
7. School enrollment waiting list gives the chance for requiring an extensive and detailed bic which gives time for gospel proclamation and the spirit's work over 9 years of school enrollment
8. Teachers that proclaim the Gospel to the students and families entrusted to their care. ****

D. Programs 21%

1. Singing in worship; Bible Information Class; personal contact and encouragement from our teachers.
2. Christmas service with fellowship following and pastor/principal newsletter
3. Activities such as our Fall Fun Fair in October and singing in Advent and Lenten services. We also have a Christmas Gathering which brings them into our sanctuary.
4. inviting the whole family to events that the congregation has and encouraging members to volunteer at.
5. Having them sing in programs in church throughout the year.
6. The days we sing in church.
7. Preschool Sundays, getting them in the door to a worship service accompanied by faithful follow-up.
8. Events designed to bridge church and school (preschool singing, Trunk or Treat, VBS, Easter 4kids etc..) accompanied by a staff that I would describe as AWARE (of the unchurched families), AVAILABLE (make time for the families during drop off and pickup), and willing to ASK (if such families would be interested in learning more about our church).**
9. Movie night and gingerbread making.
10. We have started doing more kid-oriented things like "Easter for Kids," "Christmas for Kids," "Family Fun Nights" and "Ice Cream Socials." I think all of these have potential for better results but in and of themselves I find them lacking.
11. Our preschool and kindergarten program, our Time Out For Moms program, and our parents using our childcare.
12. Christian Education Week.
13. A BIC class targeted for the Preschool with babysitting provided
14. Family Building

E. Unsure or negative 5%

1. not sure
2. There is no effort

3. I'm not sure.

Other Comments

Positive comments!

1. I would have to say this is our main and best avenue of outreach in the community.
2. As to gaining members it has not been successful. However, in teaching the little lambs entrusted to our care and having the children take those truths home to their parents, we have been very successful. Most parents comment on how much their children sing the Bible songs and speak about the lessons learned in Bible Study.
3. Here's the thing we all need to keep in mind about child care ministry: We will never be able to perfectly measure with numbers the effect that our ministry is having on families who utilize our center. If we open a child care ministry with the intention to double our membership, we're going about it the wrong way. If we do so to share the gospel directly with children and indirectly with their families, then we can be content to let the Lord produce the results in any way he chooses. Having the opportunity to share the message of Jesus with children, without any apologies, five days a week, and having these children share that message with their families -- how can we ever truly measure the "success" of such a privilege? The results -- at least in numbers -- may not always be visible, but that doesn't mean they're non-existent. God's Word never returns to him empty!
4. Over the years, our expectations for our ECM have lowered. At first, we hoped that the program would lead to hundreds of new members. But as time has gone on, we realize that mission work is always a challenge and the number of new members the program would bring our congregation would not always be large. However, we are blessed with the opportunity to teach many precious children about Jesus and many of them might never have heard the Gospel if our program wasn't here. We've also had the opportunity to develop strong relationships with many unchurched families, families that refer to Abiding Love as "my church" when there are family crises, they come to us and often we are given another opportunity to share Law and Gospel with them. We can only plant the seed, God gives the increase.
5. We are currently looking to expand
6. Families expressed interest, we need a second Pastor
7. We need a second Pastor

Staff Concerns

1. I am concerned that our teacher training college (MLC) appears to only aim at preparing students to teach in an early childhood center or, at most, guide a small group. It is disconcerting to be told a graduate is not prepared to begin handling the administration a larger center like ours requires and is not being equipped to manage the many workers in a larger center who might not necessarily be members.
2. The congregation has been disappointed at the small number of families the preschool has actually brought in. And, actually, the preschool is a cause of frustration for our members who are bearing the financial load of keeping it open. I would suggest including the importance of having a trained called worker in your preschool who is at the very least WELS certified. We don't have one and it's been a total mess. You can call for detail, if you'd like.
3. Also, the skill set of a director, and a teacher are not always found in one person. Our work has been much better since we implemented the Mission Director position to complement the Director.
4. There is much more to be said. (Negative Presumably)
5. Additionally, the teaching staff includes 3 called WELS teachers and 7 hired non-WELS teachers. The effort to teach children about Jesus and model Christian faith to parents and children alike is compromised with the majority of our teachers hired from outside our fellowship. The child care has become more of a side-business at our church than it is a ministry.
6. I hope I don't come across as sour on ministry. It is my goal to alter their approach to child care. I have plans to eliminate non-WELS teachers from the staff, hold the pastor accountable for his involvement, while maintaining expected revenue.
7. The enrollment is typically 100% non-members. There is currently 1 member child enrolled, and it is the only member child who has been enrolled during my time here. However, the church leadership has dismissed the

enrolled families as outreach prospects with the reasoning, "they all have their own church". There is no effort by the pastor or church members to connect with the enrolled families. Pastor works from home. Leadership has a "we are here; they can come to Grace if they want" attitude. An outreach strategy has been proposed to the pastor and council on multiple occasions, but has not been utilized. Hence, the church has not acquired any members from its child care ministry.

Congregation concerns

1. It feels like a separation of church and preschool staff with a very us vs. them mentality. The staff is trying to keep the congregation up to date on enrollment and activities, but are often ignored or seen as unimportant.
2. A church with a child care has one ministry, not two. If the child care is regarded as a separate entity, there will be relational problems between it and the church. Operate as one ministry, with one budget, and one mission and purpose. Separation will only create division in the congregation.
3. Our child care is atypical in the WELS because the congregation depends on the revenue from it to cover basic expenses such as mortgage and utilities. Our church cannot financially survive without the child care. And, historically, pressure is always on the child care to produce more. The reason that our congregation has an Early Childhood Ministry is... to create revenue for the congregation's budget. That is the primary reason our church is operating its child care. If the child care ministry required offerings to exist, or just to break even, Grace would likely eliminate the program.
4. I believe the Lord led me here to implement these important changes for the congregation. In the near future, I hope to help the congregation form a child care ministry that is more than just a financial blessing.
5. I pray this situation would change, and this church would see that our ECM is not a drain on the resources of the congregation, but rather a rich and plentiful harvest-that walks into our doors every single year!
6. I'm afraid my responses may seem negative, but I feel I must be truthful. I have observed just how wonderful the support of a congregation can be.
7. The ECE has been open for 20 years. The older membership has taken a long time to come on board with the need for an early childhood program since "children should be at home with their mother". The church also has a huge responsibility of supporting the elementary school. So since the preschool opened it was supposed to be "self supporting " financially, which means operational expenses not rent or capital improvements. This makes it really hard to grow and get ahead. We were in the oldest building on campus and it looked and smelled old. Last year the church raised money and remodeled the space to make it look like a preschool!! We love our "new" space and it has helped bring people in. In the last 5 years we have been 1/3 members and 2/3 community people. We really are an outreach to our community. Usually about 70-80% of our graduating prek children go to our elementary school! I have been director for 3 years and I love my job. It is tiring because we are open Monday through Friday 6:30-6:00 all year long, but it is extremely rewarding telling children about Jesus!
8. The childcare program is covering its own costs for building debt and operation, so the church does not subsidize the childcare students. Non-members interested in our K-8 program are treated as members for tuition for the first year and have several opportunities to attend Bible Information classes during that year.
9. I believe ECM has great potential but we get in our own way. I suspect one serious problem is that the school has begun to operate like its own business. The congregation has been ignoring its Constitutional structure and lets its education board call the teachers and manage the school and just reports to the Council. That should change. I also am inclined to make baptism part of a broader effort to help a family be faithful to what we promise at a baptism. I fear that sometimes baptism has been treated almost as a works-righteousness effort to "push" people into heaven. I want to take the school and meld it with all the work of the congregation. It is my understanding that the vast majority of our children are from families belonging to another church and they use our school because it is reasonable, convenient or it provides a Christian foundation for the care provided their children. While all valid uses they do not fulfill the congregation's outreach emphasis in operating the school. BTW - we have the same trouble with Sunday School. We have parents in pajamas dropping off and picking up their kids for S.S. but they do not attend church or Bible Class. Sigh!
10. Our congregation never really had a plan to assimilate the families of our ECM students with the congregation. I think the idea was here for outreach but a formal plan or goal was never made so very little has been done to try to reach these families from the congregation's side.

Mission Statements/ Words of advice

1. We don't twist arms. We don't get caught up in numbers! We simply value every child and their family as individuals created by God who are walking in different phases of life. Many of these families come into the program with absolutely NO intention of making it anything more than that, but by God's grace, they connect emotionally to our school.
2. I am confident our ECM will be a great tool for outreach in the future, but I could only give us a 6 right now as we're still getting our feet under us in a few important ways. Pastors and congregations beginning these kinds of ministries will need to be patient with childcare staff when centers open. It simply takes time to put the policies and procedures in place. I can't state enough the blessing of having called workers leading the classrooms. They are trained not only for the educational part of the work but also have a unique perspective on the spiritual goals of the childcare too. No matter how involved a pastor might be it is the teachers who will see and talk with parents every day, and the teachers who model Christian faith and practice most effectively. If they understand the outreach goals of the center, opportunities to share the gospel increase exponentially.
3. Important to strike the balance between being too pushy and being too reserved in developing relationships with the unchurched parents.
4. Pastor plays a key role. An ECE will fail as an outreach tool without pastoral involvement. No matter how wonderful your teachers and director might be, the pastor has to be on board and assume a relational role for an ECE to be a successful outreach effort. He is the link that connects people to worship, Bible class, Sunday School and other ministries of the congregation.
5. Just a few additional thoughts...Even if an enrolled family claims membership in a non-WELS Christian church, they should still be regarded as a prospect. Many church membership claims are only nominal. Many times, they never attend and couldn't even tell you the name of their pastor or priest. And, if the family is being served spiritually by our congregation's ministry, the pastor and our church leaders should assume some responsibility for their spiritual welfare. Don't wash your hands of them simply because they are not one of "your" members.
6. I think that it is important that we remember that God uses us to plant a seed. God does not need us, but we have been given a great responsibility and privileges in using Early Childhood program to reach the unreachable. Bring the Little Children to me. Only when we get to Heaven may we know how God used us as individuals or this ministry. But trusting in Our Lord I know that only blessings will flow to the families that we serve. We must be very careful that the reason for doing early childhood ministries is not to fill our seats, but to fill souls. If they become WELS let us welcome them, but the ultimate goal is to see them in Heaven. Some of the new members that have joined came back to us after 15 years. They remembered when they were child and when they were looking for a Church, now as adults themselves are returning.
7. We continue to try new ideas for our outreach arm. Even rotating in and out things that have "been effective" in the past. We are eager to attempt new, great ideas even if they are untested. This fall, for the first time, we will be meeting with parents (about 3-5 of them at a time). The goal of the 20-30 minute meeting will be to get some honest feedback (a pastor and a preschool board member will run the meeting) and to make a brief Law/Gospel presentation by way of explaining what makes our preschool different from every preschool out there.
8. We will also attempt to implement a parent curriculum. One night a week, we will have a "grow as a family" course that will help to address some of the most frequently occurring concerns from our parents. We plan to build the curriculum into a four semester setup where each semester will see a different topic addressed. We'll talk one semester about parenting, another about finances, another about marriage, etc. The exact topics will be fluid. But the last semester will culminate in inviting them to join us for a BIC. Not that we won't invite them before that time, but this builds a bridge for us to credibly say, "I think you'll really get a lot out of our BIC."
9. Your first question with four choices is not really complete. The option I would've chosen would be "Our church as an ECM ministry—to be an arm of the ministry of the church." In other words, it's not just for outreach or for members, or partially one and partially the other. It is fully for both. It is to train our member children in the way they should go and also to reach out to families with the gospel so that they can do the same. You also ought to consider many other variables that affect ECM ministry and outreach. They are complicated suckers. One example: Does the responding ECM have all members as employees, or non-members too? How would (or does) that affect ministry and outreach?
10. We haven't abandoned anything.....everything works eventually.....nothing works perfectly.....and nothing works perpetually. So we're trying to use a "shotgun" approach -- trying any and everything we can.
11. Teach members to be open, welcoming and engaging helps greatly.

Obstacles

1. Cost seems to be the biggest issue in attracting families from our pre-school to our LES. Our community is willing to pay for pre-school, but transitioning to K is huge step because public school is free and LES is pricey. Most of our pre-school families already have a church home.
2. Our child care is on a second campus. 83 includes all those who come into membership through our ministry on that campus. (In the last 3 years we've begun worship and dedicated a full-time pastor to that campus.) Your scale question could be answered in two ways. Relative to other ECM's I'd give a higher value, but I rated us lower simply because there is a lot of untapped potential that we're still trying to figure out how to capitalize on. (200 is an average for enrollment--it goes up and down within the year.)
3. I think the difficult aspect of this topic is that we only have the students in our care for a year or two. We strive to make connections, but we need to be careful that we're not being too forceful as we reach out. One of our goals here is to get the Preschool students into the elementary grades. That, in theory, exposes them to God's Word for a longer period of time.

Further Explanation

1. Re: the number of students served Our childcare serves around 110 children during the school year. I do not know how many children would be counted more than once, but it may help you to know that our 3K program currently serves 14; our 4K, 31; and our kindergarten 26. I would guess that the 20 I included from our Time Out For Moms group would include a lot of kids who are already counted.

Appendix B- E-mail Invitation to participate in the survey sent October 13th
2015

Hello,

God's richest blessings to you in your ministry. My name is Paul Kolander and I am a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. I am writing my senior thesis paper about trends in outreach strategies for our Early Childhood Ministries.

I have selected 60 ECM programs from across our synod that I am surveying using a google form, a short survey that should only take between 5 and 10 minutes to fill out. Its information will be very helpful to me as I research this very important opportunity the Holy Spirit has given our church, to share the wonderful message of the Gospel through our ECMs.

Please click on the link below and complete the survey at your earliest convenience. If you are not the pastor or teacher who primarily works with your ECM, please forward this email to the more qualified candidate for this survey. (If you are a pastor please only forward it to another pastor on your staff. If you are a teacher please only forward to another teacher on your staff.) I will leave the form open for two weeks. I will send out a reminder email after one week, and also on the last day that the form is open. Thank you in advance to all who participate.

To God be the Glory,

Paul Kolander

Appendix C- E-mail reminder sent on October 20th 2015

Good morning!

Thank you to all who have completed my survey! All the information I have received will be very useful. For those of you that have not yet filled it out, this is a reminder that I will be closing the survey one week from today. I have included the link below. Thank you again for your time.

God's blessings,

Paul Kolander

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1TMtMBbbtZTtbUVbNN8N1e_59tfA0eqityYSaoVImuAs/viewform?usp=send_form

Appendix D- E-mail final notice reminder sent October 27th 2015

Good Morning!

Today is the last day to complete the Early Childhood Ministry Survey. Please fill it out if you have not had the opportunity to do so. Thank you to all who have filled it out. God's blessings as you serve your Lord.

Paul Kolander

Appendix E-Raw data. (Survey results are listed below. Participants names, congregational names, and dates have been removed to preserve anonymity.)

What is your title?

Pastor

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Connect with Pastor: Make sure Pastor is available a few times a week to greet and strike up conversation with the parents. This 'small talk' often leads to 'bigger talk.'

--Coffee/Donut Day --Make sure his office is in line with preK OR that he is up to greet when the kids come in (For us, Monday morning, Wed Morn, Thurs Evening and Friday evenings are the best for talking) --Pastor sends out devotional emails once in a while...invites them on a one on one basis to church (Keep at it!) TALK TO THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE! Make yourself available as a pastor. This is KEY!!! Share God's Word with the Kids: --Devotions --Bible Stories w/ sheets to go home with parents --Songs (for them to repeat to their parents) Share God's Word with the Parents: --meditations, sermons, forward in Christ out for them to pick up -- occasional note in the child's paper. Connect them with each other: As their kids outgrow PreK, there will be a pull to have them connected with their old Christian friends. The following events were done during the week. Parents were invited. Kids sang about Jesus. Pastor joined in with a devotional thought. --Mother's Day Tea --Father's Day Ice Cream Social --Thanksgiving Meal -- Trunk or Treat -- Valentine's Party Connect them with church: Most people go to church for the wrong reasons. Liking people and feeling a part of a community is one of them. Why not take advantage of this that they might continue to hear the Word? --Sing in Church (Christmas, Ascension, Reformation?) --Chruch/PreK picnic --Parenting Class (advertised to both) -- September Game Night/Chili Cookoff.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

29

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Relationships. Simply talking to them and showing an interest in them. This is HUGE!

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

33

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?
Weekly Chapel Services Ministry Team Calls to New Families Bible Study for Parents Quarterly Outreach Activities Weekly Classroom/School Newsletter Resources Distributed at Parent/Teacher Conferences Singing in Church Thankful Thursday/Fanatical Friday Breakfasts with Classroom Families

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

230

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Can't think of any

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Connecting families to the ministry team. The ministry team is able to cater to specific needs and asks. On the school end, I would say tracking baptisms is a quantitative way to track spiritual connections and one that happens frequently throughout the year.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Not Sure

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Religious Orientation (voluntary) parents take a 4 week "highlights" course of The Wonders of God, Eichman AIC manual. chapters 1-2, 6d-8, 9-11, 13 18 20. After that they get \$10 off the normal tuition. Those who do not take the course get a higher rate of tuition. If they like the course, they can simply continue because it is part of the Adult Information Class and they are almost half-way to membership. We advertise church services at school. We highlight each grade level (3s, 4s, K) in our Advent services and have great turn-outs. We used to do the same during Lenten services, but then I succumbed to the circuit and joined the round-robin using the maudlin WELS Lenten series. Within one year the preschool director asked that the students be dropped from the services, so we only have 3 chances to get them hooked on worship instead of 7. Sunday School invites go out to all students and Sunday School special events, like Fall Carnival and Hikes. We have a Connections committee that started under the guidance of our new pastor, but he resigned after 11 weeks, so I don't know how much further that will go with only two ladies. I have chapel every day for the children. If you are going to have an ECM, you better have chapel every day. It is 15 minutes. The kids feel it is their church. Paul, if you would like to call me, that would be better. is my cell. We have such a wonderful program here and i think it has been unduly neglected and vilified in WELS circles.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

104

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

call me

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

call me

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

80

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

call me

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Newsletter Intro to Kindergarten Pastor Devotions Ice Cream Social/New School Year Welcome Trunk-r-Treat Fun Fair Worship Invitations

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

60

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

The outstanding work of our preschool teacher, whose program is well-known throughout the community.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

14

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Cost seems to be the biggest issue in attracting families from our pre-school to our LES. Our community is willing to pay for pre-school, but transitioning to K is huge step because public school is free and LES is pricey. Most of our pre-school families already have a church home.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We do a number of things. We invite and encourage parents to join us for our twice a month chapel times that are led by the Pastor. We hold about 4 Parent Nights throughout the year where we offer Parenting Pep Talks from a Christian/Gospel focused agenda. We have a Fall Festival/ Trunk n Treat event, and we take the time at the Christmas Programs, and Easter and the end of the school year to highlight and invite the families to join us for these special services and programs like VBS. In the Parent Nights I also highlight and invite them to attend the BIC that is going on at that time.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

58

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None have been abandoned.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Presenting the truth of the Gospel and not being ashamed or cautious about proclaiming this truth even to young families and parents who have a very varied and skewed concept of religion. Most who have connected with the congregation through the preschool have done so, because they were led by the Holy Spirit as they heard the Word being shared in its truth and purity in all aspects connected with our Preschool and our congregation.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

12

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

6

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

I am new here - serving a shared ministry call with Christian Life Resources. I had been a member here for 15 years prior to being their pastor. I do not think they have done a credible job of using the school as an outreach tool. For 15 years there have been occasional baptisms but no follow up - almost as if baptizing was the goal. Sounds too much like a Crusade approach to evangelizing the Turks!

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

135

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Sorry - to my knowledge there have been no strategies. The program began with the pitch that it is an outreach tool which can also serve the members. The logic works but the results are not as compelling.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

We have started doing more kid-oriented things like "Easter for Kids," "Christmas for Kids," "Family Fun Nights" and "Ice Cream Socials." I think all of these have potential for better results but in and of themselves I find them lacking.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Maybe 10 if that.

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

2

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I believe ECM has great potential but we get in our own way. I suspect one serious problem is that the school has begun to operate like its own business. The congregation has been ignoring its Constitutional structure and lets its education board call the teachers and manage the school and just reports to the Council. That should change. I also am inclined to make baptism part of a broader effort to help a family be faithful to what we promise at a baptism. I fear that sometimes baptism has been treated almost as a works-righteousness effort to "push" people into heaven. I want to take the school and meld it with all the work of the congregation. It is my understanding that the vast majority of our children are from families belonging to another church and they use our school because it is reasonable, convenient or it provides a Christian foundation for the care provided their children. While all valid uses they do not fulfill the congregation's outreach emphasis in operating the school. BTW - we have the same trouble with Sunday School. We have parents in pajamas dropping off and picking up their kids for S.S. but they do not attend church or Bible Class. Sigh!

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

have children sing in church

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

35

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

not sure

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

not sure

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

0

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

6

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

No

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

~~Our scholars sing in church every other month. Our first singing is in September when the whole school sings. We have church under a tent outside and eat lunch and have a bouncy house. Telling young kids about a bouncy house gets them very excited! We have parent gatherings to welcome everyone. We have newsletters with church times in it. We are excited to share the love of Jesus with the kids so they are excited to share with parents. (Several of our families attend another church in the area). We also have Christmas services for the kids... That gets parents in.~~

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

24

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Not sure of any.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

The days we sing in church.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Not many since so many have their own churches. Maybe 3 souls.

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

6

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Teacher

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Pastor Lange is actively greeting parents before/after preschool. Pastor Lange also contacts all families interested in learning more about the church (we ask on the registration form about interest and if the family is a member of a church). We invite preschool families to participate in the Bible Basics Class and after completion of the class, families receive 1 month of tuition reimbursed. The preschool children sings 2 times a year in church. We invite families to participate in: Trunk or Treat, Easter 4 Kids, Walking in a Parade and VBS.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

53

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

There is nothing that we have stopped doing but we actively search for more ideas how to connect with families more.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Events designed to bridge church and school (preschool singing, Trunk or Treat, VBS, Easter 4kids etc..) accompanied by a staff that I would describe as AWARE (of the unchurched families), AVAILABLE (make time for the families during drop off and pickup), and willing to ASK (if such families would be interested in learning more about our church).

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

38

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

10

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We send out a email newsletter every week, with an adult explanation of the Bible Lesson. We hold several "community events" each year with target invitations to our ECM families-Fall Fest, Christmas for Kids, Easter for Kids, Vacation Bible School. The children sing in church three times a year, and that is an open invitation to the families to check us out and see what we are about. We also encourage the families to have their child attend Sunday School, as part of a Jesus' Lambs "package".

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

54

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

There are no strategies and have not been any, and this is sadly a very lost opportunity to minister to our ECM families. The staff of Jesus' Lambs and myself are often counselors for our families. This takes a lot out of us, and our meager abilities to provide adequate religious counseling. When we suggest pastoral intervention, we have a lot of families not take advantage.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Would love to hear strategies as to what other churches are doing! While our congregation is not currently trying to close down our ECM, they are not involved either.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

10

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

2

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I pray this situation would change, and this church would see that our ECM is not a drain on the resources of the congregation, but rather a rich and plentiful harvest-that walks into our doors every single year! God's blessings on your studies and thesis!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We try to have many events throughout the year that cater to preschool families which bring them to the property during non-preschool hours. We have a Pizza Night in the fall and encourage congregation members to come and meet the families. We do the same thing for Parents' Evening Out (essentially a 3 hour Christmas for Kids, billed as fun child care while the parents go shop at the nearby department stores). The pastor's presence is very important, not just when the parents are around, but also when the kids are in the classrooms. The more a pastor stops by and says a friendly hello, the more the kids want to talk to the pastor, and talk about him to their parents. The preschool children are the main pool for VBS attendees, Easter for Kids, Trunk-or-Treat, etc. If we didn't have a preschool, these would be very poorly attended. Two programs are held each year, Christmas and graduation, in the church. The pastor gives a sermonette. This is an opportunity for the parents to see our sanctuary and listen to the pastor.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

38

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

A few years ago there was a Kids Connect program held during Sunday School that was oriented toward bringing those kids in, but it was abandoned due to a lack of volunteer work.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

inviting the whole family to events that the congregation has and encouraging members to volunteer at.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

10*

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

*all 10 joined in the past year. That's been the only group to join in the 10 year life of the preschool, and 3 of them were years after the kids graduated. The congregation has been disappointed at the small number of families the preschool has actually brought in. And, actually, the preschool is a cause of frustration for our members who are bearing the financial load of keeping it open. I would suggest including the importance of having a trained called worker in your preschool who is at the very least WELS certified. We don't have one and it's a been a total mess. You can call for details, if you'd like.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We host a large number of connecting events (i.e. Muffins with Mom, Doughnuts with Dad, Advent by Candlelight, Congregational Bonfire/Hayride, Bowling Events, Party at the Park, Spring Picnic, Happy Birthday Jesus Party, Singing for church, Financial Peace University Classes, Love and Logic Classes, New Life Classes, and regular invites to our services. But the primary approach we have used is simply by employing all WELS teachers that make it a top priority to encourage our families to get connected to Christ through our congregation.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

130

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None that I can currently think of.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Teachers that proclaim the Gospel to the students and families entrusted to their care.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

50

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

10

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

-Calendar of events shared with congregation -upon enrollment a questionnaire on Name, address, phone, e-mail ,church affiliation (If any) baptism, if they would like the Pastor to visit or call. If not affiliated with a church there info. is given to the Lay Evangelist and put on mailing list. - Church times and dates, Sunday School and events are listed in the Learning center newsletters. During Christmas, Easter, Sunday - School seasons the parents are sent a invitation. - The Administrator/Director personally invites unchurched families, offers to meet the family outside of the Church and walk in with them at first until the family feels more comfortable. - Congregation members are invited to be apart of all Learning Center events. (Open houses, Family Days, Preschool Graduation, Holiday Dinner) (This is to help enrolled families build relationships with members outside of the Learning Center) - Our Learning Center is in the bottom half of the Church. (Purpose is to help families feel comfortable in entering the church building.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

20

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Mandatory Bible Information Classes Mandatory Bible Memory work We have found that the unchurched families respond better when we build relationships with them and then as the trust grows they become more open to hear about Jesus. We do teach the Bible verses and Bible truths to the children and send a copy home with the child. We have found that many Parents are picking up on what the children are teaching them and then using our information that is sent home to reinforce what their children have learned here at the Learning Center.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Creating as many opportunities to bridge building meaningful relationships with the children and the parents or guardians and also continually over time feed them information of Bible truths and of our Church.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

20

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I think that it is important that we remember that God uses us to plant a seed. God does not need us, but we have been given a great responsibility and privileges in using Early Childhood program to reach the unreachable. Bring the Little Children to me. Only when we get to Heaven may we know how God used us as individuals or this ministry. But trusting in Our Lord I know that only blessings will flow to the families that we serve. We must be very careful that the reason for doing early childhood ministries is not to fill our seats, but to fill souls. If they become WELS let us welcome them, but the ultimate goal is to see them in Heaven. Some of the new members that have joined came back to us after 15 years. They remembered when they were child and when they were looking for a Church, now as adults themselves are returning.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

The children are being taught the word of God. Since most of our children come from unchurched families, our first goal is to make sure that everyone of them leaves our program with a clear knowledge of God's grace to them in Christ. We attempt to familiarize the parents with the people of our congregation with several "come events" (Fall and Spring Festivals; this year were planning an additional spring event.) We also encourage the children to attend our Christmas for Kids and Easter for kids events. We have the children sing in church four times during the school year, and we generally have a good turnout for each of these services (more than half of the children usually are part of the service.) We also encourage our staff to engage the parents one on one to encourage them to have their children baptized; to contact the pastor for counseling; and to attend BIC classes when they show interest. "Bread of Life" visits (friendly visits made 36 hours after worship) are made to parents who worship with us for the first time. Members also make follow up visits on preschool families throughout the year.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

75

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We no longer have the director make in home visits on all of the children. The number of visits became to great.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

One on one connections between members or staff and the parents.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

8

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Over the years, our expectations for our ECM have lowered. At first, we hoped that the program would lead to hundreds of new members. But as time has gone on, we realize that mission work is always a challenge and the number of new members the program would bring our congregation would not always be large. However, we are blessed with the opportunity to teach many precious children about Jesus and many of them might never have heard the Gospel if our program wasn't here. We've also had the opportunity to develop strong relationships with many unchurched families, families that refer to our church as "my church" when there are family crises, they come to us and often we are given another opportunity to share Law and Gospel with them. We can only plant the seed, God gives the increase.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We have monthly church sponsored events for students who are or were recently enrolled at our early childhood center. For example, last month we had a pizza party and ice cream social on a Saturday afternoon. The ladies aid of our church outfitted our classroom with enough tables, chairs, and activities to suit about 50 people, and they provided the pizza and ice cream. All currently enrolled students were invited to come socialize with their families, as well as recently enrolled students and of course members of the congregation. We're currently planning more events, like a pajama party and a pancake breakfast. We also invite the early childhood students to sing in church 3 times a year, and focus on inviting early childhood families to worship with us and join us at special events at church.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

20

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Unfortunately, I can't help you with this question.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Face-to-face conversations with parents specifically asking/encouraging them to explore the life, faith, and family enriching opportunities at our church.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

I'm sorry, I don't know!

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

The early childhood director who started our program was met with success, at least for the school. Enrollment was high, in the mid to upper twenties, but eventually waned because her curricular choices were unpopular with parents in the area. I do not have information about church/school relationships from that time. The next long-term director did a lot for the program and built up its credibility in the community once again, but she eventually took another call and our school had trouble finding a suitable replacement for her. Once again, I do not have information about church/school relationships from that time. I do know that the next director stayed at our early childhood center for only 2 weeks before resigning her call due to personal matters. Left so suddenly without a director, the center either could not or did not find help from the WELS, so they hired a director from the public school system. This director was not a Christian, and never came to faith during her time as director here. The acting pastor took Christian instruction upon himself for the entire time this director was working at the school. She also left quite suddenly this past summer. She put in her 2 weeks notice in mid July, not realizing that the WELS uses a call system, and that she'd effectively lost our school the opportunity to request a formal call or assignment. That's when I received a phone call. Since serving here, I've picked up on the vibe that for the past few years, especially during the previous agnostic director's time here, outreach was rarely the top goal of our early childhood program. It's a relatively new school in a great area for outreach (ever-growing, family-oriented suburbia), yet I think that the higher goals of the center have been increasing enrollment and staying relevant in the highly competitive ECE "market". While the church definitely makes an effort to sponsor the school with the monthly activities and singing previously mentioned, I'm not sure the congregation's tie to the school is strong enough. The congregation itself is made up of older members, and the youngest children I've seen in attendance have been middle-school aged. No currently enrolled students are members. Parents know that this is a Christian school, and I send Christian materials home with the children almost every day, but most parents I've spoken to are already churching at other churches in the area and seem uninterested in joining our church for worship. That's why I said that face-to-face interactions with parents have been the most effective outreach for me. Getting to know my parents and their families, seeing what they know about God, and seeing what they need to know about faith, has been an enriching experience. It's something that members at our church haven't done in a long time. I've been able to actively encourage my families to come worship with me and urge them to understand that sending their child to a Christian school isn't enough for their own personal spiritual development. Not all of my students are blessed with Christian homes, and I know that some of my parents are delinquent members in other churches. It's my prayer that I can get them involved in our church through this face-to-face interaction, by living my faith, teaching the little ones as much about Jesus as I can, and by encouraging the efforts of the congregation-sponsored events. I'm working on turning the direction of our preschool back around to becoming outreach inspired, and though I'll only be here a year, I believe that I can make some kind of a difference, as well as lay down the beginnings of a path for the next director to follow. Good luck on your thesis!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We hold monthly events at our church and encourage members to mingle and interact with non-members. We intentionalize our fellowship in this way. This builds relationships and makes worshiping together natural. The events are sometimes educational, like the importance of reading, and sometimes simply entertaining, like everyone coming in pajamas, eating popcorn, and watching a movie.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

65

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

I don't know if we have abandoned anything. However, I will mention that we require non-members with children in our LES to take our Bible Information Class, so that they know what we teach their children. If they join, we are overjoyed. If they do not join, they pay tuition. They have one year to take the BIC. We do not require this of our ECM non-member parents, but they are all encouraged to attend a BIC.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Our director, who is constantly seeking ways to connect parents with our congregation and works closely with our school faculty and pastors to make that happen.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

32

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Offer Bible Information Class, invite to events at our Lutheran elementary school, work with preschool teacher to identify children who have no been baptized and parents who have no church home.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

21

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We've talked about adding a Bible study on parenting for the benefit of both preschool and LES parents, but we haven't been able to make that happen yet.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

a preschool teacher who is outreach-oriented and works with the pastor to identify families in the preschool who are prospects.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

24

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

6

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

We are currently looking to expand our ECE ministry from a preschool that serves only 4 year-olds to preschool and daycare for 3 and 4 year-olds.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We have put together a Harvest Strategy that allows us to look at every activity that we do as an ECM to tie it into our church and church community. Such activities are: Having our own website but having a link to our church and school sites and visa versa Doing a fall harvest festival for the community, ECM, school and church participating in Community awareness fairs Newsletters and e-letters to church and non church ECM's Christmas and Easter for Kids Summer VBS Pancake breakfasts for all Thanksgiving dinner ECM puts on for congregation members Christmas tea parties for the Women of the church put on by ECM's field trips tournaments fundraisers Pastor reading to the children every Wednesday Pastor doing chapel services Sunday school Singing in church Kids church Pastor greeting parents either at the beginning or end of the day Children greeting pastor on walks through the campus in morning Promoting pastor as good counselor for unchurched home "issues" Having 2 days a week where families and members can come and get Panera bread and communicate Mommies and me Christmas Services Plays Art fairs Special party days where we invite members and parents with specific Jobs to come and teach inviting mom's, dad's and grandma's and grandpa's for different activities in the classroom Sending out brochures of up coming activities in the community Everything we do we do for reaching the unchurched and bringing them towards getting to know our members and more importantly, hearing the message of Christ. Every chance we get to mix church members and school and ECM families together we do.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

69

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We haven't abandoned any of the things that we do. WE work hard to come up with more ways or better ways to improve what we are currently doing.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Getting to know those families and matching them up with other families in the congregation. Personal connections are the best!

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?
at least 12 that I can think of but i'm sure more

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

9

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

ECM's are so very important and for most people a very easy way to be introduced into our congregations. The children go home learning so much at a very simple level and are so eager to share and live their faith that the parents can't help to want to know more about what they are learning and to find out more about Jesus and what he has done for them. We have at least 13 different ethnicities who come from every different spiritual and non spiritual back ground you can think of and we have been blessed to have the opportunity to set them straight as per say. What an awesome opportunity we have been given. As the saying goes, "out of the mouth of babe's!"

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

* Our ECC director initially & now again (following a period where a member assumed some duties of a director during a vacancy) offers Christian guidance and encouragement to parents, workers and children as she interacts with them on many different levels. * Our Principal is a major factor in communicating Christ's love and forgiveness as he has worked relentlessly with parents, children, workers, our directors and our education committee. * Our addition was built with our separate Kindergarten room right by the entrance so parents bringing their children to our ECC notice the Christian character of our Kindergarten teacher and her room. * Our addition located the Education pastor's office and our Principal's office by our ECC entry so we regularly interact with people coming and going. * Our principal, pastors and teachers regularly greet children & parents for a period of time as they arrive every morning in order to help them become more familiar with us. * Our education pastor guides a short Christian Character study for all our workers as we begin our ECC staff meetings. * Our worship & outreach pastor takes a little time to sing songs with the children once a week. He also tries to contact each family with an offer to learn more about our Savior. * A brief (20-minute) Christmas Service with our 3-5 year olds singing simple songs has regularly filled our church with relatives who hear the message of the Christchild. * Invitations are extended to some elementary school events where we hope to have members interacting with ECC parents.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

115

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

No strategy has specifically been implemented and abandoned. Some expectations (or dreams) have not yet been put into place.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

People (primarily our principal, partly our pastor and director, in some cases a member parent) who are willing to work with parents when their children or they themselves encounter troubles of various types.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

In our 3 years of existence, about 18 communicants, approximately 30 souls

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

6

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I am concerned that our teacher training college (MLC) appears to only aim at preparing students to teach in an early childhood center or, at most, guide a small group. It is disconcerting to be told a graduate is not prepared to begin handling the administration a larger center like ours requires and is not being equipped to manage the many workers in a larger center who might not necessarily be members.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

I'm curious to hear of any positive results you come across. This has been an egg Synod at large has been trying to crack for a long, long time. Many of our non-member Preschool families are other churched. With that, we don't want to take them from their current Christian church homes. Our School children are scheduled to sing in a Sunday service (we purposefully schedule this on Sundays when we don't have Communion). We sang last Sunday, and we had a very good turnout. A few left after they sang, but many stayed for the whole service. We also send home worksheets with our Bible stories for the week. The children are often the best advocates for our church. We also strive to invite them to fellowship opportunities within our church home.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

29

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

This is only my third year here, we haven't given up on anything in that time.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

the students asking their parents to bring them to church.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

6 (estimate)

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I think the difficult aspect of this topic is that we only have the students in our care for a year or two. We strive to make connections, but we need to be careful that we're not being too forceful as

we reach out. One of our goals here is to get the Preschool students into the elementary grades. That, in theory, exposes them to God's Word for a longer period of time.

What is your title?

Other

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Singing in chapel services mid-week. Newsletters (monthly) Online news & notes (weekly)

Visibility of Pastor at events (Pumpkin Patch etc.) Christmas Program Power Hour Program for families Building one on one relationships between preschool staff and families

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

70

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Mandatory Bible Information Class. We used to require all preschool families to attend this class. However, since we have downsized Pastoral Staff and increased preschool enrollments, it has been hard to make it mandatory. In addition, some of our families are members at other Christian churches in town.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

building relationships and introducing new families to church/congregational events together.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

5-10

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

4

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

This area of outreach is ripe for the picking at Redeemer! With 70 families, many of which expressed interest in our church, we are working to address this bridge. It has been a struggle because of lack of manpower over the last several years. I feel we really need a 2nd pastor who can focus on young families and campus life at Redeemer!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

- host a children's devotion 4x's each week at the end of the school day - parents are encouraged to sit in when they come for pick-up - Meet the Teacher Night (Pastors scoop icecream and greet PreK families - Thanksgiving Party - kids "help" make meal for their families. Congregation members help with setup, cooking and visiting - Christmas Play - kids put on this event, families invited (church lobby filled with tables for coloring, cookies, coffee, etc. School Board members all serve at this event. - direct invitation to all "come" events (Soccer Camp, VBS, X-mas and Easter 4kids, Fall Festival, Turkey Bingo, worship services, etc) - special invitation to BIC for those families who have attended an event - billed as a "date night" for mom and dad now that the kids have had their event. - in process of planning a two-year "Equipping Parents" curriculum that would involve, finances, parenting, marriage, and BIC (which would be offered every year). - at least one pastor always tries to be out in Lobby for pick up and drop off times each day. - one school board member's position is to specifically invent ways to engage families with our church

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

48

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

- one year we coached and scripted a Prek Board member to meet with all of the PreK parents to check-in on year and do a mini Law/Gospel presentation. May try it again.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

-friendship evangelism. Parents becoming friends with members who have children in PreK.

They prove that we aren't weird or attempting a bait and switch. Feel more comfortable coming to our church then when they know someone.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

at least 22% of adult confirmations

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We offer Bible Information Classes for them to attend. We have the children sing in church on Sundays and have graduation over here at church. Pastor Starr and myself open doors and greet for school two times a week.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

91

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

I'm not sure on this. I'm not aware of anything being abandoned.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Singing in worship; Bible Information Class; personal contact and encouragement from our teachers.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

11

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I would have to say this is our main and best avenue of outreach in the community.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Every new parent is asked to meet with me as Pastor so I can share with them the connection of the church with the child care center. It also gives me an opportunity to find out whether or not they have a church home. From there all families receive invites to anything special being conducted by the congregation: Baptism Sunday, Easter/Christmas for Kids, VBS Soccer Camp, etc., in addition to invites to special worship services. The unchurched families receive a letter from me every time I begin a Bible Information Class. All families are initially added to our prospect list and followed up on 2-3 times by our Board of Evangelism. A monthly newsletter is also shared with all families.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

65

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We've tried to have a mandatory "class" for all parents for one or two nights, but attendance was also spotty, at best. I've become much more comfortable with the personal visits that we require. Granted, I don't have as much time to take them through an entire class, but I can find out what I need to know about their spiritual background. These visits also tend to be a little less intimidating to parents.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

... being open and friendly with people, following up on those who are unchurched with reminders about special activities and classes, and trying to always let them know that we care about them as people and not just as someone who pays us to watch their children.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

10

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Here's the thing we all need to keep in mind about child care ministry: We will never be able to perfectly measure with numbers the effect that our ministry is having on families who utilize our center. If we open a child care ministry with the intention to double our membership, we're going about it the wrong way. If we do so to share the gospel directly with children and indirectly with their families, then we can be content to let the Lord produce the results in any way he chooses. Having the opportunity to share the message of Jesus with children, without any apologies, five days a week, and having these children share that message with their families -- how can we ever truly measure the "success" of such a privilege? The results -- at least in numbers -- may not always be visible, but that doesn't mean they're non-existent. God's Word never returns to him empty!

