

Taking Your Program to the Next Level
NCCS 2018 Convention
Workshop Discussion

1) Your chapter's literacy program has been going on for 20+ years. Your program volunteers are getting older and are dropping out. How can you generate a new enthusiasm for the program in order to draw some new and younger volunteers?

Utilize social media; post photos of fun, worthwhile activities; email blasts, link on website to register.

Partner with other organizations – churches, women's groups, welcome wagon, new people moving into parishes, school parents. Get kids involved to inform parents.

Community Book Drive – hand out information about CCS and your programs

Evaluate your program periodically to figure out what isn't working.

2) You are currently running a basic literacy program (reading a book 2 times/month) to kids K-2 at two local elementary schools. It's time to expand and grow this program in order to establish a better interpersonal relationship with the children you serve. How can you accomplish this?

Meet with your partner organization about their needs and opportunities available.

Remember teacher appreciation gifts to promote partner relationships.

Add more days to develop deeper relationships.

Add craft/activity or outside enrichment program, maybe a field trip.

Send a book home to build their personal library. Increase book drive donations or use Scholastic, Dolly Parton's Imagination Station, Amazon lists, Usborne Books.

3) (Referencing article about kids reading to dogs and seniors) Think of other people/things/places children could read to as part of your program. How can you make that happen?

Field trips to nursing homes where small children read to/with the elderly residents.

Pediatric Clinic – create a library in a clinic for children of all ages.

Read to stuffed animals.

Bring children to various settings – church medical office, children's museum, farms.

4) Your membership numbers are dropping. After some self-reflection, you realize the programs you have lack enthusiastic leadership. Your board has decided to take on an early learning program as a way of attracting new members and re-igniting a fire in the existing members. What steps can you take to discover the kind of program that will do the trick?

Piggybacking on an existing program.

Leadership does a search for new partners – "How can we add to your services?"

Be a helper in a program as a way to develop your own program.

Change the days or the experiences in your program to attract more volunteers.

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5) You discover your volunteers want a summer activity. Think of a "camp-like" early education experience. Add details such as a possible location, length and materials needed.

Partner with existing Bible camp and offer to host a reading/craft/activity each week.
Partner with a nature center and offer to host a reading activity throughout the summer.
Partner with a school to offer a summer program one week during the summer to reinforce reading skills.

Financially support a summer program with certified teachers in a school.

Partner with the Public Library to come in periodically during June/July with a book and craft activity.

6) Your chapter is interested in starting an early learning program. You have 6 willing volunteers who want to be involved, but none is really interested in reading to children on a regular schedule. One of them occasionally acts with a local community theater, another is a master gardener and a third writes articles for the local newspaper. Another volunteer travels extensively. A local inner-city Catholic grade school is interested in having you partner with them. Using your "outside the box" thinking caps, brainstorm 5 literacy-related ideas for one or more ongoing programs.

Have the writer read a local interest newspaper story and have the children write a news article. