

# THE WELL EQUIPPED VOLUNTEER

## Children's Ministry Program Evaluation Tool

Name of Program \_\_\_\_\_

This evaluation tool has been designed to evaluate one specific program at a time.

### Step One – Pray

Take some time by yourself or with the ministry leader and volunteers to pray about this particular program. Pray for the evaluation process. Pray that God would help you to see the program as it actually is and then as it potentially could be. Pray that God would give you an open mind, wisdom, creativity, and courage.

### Step Two – Define Program

What is the purpose of this program?

Where does it fit on the Children's Ministry Spectrum? (For more information on the Children's Ministry Spectrum visit <http://wellequippedvolunteer.com/2012/08/17/childrens-ministry-spectrum/>)

Does it help fulfill your children's ministry vision statement? (For more information on the purpose of a vision statement and how to write one visit <http://wellequippedvolunteer.com/2012/02/01/why-do-you-need-a-vision-for-your-childrens-ministry/> )

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### Step Three – Evaluate Program

Using the chart on the following pages, you will evaluate these four categories of your program:

- Purpose/Vision
- Program/Curriculum
- Volunteers
- Administration

Within each category are a series of questions. Place an 'X' in the column that best matches your answer to that question ("Absolutely", "Somewhat", "Not really", or "Not at all"). Answer these questions as accurately as possible, taking into account the program's current situation. Be careful not to answer based on what you want the answer to be but rather how it is right now. The more accurately you answer these questions now, the easier the next steps will become!

	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not really	Not at all
<b>Purpose/Vision</b>				
Is this program fulfilling its purpose?				
Does this program have a goal?				
Is this program on its way to reaching its goal?				
Is this program growing? (numerically)				
Does this program help to fulfill the vision for children's ministry in your church?				
Do the parents who register their children for this program understand its purpose and goal?				
Using the Children's Ministry Spectrum, do you need to run this program? (ie. Do you already have other programs from this category on the Spectrum already?)				

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	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not really	Not at all
<b>Program/Curriculum</b>				
Is the program/curriculum age appropriate?				
Is this program meeting the needs of the community? (ie. your neighborhood or your church)				
Does this program meet the needs of the people who attend?				
Are the participants growing spiritually?				
Does the curriculum help the program reach its goal?				
Does the curriculum help to fulfill the purpose of this program?				
Does the program make good use of time, space, & resources?				
Are relationships growing between the kids and other kids in this program?				

	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not really	Not at all
<b>Volunteers</b>				
Is this program adequately staffed?				
Do you have enough volunteers to run this program with excellence?				
Do the volunteers know the purpose and goal of this program?				
Do you have a leader with passion and purpose?				
Does the leader communicate regularly with the volunteer staff?				
Do the leaders/volunteers spend time praying (together & separately) for this program, its impact, and the kids who attend?				
Do the leader & volunteers have a job description that they understand and follow?				
Do the volunteers take time to build relationships with kids in this program?				
Do you regularly train your volunteers to serve in this program?				

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	Absolutely	Somewhat	Not really	Not at all
<b>Administration</b>				
Is this program child-friendly?				
Are there policies & procedures in place to ensure that this is a safe program for children & volunteers?				
Has enough been done to reduce any risks involved with this program?				
Does this program have adequate facilities?				
Does this program have adequate equipment?				
Is there adequate communication with parents?				
Does this program have an adequate budget to fulfill its purpose?				
Does this program have adequate resources to fulfill its purpose?				
Do you have a contingency plan in place for emergency situations? (ie. You don't have use of the building; sudden spike in attendance; several volunteers don't show up)				

### Step Four – Reflect on the Program

The following questions are to help you reflect a little further on the program. Answer prayerfully and honestly. Think of this section as a type of "journal" in which you can totally honestly reflect on some of your answers from above. The answers you give here can help to reveal deeper thoughts and feelings about your program that you might now have answered in the evaluation chart in the previous step and these answers will help you as you go through the rest of this tool. Use the back of this page or additional sheets of paper if you need more room.

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1. What do you love about the program currently? What's going really well?
2. What could be improved in the program currently? What is not working so well?
3. Is there anything missing from the program currently?

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### Step Five – Identify Next Steps

Now that you have evaluated your program and reflected on it, it's time to figure out what to do next. You're going to use the **evaluation questions** you answered in the evaluation chart (in Step 3) and you're going to use a **flowchart** (on the next page). Together, those will help you put together an **action plan** to create some next steps for your program!

Use the flowchart on the next page to help you review each question that you answered in your evaluation chart in Step 3. The flowchart will help you identify potential next steps to take as a result of how you answered those evaluation questions.

For *each* question you answered in your evaluation go through the flowchart on the next page. There are 33 questions in the evaluation chart, so you'll go through the flowchart 33 times. Don't worry, it will go fast. *(Note: Those evaluation questions were placed in a specific order: the categories go from strategic to tactical – first purpose/values, then program/curriculum, then volunteers, then administration. Not that one is more important than the other; rather, some elements need to be dealt with first so that you can build off of them. For example, you need to work on a foundational element like purpose and vision before you deal with facilities and equipment. So in this next step of your evaluation, you will go through those questions in order. Resist the temptation to skip over a hard question to answer an easier question!)*

Start at the top of the flowchart, with the box marked "A" and follow the blue line that matches how you answered that specific question.

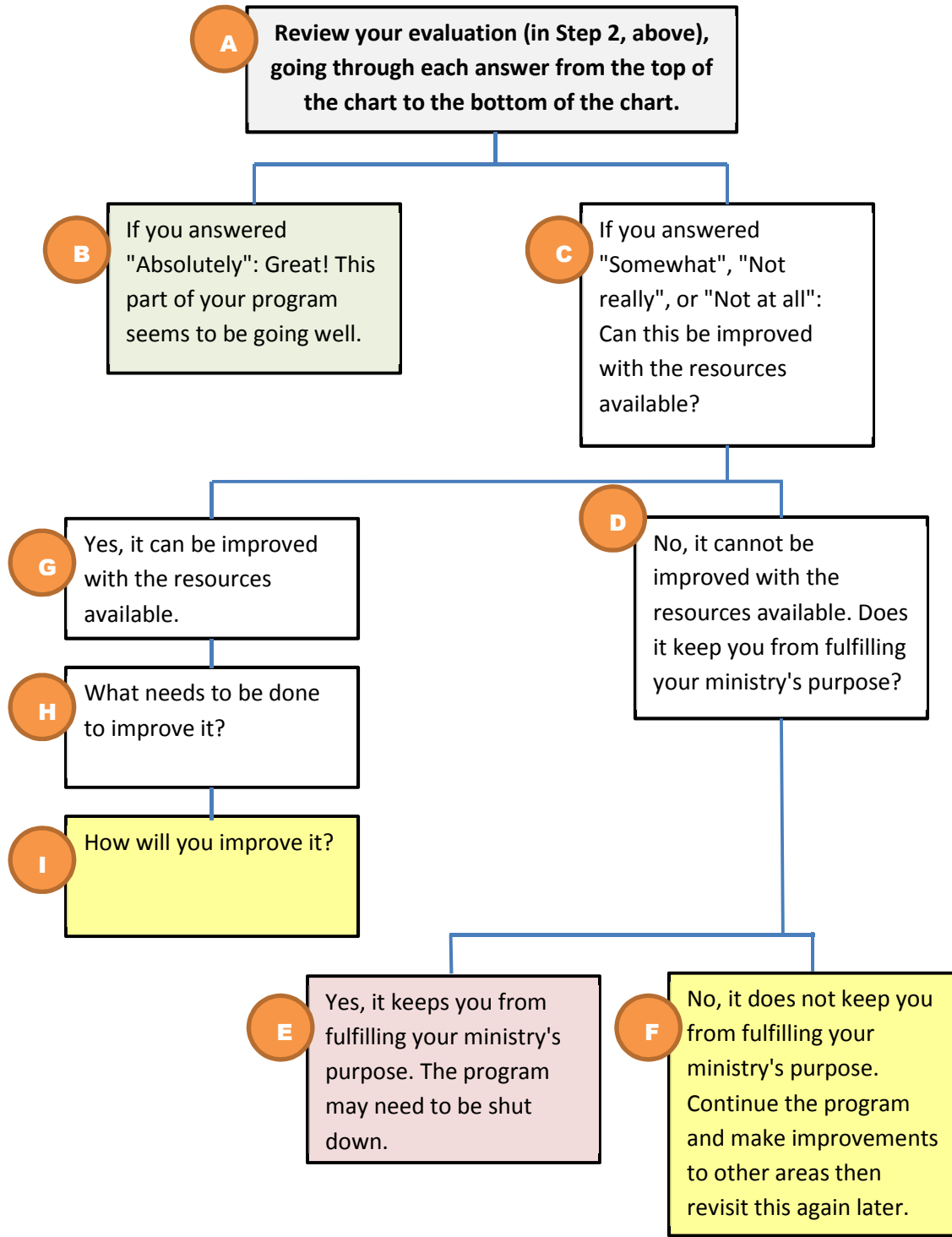
Even though you are going through the flowchart for each question, you can do this fairly quickly as a way to identify the areas that you need to work on right away, and as a way to identify how to make changes. (Think of it like a *Choose Your Own Adventure* book!)

If you need more information about a specific box on the flowchart, you can find it on the pages that follow. You will also find tips and ideas to help you make changes and implement them.

Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper and that sheet of paper will become your action steps as you work on specific areas of improving your program!

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Below, you'll find additional information about each of the boxes in the flowchart on the previous page. The letters match the boxes in the flowchart:

### **A. Review Your Evaluation**

Look at the first question in your evaluation tool. How did you answer it? If you answered “absolutely” then go to B. If you answered "Somewhat", "Not really", or "Not at all" go to D.

### **B. Answered “Absolutely”**

This is the easy part. Be encouraged. This part of your program seems to be going well.

### **C. Answered "Somewhat", "Not really", or "Not at all"**

If you answered “Somewhat”, “Not really”, or “Not at all”, this highlights an area where you need to make an improvement to the program. (If you answered “somewhat” then you probably need to make a minor improvement. If you answered “not at all”, then it’s likely a much bigger improvement or change that is needed.)

What you are trying to decide here is whether or not an improvement can be made with the resources you have available. There are many resources required to run a program (including resources you might not immediately think of) and every change you make will require some of those limited resources. Available resources include budget, facilities, staff, and even your time.

For example: If you have a program that needs bigger facilities, you need to figure out whether you have the resources to do that – including whether you have the budget and whether there are facilities even available that meet your needs.

Another example: If your program is lacking a vision and goals, you need to spend some of your time (time that you could be working on other programs) to develop a vision and goals for this program.



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So ask whether you can make the changes you need to make with the resources you have available. If you can, go to G. if you can't, go to D.

### **D. Can't Be Improved with the Resources Available**

If you answered no there is a further question you need to consider: Will the program keep you from fulfilling your ministry's purpose if you can't fix it?

Let's say you are evaluating a mid-week club program whose purpose is to introduce kids to Jesus. The current question you are considering on the evaluation tool is "Does the program make good use of time, space, & resources?" You answered "not at all" and you also realize that you cannot improve it with the resources available. Can you still introduce kids to Jesus if you are not making good use of the time, space, and resources that you have? Probably yes. If so, go to G.

### **E. The Program May Need to be Shut Down**

Sometimes this is the right decision. I was once in charge of mid-week clubs. The program was going really well until we lost a number of volunteers (for various reasons) and did not have enough to safely run the program anymore. I tried communicating the need and talking directly with people. When no one stepped up to volunteer, we had to shut down the program. Not enough volunteers was something that kept us from fulfilling the ministries purpose.

### **F. Continue the program and make improvements as you can**

Continue the program, pray, make improvement as you can and make a point to revisit this question again. The next time you ask it you may have the resources available to make the improvements you want to.

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### **G. Yes, It Can Be Improved with the Resources Available**

You do believe improvements can be made with the resources available. Now it's time to consider some follow up questions. Go to H.

### **H. What Needs to be Done to Improve It?**

For this step you are going to figure out one thing (no more than two or three things) that need to be done to improve this element of the program. Some improvements will be simple and can be effected immediately. Some improvements may take a little time and planning. Let's take for example the need for more volunteers. There are two things you need: 1. More leaders and 2. More helpers. Once you have done that, go to I.

### **I. How Will You Improve it?**

Next you will write out the steps you need to take to achieve the need(s) you listed from I.

For example, to get more helpers you might talk to the youth group, do some recruiting in the service on a Sunday morning and ask parents about being parent helpers.

When writing out the steps, don't forget to include who might be able to help you. For example, you could ask the youth leaders to help you by talking to the youth about serving and specifically about your program's needs.

Now that you have done this for the first question in your evaluation, go back and do it for the next question. This might seem daunting, but by the end you will probably see ways to combine certain improvements as you work on the program as a whole. If you've gone through the flowchart for each question you answered, you should have a great idea of what needs to be improved in your program and how you are going to improve it. **And don't forget to pray through each step of the evaluation!**