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our teachers are the main evangelists. They are trained and equipped to make connections with parents and be a bridge between the school and the church. It is essential that they form relationships with the parents and then encourage and invite parents to come to worship or Bible study or events. The pastor also needs to be present, visible, and active with the school. The pastor or evangelism team should work strategically on harvesting families from the school.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

120

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We never have and never will require a BIC class to be in our school. We never have and never will pressure people to come to church. I wouldn't say there is anything that we have "abandoned" in our strategies. By the way, the question is difficult to answer because technically you wouldn't assimilate a non-member family into your congregation. First you do outreach/evangelism. Then you do teaching/discipleship (BIC), then you do assimilation of new members into the congregation.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

the teachers being salt and light and taking advantage of opportunities to encourage and invite. Also, simply making conscientious effort to harvest prospects.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Over 100

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

9

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Your first question with four choices is not really complete. The option I would've chosen would be "Our church as an ECM ministry—to be an arm of the ministry of the church." In other words, it's not just for outreach or for members, or partially one and partially the other. It is fully for both. It is to train our member children in the way they should go and also to reach out to families with the gospel so that they can do the same. You also ought to consider many other variables that affect ECM ministry and outreach. They are complicated suckers. One example: Does the responding ECM have all members as employees, or non-members too? How would (or does) that affect ministry and outreach?

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Unfortunately my congregation does not try to reach out to the preschool other than those involved in the preschool. The first two weeks of school, the pastor and a member of the church who often subs for the teachers had a table and gave out coffee and offered parenting classes to the parents. Occasionally a member of the church council will come to the preschool staff-led monthly movie nights after much cajoling.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

54

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

It feels like a separation of church and preschool staff with a very us vs. them mentality. The staff is trying to keep the congregation up to date on enrollment and activities, but are often ignored or seen as unimportant.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Our strong preschool staff. These women are the strongest people I know. They do not give up and are always showing Christ's love in everything they do.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

None that I know of

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

2

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I'm afraid my responses may seem negative, but I feel I must be truthful. I am only a second year aide, but my mother had been teaching preschool for over 18 years, so I have observed just how wonderful the support of a congregation can be.

What is your title?

Other

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our childcare center has only been open a year, and our preschool three years so we're still getting things online. One key for us is having a called worker overseeing each level (infant, toddler, preschool). The called workers are critical in forming relationships with parents and then connecting them with me. Other things: I spend mornings in the childcare office rather than my own so that I can greet parents as they come in. I try to be around at pick up too, and parents usually have more time after work to talk than before. Every enrollment packet has a church information from included so we can identify prospects easily. That sheet asks if the child is baptized and that is often the "point of entry" for contact with me. The kids sing in church 2-3 times a year and we see a good number of families come for that. Our childcare management software allows me to send messages to families that are listed as prospects so I can invite them to BIC, special worship services, etc. very easily. I was involved in opening a childcare in my previous call and there are a few things we did there that I hope to start here soon. Eventually our director will do a monthly center-wide newsletter and church activities will be prominent in it, including an article from me each month. Once our new sanctuary is complete I'd like to start offering parenting workshops and marriage enrichment opportunities. (That was a good bridge for us at my last parish.) In November we are starting a monthly community seminar with guest speakers and that will be another tie-in for our families, even if it is still pre-evangelism. If possible, I'd like to go at least to the preschool & toddler rooms to lead devotion once a week or even once a month. Most of what we do will focus on building the relationship between called teachers/pastor and the parents. I don't see us ever requiring BIC; my goal is to invite people to BIC so many times that they succumb to sheer volume!

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

71

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We're still new enough here in Mandan that we haven't abandoned anything yet. At my former church we tried having a coffee station at the entry and putting a pastor there. People were too busy in the morning to stop and chat as they were heading to work though. That idea didn't last long.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

faithful called teachers who understand the spiritual purpose of our childcare and preschool.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

8

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

6

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I am confident our ECM will be a great tool for outreach in the future, but I could only give us a 6 right now as we're still getting our feet under us in a few important ways. Pastors and congregations beginning these kinds of ministries will need to be patient with childcare staff when centers open. It simply takes time to put the policies and procedures in place. I can't state enough the blessing of having called workers leading the classrooms. They are trained not only for the educational part of the work but also have a unique perspective on the spiritual goals of the childcare too. No matter how involved a pastor might be it is the teachers who will see and talk with parents every day, and the teachers who model Christian faith and practice most effectively. If they understand the outreach goals of the center, opportunities to share the gospel increase exponentially. On a side note, I would be very interested to read the thesis once you finish. I'd love to hear what other pastors/teachers are doing and how they're thinking about things. God's blessings on your last year at WLS.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our Little Lambs Childcare program is marking the 11th anniversary of the dedication of an 8,000 square foot facility we built after purchasing several acres of land across the street from our church. In the first several years we offered Faith Stepping Stones workshops for parents. We used Stone 1 twice; Stone 2, 3 or 4 times; Stone 3, once. We have used our own materials for workshops since then. We use Christmas for Kids and Easter for Kids to get families across the street to our church/school. Little Lambs conducts its own programs in our church several times per school year. Our director also serves as our Preschool program teacher, which helps to get non-members interested in our school itself. They send out a newsletter on a regular basis including information on our school and church events and programs. The childcare program is covering its own costs for building debt and operation, so the church does not subsidize the childcare students. Non-members interested in our K-8 program are treated as members for tuition for the first year and have several opportunities to attend Bible Information classes during that year.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

200

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We stopped using Faith Stepping Stones materials, primarily because of the membership cost.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Our preschool and kindergarten program, our Time Out For Moms program, and our parents using our childcare.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

20

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Re: the number of students served Our childcare serves around 110 children during the school year. I do not know how many children would be counted more than once, but it may help you to know that our 3K program currently serves 14; our 4K, 31; and our kindergarten 26. I would guess that the 20 I included from our Time Out For Moms group would include a lot of kids who are already counted.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

I will attach a list of ministries with brief explanations that we offer deliberately to reach out through our ECM .

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

200

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We have lessened the amount of Parenting Seminars we do, but we're looking to get that going again. We do a lot, so the frequency changes. Nothing has been totally discarded that comes to mind, only modified, which we do a great deal of.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

...personal connections. Outreach at its core is still way more about the people work than program. God's plan for mission work hasn't changed. He's always intended people to share their faith with others. Program can help us find ways to share our faith with others, but no program is really going to automatically make disciples. We use program to give us opportunities to do the people work of sharing our faith. Our ECM gives us some good opportunities to connect with people and share our faith.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

83*

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

* Our child care is on a second campus. 83 includes all those who come into membership through our ministry on that campus. (In the last 3 years we've begun worship and dedicated a full-time pastor to that campus.) Your scale question could be answered in two ways. Relative to other ECM's I'd give a higher value, but I rated us lower simply because there is a lot of untapped potential that we're still trying to figure out how to capitalize on. (200 is an average for enrollment--it goes up and down within the year.)

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We invite all non-member parents to take BIC class. We require all non-member teachers to take BIC class-the pastor holds class during the day when they are on the clock. The Pastor comes in and out of the building periodically. He talks to the teachers and children. The church invites ECE (Early Childhood Education) to several events throughout the year--Sunday morning worship, Fall Festival, Easter egg hunt ECE has a Thanksgiving program and Christmas program every year in the church (Christmas on Sunday morning during service)

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

49

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Family BBQ-- ECE put it on for-- our families, church and elementary school parents. Too much work and money for director to put on every year alone. Fall festival that is put on by all three-- church, school and ECE replaced it and is going strong.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Personal conversations from director and teachers to parents inviting them to our church or encouraging them to get their children baptized. We have 11 out of 49 children that do not go to a Christian church. One of the questions on our enrollment form is "when was the child baptized" and "what church are a member of". We use this information to focus on these families and inviting them to be part of our church family on Sunday morning. The church office also sends them BIC invites through the mail 3 times a year to all non-member families. When children go to the elementary school, we require them to take the BIC class and some parents become members at that time also.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

at least 60 (14 just last year)

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

9

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

The ECE has been open for 20 years. The older membership has taken a long time to come on board with the need for an early childhood program since "children should be at home with their mother". The church also has a huge responsibility of supporting the elementary school. So since the preschool opened it was supposed to be "self supporting " financially, which means operational expenses not rent or capital improvements. This makes it really hard to grow and get ahead. We were in the oldest building on campus and it looked and smelled old. Last year the church raised money and remodeled the space to make it look like a preschool!! We love our "new" space and it has helped bring people in. In the last 5 years we have been 1/3 members and 2/3 community people. We really are an outreach to our community. Usually about 70-80% of our graduating prek children go to our elementary school! I have been director for 3 years and I love my job. It is tiring because we are open Monday through Friday 6:30-6:00 all year long, but it is extremely rewarding telling children about Jesus!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

The enrollment in Grace's child care is typically 100% non-members. There is currently 1 member child enrolled, and it is the only member child who has been enrolled during my 3.5 years at Grace. However, the church leadership has dismissed the enrolled families as outreach prospects with the reasoning, "they all have their own church". There is no effort by the pastor or church members to connect with the enrolled families. Pastor works from home. Leadership has a "we are here; they can come to Grace if they want" attitude. An outreach strategy has been proposed to the pastor and council on multiple occasions, but has not been utilized. Hence, the church has not acquired any members from its child care ministry. Additionally, the teaching staff includes 3 called WELS teachers and 7 hired non-WELS teachers. The effort to teach children about Jesus and model Christian faith to parents and children alike is compromised with the majority of our teachers hired from outside our fellowship. The child care has become more of a side-business at Grace than it is a ministry. Grace's child care is atypical in the WELS because the congregation depends on the revenue from it to cover basic expenses such as mortgage and utilities. Grace cannot financially survive without the child care. And, historically, pressure is always on the child care to produce more. The reason that our congregation has an Early Childhood Ministry is... to create revenue for the congregation's budget. That is the primary reason Grace is operating its child care. If the child care ministry required offerings to exist, or just to break even, Grace would likely eliminate the program.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

47

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

I'll be happy to share the proposed outreach strategy which has not been utilized by the leaders. Just send me an email if you want an electronic copy. It is simply a description of the responsibilities of the director, teachers, pastor and council. Nothing fancy.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Unfortunately, there is no effort to connect with families.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

0

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

1

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Just a few additional thoughts... Even if an enrolled family claims membership in a non-WELS Christian church, they should still be regarded as a prospect. Many church membership claims are only nominal. Many times, they never attend and couldn't even tell you the name of their pastor or priest. And, if the family is being served spiritually by our congregation's ministry, the pastor and our church leaders should assume some responsibility for their spiritual welfare. Don't wash your hands of them simply because they are not one of "your" members. A church with a child care has one ministry, not two. If the child care is regarded as a separate entity, there will be relational problems between it and the church. Operate as one ministry, with one budget, and one mission and purpose. Separation will only create division in the congregation. Pastor plays a key role. An ECE will fail as an outreach tool without pastoral involvement. No matter how wonderful your teachers and director might be, the pastor has to be on board and assume a relational role for an ECE to be a successful outreach effort. He is the link that connects people to worship, Bible class, Sunday School and other ministries of the congregation. I hope I don't come across as sour on Grace's ministry. It is my goal to alter their approach to child care. I have plans to eliminate non-WELS teachers from the staff, hold the pastor accountable for his involvement, while maintaining expected revenue. I believe the Lord led me here to implement these important changes for the congregation. In the near future, I hope to help the congregation form a child care ministry that is more than just a financial blessing.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our pastor makes himself "known" from the first time we meet the parents at our Open House. He is a big part of our preschool. We do a Parent's Night about four times a year. This involves inviting all of our families to a night designated just for them. We offer free child care (provided by our staff, members of our preschool board, and members of our church.) The parents meet in the church and Pastor picks a topic that he will talk to them about. I also talk for a little bit, and then we offer refreshments so the families can make connections with other families, staff and Pastor. We have "Chapel Time" with Pastor twice a month. This involves our children going into the church and having Pastor tell our Bible Story to them. We invite the parents to be a part of this. Again, this time they are seeing Pastor "in action". Over the years we have had several families take Bible information classes with Pastor and become members. We include our Church service times in our newsletters that the staff writes, and we also have a facebook page that we keep updated and invite our families to join. We currently have a Fall Festival that we offer in connection with Safe Kids and reach out to the community. We also have a good turnout for our VBS of past and current families.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

60

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Off hand I can't think of any?

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

That our Pastor is a big part of our program.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

About 5 families...we are a smaller congregation.

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I hope the information I have provided to you is ok. Blessings on your studies!!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Really nothing...It's quite sad the ministry was started before my time here and there was no extra planning to strategize how to engage the families walking through our doors. We do inform them of a B.I.C. or other congregational events and the kids sing in church but I have been pushing for a 3rd pastor to nurture these prospect families and pursue other mission opportunities.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

45

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Other than the approach that "we'll do whatever you want (complain about)" nothing.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

The pastor specifically speaking with these families and inviting them to church and class. Also having the kids sing in church.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

0

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

2

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I personally believe that there is a wonderful mission field full of opportunities in an ECM ministry. However, it seems that for many congregations the demand for PreK and childcare have outpaced the availability of trained and lay workers. I have noted that in our area every WELS congregation makes use of non-member helpers especially in the daycare. This appears

dangerous to me. I spoke about this with the head of our ECM ministries in the synod office building and she expressed the same concern. I'm not sure MLC is addressing the biblical doctrine of church fellowship in regards to these ministries. It is quite a slippery slope.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

All EC students receive the grade school news letter. We sing in the church service several times a year. We have joint field trips with upper grade classes. We have an ice cream social in September that includes preschool with others and the grade school teachers included.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

110

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

When there were fewer preschoolers (there are currently 90) one of the pastors would try to talk to the unchurched families. I happen to have a fairly high number of families from India.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

I'm not sure.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

6

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Teacher

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

This is THE POINT of an ECM, and needs to be intentionally considered, re-evaluated, and celebrated. I have listed our action plan to connect families to our church and to their Savior more or less in order of importance (in my opinion) with foundational, essential items listed first. 1) All ECM teachers and director MUST be members of a WELS church and trained for ministry. Without this key ingredient - called workers who share in our faith and ministry outlook - you will be constantly rowing against a current to connect prospect families to your church. It will be a detriment to your ministry and can even be an avenue for Satan to destroy your church as well. I have seen this happen, and I strongly urge all pastors not to underestimate the seriousness of the seemingly harmless act of hiring non-WELS teachers to carry out our Early Childhood MINISTRY. 2) The ECM must be viewed by the congregation as one of many ministry arms of the church. The ECM is not a business, it might not always be self-supporting, and it definitely should not be "making money for the church" to supplement offerings. Sadly, I have seen this attitude in many churches and it is detrimental to the outreach ministry mindset of the ECM. The ECM should be supported by the congregation through prayers, special offerings, staffing/volunteers, and budget items (classroom space, called worker salary, benefits etc) because it is a ministry of the church. 3) A ministry plan/harvest strategy specifically listing our plans for outreach to the preschool families is created each year. At monthly preschool committee meetings, outreach is a topic on the agenda. We highlight what has gone well (or poorly) in what we have done, what event/item is coming up next. Pastor also shares how many families are involved in different items. I think that this step is so important for internationalizing the outreach and for keeping everyone focused on what the mission of our Early Childhood MINISTRY is - ministry. (Also, our mission statement is the first thing I share on my Director's report for each monthly meeting. Keep focused on the goal.) 4) We work to keep the quality of our preschool top notch, competitive with the best programs in the area. I believe that the effort put into providing a high quality care and education for families speaks volumes to the families about how important you think this ministry is, and how much you value them. It also builds trust. I believe working toward high quality lets your light, and the lights of the teachers and staff shine when you give God the glory. Parents will see this and want to be a part of it. 5) The pastor's office and director's offices are within the flow of drop off/pick up in order to facilitate natural conversation. 6) The pastor intentionally forms relationships with the children AND the

parents. When the pastor spends time with the children during the week (chapel obviously, read a book after lunch, visit on the playground, etc), the children are excited to stop in his office on the way to or from school - dragging their parents along. :) This relationship also helps the children to be excited about attending church. 7) Teachers intentionally discuss church attendance and its blessings with the children and families and regularly invite children to visit. Same goes for parental invitations - when it is natural. 8) It's an attitude thing - Pastor and director/teachers remind each other and pray for God to keep them ever grateful for (and not complacent about) the prospects that are walking through their doors every day. These families are such a wonderful opportunity for making genuine connections and sharing the Good news with! However, it can be easy for interactions with families to feel routine and take the opportunities for granted. Before you know it, the year will be up! 9) Preschool children sing in church 4 times/year, and parents are encouraged to come. 10) Worship on these Sundays is especially planned to accommodate more children and non-church going families. i.e. adult-staffed nursery during the sermon at least, children's activities for the pews, contemporary music choices/songs non-church goers may recognize, children's sermon, etc. 11) One of the 4 Sundays/year that the children sing at is the Christmas Program! This very special service always attracts almost all of our preschool families. We follow up that service with an invite to Christmas Eve. 12) In fact, all services that the children sing in have a "follow up plan" of subsequent special services and events to invite the families to. These are listed in the bulletin - special insert usually. 13) Special events are held throughout the year at which both preschool families and church families are invited/asked to participate: School Year Kick Off Sunday with Ice Cream Social, Trunk or Treat, Chili Cook off +Family Game Night, Food Drive, Kids Christmas Program, Christmas for Kids, Easter Egg Hunt, End of the Year Service + Picnic. Church families are encouraged to be intentional in getting to know preschool families at these events. I also think it is important not to do too many events. We try to space out our invitations to families so that they are not overwhelmed, but rather look forward to them. Also, the volunteers and staff don't burn out - but get excited to host these events. 14) We look for other smaller opportunities to integrate both church as preschool families as they come up - i.e. volunteer opportunities in the community, bible study series, volunteer work days at preschool, youth group activities for older siblings, church members volunteer at preschool events like Open House/Parent Orientation. 15) Pastor speaks at every preschool event, and has a chance to share a bit of God's Word with families while we have their rapt attention. For example, he gives a mini sermonette (5 min tops) about the importance of Christian education for children AND their parents at our Parent Orientation, Thanksgiving program, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Grandparent's Luncheon. It's amazing to me how many non-churched families begin to refer to him as "my pastor" even if they're not attending services yet. 16) We encourage families to attend Bible Information Classes. Pastor introduces this invitation at our Parent Orientation. We do offer a discounted tuition rate (not much - \$5 off/week) after the class has been completed. We advertise this discount somewhat, but not heavily. We find more success when parents enroll out of genuine interest than for the \$. 17) We have held H.O.P.E classes (Helping Our Parents Educate), usually for a 4-6 week session, one weeknight/week. It starts with potluck dinner, then kids have a bible class, and parents go through parenting/bible topics. We haven't been able to keep up with it just because of not having enough members/volunteers and too many programs going on. But we do hope to use it again

sometime. It was a great mix of preschool and church families talking over parenting issues with a biblical perspective and God's Word (which always works :)). 18) Connected our congregation to our preschool. When the congregation members are invested and feel like part of the ministry, they take initiative in integrating the preschool families into the church family. Ways we do this: a. our bi-monthly newsletter is sent out to all of the church families via email and available via hard cop b. this is also followed up by a little video slideshow shown in church after the service and opportunity to ask the director any questions. c. Reports are also brought to every church council meeting with outreach updates. d. Congregation members are invited, encouraged and begged ;) to participate in many volunteer and paid positions. 19) Pastor has access to the preschool google group and can send out emails to parents any times with devotions, parenting articles, invitations to bible class/church events. 20) Basically, every single thing that your Early Childhood Ministry does should be evaluated through the lens of your mission statement. Does this activity/decision work toward the end of connecting families to your church and to Jesus? Yes? Great! Do it to the best of your ability. No? Then adjust it so that it is more effective, or drop it. And "over all of these put on LOVE, which binds them together in perfect unity," Col. 3:14. Love the children. Love the parents. Love the teachers. "But [if I] do not have not love I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." 1 Corinthians 13:1

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

27

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

large discounts for BIC: discontinued because it brought many people to BIC, but not one family into the church. It harmed the ECM by reducing revenue too much (therefore reducing quality), even to the point where called workers could "not be afforded." (I should mention that we do have a member rate as well that is a deeper discount than a BIC completion rate. However, we do not advertise this rate as enticement. Rather, it is after membership is desired that we share this rate - the discount assumes that the new member will be supporting the ECM through offerings.) 2) Some special events, such as Fall Festival (replaced by Trunk or Treat), or Breakfast with Santa (besides the fact that I don't believe in promoting Santa...) have been dropped because a) staff and volunteers were getting burned out. b) it's better to do a few events and do them really well. c) parents were less excited to attend when there are too many events. Better to create anticipation and better attendance to a few really well done events.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Having a pastor, director and teachers who are united in faith and in passion (and trained for) ministry! It's all about the people. Having called workers to staff an ECM is extremely important. Nurturing these workers professionally and spiritually, working together to grow in faith and excitement for ministry, and not burning the out the workers by making them shoulder the entire burden of the ministry (it is a ministry of the congregation) is key in keeping the workers

effective. Then, they will be excited about carrying out the harvest strategy and everything else will follow.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

32

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

9

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I feel like our effectiveness ebbs and flows. I think that we can always do better. Our worst enemy is complacency in intentionally making relational and spiritual connections with the families walking in our doors. Thank you for researching this topic for your thesis. As a director here and as an Early Childhood District Coordinator, I have seen and heard of too many congregations who have not treated their early childhood ministry as a ministry. The effects of this range from lack of effectiveness to detrimental to the overall ministry. I believe that part of the reason for maltreatment of ECM is that it is still a relatively new ministry, and we are still learning about it. Therefore, I think that part of the solution to the problem of many ECMs is in educating all of our pastors about the issues that arise in ECM, how to best meet them, and how to keep the focus on outreach ministry.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Bible stories in each of the classrooms monthly newsletter to each family Information Class for parents sending children to preschool Pastor does object lesson for children / teaches Bible Story once a month

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

50

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

N/A

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

the friendliness and invitations of other members to those who are not members.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

3

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

As to gaining members it has not been successful. However, in teaching the children entrusted to our care and having the children take those truths home to their parents, we have been very successful. Most parents comment on how much their children sing the Bible songs and speak about the lessons learned in Bible Study.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?
Singing in worship services, pastor at door at opening and closing of school sessions, home visitation, invitations to outreach events, special family evenings, Preschool Christmas worship, etc.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

60

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

n/a

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

One of our pastors deliberately interacting with the families from outside the church

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

50?

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our main component is though the excellent teachers we have. They are instructed to invite, invite, invite. We train our teachers and discuss with them how encouraging these families to attend is a valuable tool. We also provide experiences for them and their children to participate in various events on our campus and through our youth group ministries within our church. I meet and greet them regularly so I can create a personal relationship from the day they enroll to the day they graduate 8th grade. We have created an environment you WANT to be part of, we don't simply talk about having one.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

110

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We don't twist arms. We don't get caught up in numbers! We simply value every child and their family as individuals created by God who are walking in different phases of life. Many of these families come into the program with absolutely NO intention of making it anything more than that, but by God's grace, they connect emotionally to our school.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....
our teachers and current families.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

100ish

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Other

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

They meet the pastors and are regularly invited to God's Service and church fellowship events throughout the year. They are invited to Easter for Kids, Christmas for Kids, and VBS.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

60

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

The preschool teacher

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

10

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

No

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Redacted

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

70

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Redacted

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Redacted

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

15

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We have several meet and greet events throughout the year. An ice cream social, fall festival, Christmas for Kids, Christmas program for the preschool, Easter for kids, Easter invites, summer church picnic. We do lots of social events in order to allow our friendly, outreach-minded members to mingle with preschool parents. We also invite families to services that are designed with visitors in mind. We actively invite parents to attend our BIC (which is attended by members, prospects and curious learners). We try to offer a wide variety of invitations to events that meet a purely social need, but also invite families to events that have at their core, the message of the Gospel.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

48

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

I'm not the best to speak on this topic. I have only been here a year, you ought to have received responses from my colleague, he would know better than I do.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Our congregants zeal to reach the lost. From all my interaction with members, they are eager to continue the outreach work of the preschool. They own the work by coming to events, financially supporting events. Supporting events with their time and energy. They want to meet and reach out to the lost that come through our doors via preschool. I know that kind of culture is hard to imitate, and believe me, I haven't had anything to do with creating that culture. But the ownership of the congregation has been pivotal in making our preschool the outreach tool that it is.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Again, not a question I'm best suited to answer.

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

We continue to try new ideas for our outreach arm. Even rotating in and out things that have "been effective" in the past. We are eager to attempt new, great ideas even if they are untested. This fall, for the first time, we will be meeting with parents (about 3-5 of them at a time). The goal of the 20-30 minute meeting will be to get some honest feedback (a pastor and a preschool board member will run the meeting) and to make a brief Law/Gospel presentation by way of explaining what makes our preschool different from every preschool out there. We will also attempt to implement a parent curriculum. One night a week, we will have a "grow as a family" course that will help to address some of the most frequently occurring concerns from our parents. We plan to build the curriculum into a four semester setup where each semester will see a different topic addressed. We'll talk one semester about parenting, another about finances, another about marriage, etc. The exact topics will be fluid. But the last semester will culminate in inviting them to join us for a BIC. Not that we won't invite them before that time, but this builds a bridge for us to credibly say, "I think you'll really get a lot out of our BIC."

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our Child Care Director and School Staff alert the Evangelism Team of those who are not members, information gleaned from applications and conversations with the families. The Evangelism Harvest Team divides up the names so to do follow up with the families, invite them to activities at the church (ice cream social, picnic, parent info nights...in addition to worship service invites throughout the year). This year we added a third pastor to serve as the primary Harvest Team Leader so to get to know these families better, develop a relationship with them, work with the Harvest Team on events with the purpose of gathering members and non-members. Our Staff Minister coordinates a mom and tots day per month with the goal of getting them familiar with our campuses and ministries and to hear about Jesus.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

250

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We no longer send monthly newsletter to our unchurched families. Some follow up is dependent on having certain individuals in place and when those individuals leave (term done or call elsewhere), that particular way of communication may end up going away.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

building a relationship with the families.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

20

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our ECE program runs 5 days a week with 2 classes for 3/4 year olds and 3 classes for 4/5 year olds this encompasses about 60 kids and about 35 families. As the pastor I connect with these families on a daily basis by being present at opening and closing time where I try to build a relationship with the families. By building a relationship daily it opens the opportunity to invite to BIC classes and worship later on. We do not require a BIC class. Without building a relationship with the family first attending a BIC is very difficult. Non-member families make up about 90% of our ECE program. About 40% would be considered unchurched. We have a parent's night out each month, various field trips, included our families in all our activities, and schedule Sundays for the children to sing in church.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

60

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Requiring BIC. It is essential to build a relationship with the family first.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Personal interaction. It takes a lot time and a lot of effort but it is time and effort well spent.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

25+

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

9

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Advertise in weekly newsletter church services and activities and posters in child care area. One of our pastors greets at the door for about 20 minutes in morning once a week and another tells a Bible lesson in one of our 5 rooms once a week and we have chapel in church once a week for preschool age in am and school age children in pm. We also have parent sharing once a year at night for about three weeks 6:00-7 or so. We also have children sing in 4 pm Advent and Lenten services.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

105

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

It has not worked to require families to come to a Parent Sharing or Bible class to have their child enrolled.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Activities such as our Fall Fun Fair in October and singing in Advent and Lenten services. We also have a Christmas Gathering which brings them into our sanctuary.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

maybe 10

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?
Grandparents night, Movie Nights, Local Fairs, Christmas Program, Spring Sing Program, Art Fair, VBS

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

57

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

No member discount for preschool families.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Having them sing in programs in church throughout the year.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

3

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

It seems we need to outreach to the community by first being useful to tithe community. For us, this meant being licensed by the state, and expanding our program to full days. We are a daycare to some, but a preschool to many. While all are hearing God's word daily.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Events designed to bridge church and school (preschool singing, Trunk or Treat, VBS, Easter 4kids etc..) accompanied by a staff that I would describe as AWARE (of the unchurched families), AVAILABLE (make time for the families during drop off and pickup), and willing to ASK (if such families would be interested in learning more about our church). We don't require families to take our BIC but this year we just started offering a month off of tuition if families are willing to take the entire class. This includes our own members (hoping for instant assimilation if members take class with potential new members). Someone asked, "What would we do if all 56 families took us up on this? This would be the entire evangelism budget for the year!" My response, "I'm sure the congregation would reallocate the entire evangelism budget into tuition discounts in order to get over 100 people in our Bible Information Class."

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

56

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None yet.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Preschool Sundays, getting them in the door to a worship service accompanied by faithful follow-up.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

38

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We have a position called "Mission Director". This person handles lesson curriculum, singing, arts/crafts, and all communication with the congregation and the families. She keeps constant contact with the families by regular newsletter and updates, personal contact, child involvement at church. The challenge is that most of the families are members of some church, so really are not mission prospects. Some are however.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

40

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Mainly we have abandoned the idea that the Director is able to handle both the "business" aspect of the child care with licensing, staffing needs, food, etc, and also have the time to adequately oversee the mission of the child care. Also, the skill set of a director, and a teacher are not always found in one person. Our work has been much better since we implemented the Mission Director position to complement the Director.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Staff connection.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

5

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Pastor has almost daily contact with children, sometimes substituting/assisting in classroom, including weekly chapel devotions. Many children recognize him as "my pastor." Regular encouragements from staff to non-churched children to attend worship and Sunday school. Children periodically sing in church, and participate in Christmas Eve service. School and church have a number of fellowship' activities throughout the year (Fall Carnival, Winter Fest, School picnic, summer church camp, special services and church meals) to which children and parents are invited. We invite parents to join us for our evening/family Bible studies (for women, men and children) on Wednesdays. In a number of cases, the connection begins before enrollment through our outreach ministry. Grace Academy is obviously a focal point in our outreach ministry (which consists of weekly canvassing, friendship witnessing, public & media advertising, special outreach events/activities) such that a large number our students come to us through personal and direct contacts that we have with parents prior to enrollment. In addition, our school's growing, good reputation -- especially in the last few years -- has made it more attractive to prospective parents/students. We periodically send follow-up mailings to parents of former students who are non-churched (we don't and won't proselytize those who are churched) inviting them to worship -- especially to special, seasonal services. We are also completely re-doing our internet presence and message and hope to use it not only for outreach, but also to try to passively assimilate non-churched parents into our church community.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

30

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We haven't abandoned anything.....everything works eventually.....nothing works perfectly.....and nothing works perpetually. So we're trying to use a "shotgun" approach -- trying any and everything we can.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Day in and Day out personal contact and connections established by our staff with parents and children, as well as the consistent Christian witness of those staff members and the instruction in the Word (that often has very noticeable "effects" on the children). In the final analysis, our key effort is tied to the personal contacts that we help the children establish with Christ and with our staff.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

10

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

2

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We offer a Preschool Partners class 3 times a year. The Spiritual needs of the preschooler is in Sept. The Physical needs is in Nov. and the Emotional needs is in Mar. These are done in the evenings with child care offered. Our pastor is always around during drop off greeting the families. We have Preschool Church the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month in the chapel. Families are invited to stay and worship with their preschooler. This is about 15 min. long and the kids sing the songs they have been working on. Our congregation puts on a Living Nativity for the community each year. We invite the preschool families to attend and have the preschoolers sing right after the 1st performance.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

53

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We offered a coffee hour for parents while the kids were in class. This just didn't seem too beneficial. We've tried offering parenting classes. Sometimes these work, sometimes they don't.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

church members with preschoolers practicing friendship witnessing.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

20

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Teacher

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Invitations to events (concerts, vbs, Truck or Treat, BIC classes, etc) Invitations to worship, especially when kids are singing / part of the service

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

75

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Are child care has only been open about a year, so we haven't abandoned ideas yet

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

the staff. Called & hired alike."

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

4

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

8

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Vicar - Blessings on your paper, current, & future service to Him!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Invite to activities, church. Counseling, support in need

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

57

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

info classes were poorly attended;

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

people contact; caring about them

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

2

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Our church was built about 4 miles away from the church in a newer, residential area. The main purpose of this was to reach out to the families in the area by offering a service they needed. This provided St. Peter the opportunity to make contact with families that otherwise may never had heard of the church. One of our Pastors, , has his office at the church. This has allowed him to develop relationships with the children, their parents, and our staff. He visits each classroom once a week to tell them our Bible story and sing songs with them. (He even visits the infant classrooms!) One of our women's groups at church provides "Baby's First Bible" for our families with newborns. Pastor also holds a Bible Information Class at our church 1-2 times each year which we invite our parents to. Just recently, we began offering a weekly tuition discount if they attended the class, and then continued the discount if they became members of the church. Pastor also holds baptism seminars regularly at our church, and some of our families have taken the seminar and had their child baptized! Our church also serves as a host site for the a nearby grade shcools 4K program. This has opened up numerous opportunities to reach out to families that otherwise would not have had a need to come to our church. After each 4K session, we offer 20 minutes of free childcare where we have Bible time. Our WELS Preschool teacher leads the Bible time, and Pastor also leads the 4K Bible time once per week. Our Kindergarten teacher from St. Peter's Lutheran School also visits for our 4K Bible time twice each month as a way to introduce herself to the 4K families.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

113

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

I have requested this information from our campus Pastor.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

the close working relationships between our staff at our school and church,. The ministry at Our church is very different from many, and challenging at times, as it is a separate campus from the

church and school. Our church was built in a newly developed residential area in Weston as an outreach tool for the families in the area. Our outreach ministry would not survive without strong communication between our three campuses. Fortunately, one of our Pastors has his office at Our church which helps tremendously. Continuous meetings between the staff have ensured that all events between the three campuses are advertised at each. The constant exposure our childcare families have to events at our church and school really help to bridge the gap and make the connection clear!

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

I have requested this information from our campus Pastor.

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I requested information to answer two of your questions from our Pastor. I did not want to lose what I had filled out, so I am submitting what I have completed. I will fill in the survey when he replies to me, or I will email you his answers directly. Please feel free to contact me with any follow-up questions. We have a really unique ministry here, and I am happy to share the stories of how God has blessed us with others. God's continued blessings in your final year!

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Very little. This is the rub. In order for ECE to be a useful outreach tool, there has to be a pastor who serves as the bridge through which prospects will connect to the church. It is incredibly time intensive to build those relationships, and most churches are not staffed properly to do it. You'd like to expect the ECE teachers to do it, but it's often beyond their training and call.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

75

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Expecting the MLC trained teachers to do it.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Calling a pastor and making it a part of his called duties to farm it.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Not sure, but less than 5.

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

2

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

You can call me if you want me to share more. There's a lot more to be said.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Four things: above all else- keep Christ at the center of the classroom. The children make the best witnesses. Also, pastors and teachers intentionally get to know the parents and look for opportunities to reach out. Parents are invited again and again to BIC. Children sing in church and parents come along.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

35

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Our church can be very slow in abandoning any strategy.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

The Gospel at work every day in the classroom. The children want to come to church and bring their parents.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

25 (estimate)

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

7

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Invited preschool students to sing with Sunday School children on various Sundays and in the Children's Christmas Service 2) Pastor Goldschmidt is in touch with parents who put on their registration form that they would like more info about our congregation. 3) Preschool families are invited to various fellowship activities, like: gingerbread house making event in Dec., Fall Harvest Festival, annual church picnic, Lenten soup suppers, Easter brunch. 4) Preschool families are invited to attend VBS, which many of them do. 5) Creating a "movie night" once per month where we show a movie that is suitable for young children (this month's is Charlie Brown Great Pumpkin) in the sanctuary on the overhead projector.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

52

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Movie night and gingerbread making.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

0

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Other

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Primarily to serve as an outreach tool.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We use the Center newsletter for informational articles, offer BIC to our families, Pastor works in our classrooms daily, all of our Center events are joint events with the congregation.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

75

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

We haven't abandoned any strategies since I have been director here.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

having our Pastor and church members actively engaged in our Learning Center.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

4

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Cross of Glory requires that parents take a Bible Overview Course (2hrs) that leads into an optional BIC Class. The pastor comes into the classroom once a week to read to the children. The pastor usually greets parents in the hallway before school. The children sing in church several times a year and then are followed up on. We have events that bring people onto our campus such as Father Daughter Dance, Ice Cream Social, Fiesta night, Trunk or Treat. Our Vacation Bible School has over 150 in attendance every year. All are intended for us to build relationships with them so we can identify where and when to serve them spiritually.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

49

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

none

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Pastor involvement and the whole staff having the outreach mindset.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

30

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

We have grown so fast and our area is exploding with population. While we have our plan and procedures in place the follow through has been weak. We are calling a second pastor to help and work primarily with the school and preschool outreach.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We have signs up, we talk about what we do at church, our pastors office is right when you walk in. We send our families to our staff minister with questions, we involve the families with the churches charitable giving opportunities. We have an outstanding invitation written into our preschool newsletters and calendars.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

73

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Unknown by the current staff. The majority of our preschool families have a home church when they enroll. Only a couple have joined our church.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Making sure the staff members are in church on Sunday and giving the families a warm welcome if they come.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

Unknown

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Teacher

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

advertise through mailings, newsletters, social networks, word of mouth, personal invitations, newspapers, tv, radio. I think this question is not what you are asking. Assimilation comes through home visits by staff and outreach teams. BIC. Early morning Bible devotions, lego nights, all fellowship activities are extended to seeker families.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

74

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Fellowship opportunities, services where children sing or are part of any worship services, home visits work best.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

57

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

10

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

teach members to be open, welcoming and engaging helps greatly.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Most of the families are attending bible information classes and the school children are included one per quarter to participate in the worship service by singing

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

15

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

None

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Our love for the people we serve. In surveys, non-WELS families mention how loved they feel and how sure they are that this is the best choice for their children.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

0

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

5

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Teacher

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

We have weekly newsletters, send out invitations to church/school events, in February we have Christian Education Week where we hold an annual Scholastic Book fair sponsored by our childcare center/preschool that involves the elementary school and the congregation and involves a Story Time night (a themed night with stories, snacks, and a craft) during that week for our ECM families, we have the preschool kids sing in church once a month with the K-2 grades.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

65

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Our congregation never really had a plan to assimilate the families of our ECM students with the congregation. I think the idea was here for outreach but a formal plan or goal was never made so very little has been done to try to reach these families from the congregation's side.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Christian Education Week.

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

0

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

3

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

Though the desire and support are there for our ECM ministry, getting the man power from the congregation to run it and do outreach tends to be quite difficult.

What is your title?

Director

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....

...Mostly for the members of our Congregation but partially for outreach.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Pastor/principal newsletter, teacher newsletter, chapel services

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

55

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

Inviting members to open house night

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

Christmas service with fellowship following and pastor/principal newsletter

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

6

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

4

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

What is your title?

Teacher

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?
invite families to "family-friendly" fellowship events (pastor to mingle with them as much as possible) have pastor visible at special preschool functions special invitation to Christmas and Easter worship all families that indicate no church home are added to prospect list

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

47

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

none

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

making sure the know who the pastor is (and his wife) and getting them comfortable enough to approach him/her

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

2

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

4

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

important to strike the balance between being too pushy and being too reserved in developing relationships with the unchurched parents.

What is your title?

Pastor

Finish the following sentence. The reason that our church has an Early Childhood Ministry is....
...Mostly for outreach but partially for members of our Congregation.

May I quote your answers in my paper?

Yes, but anonymously

What has your congregation done to connect families of your Early Childhood Ministry programs who are not a part of your church to your congregation?

Outreach pastor (me) meets with parents in January to "evaluate the preschool program," non member families go on outreach email list, 3 or 4 major congregational family events per year are attended by most families, and by k5 most have taken bic and joined the church. Likely the primary motive is knowing that our church has a waiting list for school and members are not turned away. But, we have them for 9 years so it is worth it in our opinion. Email me separately if you would like more details.

How many students currently attend your Early Childhood Ministry programs?

70

What strategies, if any, have been abandoned by your congregation to assimilate the families of your ECM students with your congregation?

I've been there 2 years and am building on a good foundation so I can't say too much about past history. What we do now seems to work well.

Finish the following sentence. What has most helped our congregation connect people from our Early Childhood Ministry to our congregation is.....

School enrollment waiting list gives the chance for requiring an extensive and detailed bic which gives time for gospel proclamation and the spirit's work over 9 years of school enrollment

How many souls, in the last 5 years, have become members of your congregation whose first contact with you was your Early Childhood Ministry?

15+

On a scale of 1-10, How well do you think that your congregation is using its ECM as a tool for outreach?

9

Please leave any other thoughts on this topic below.

I'm happy to talk further via email or phone if you want.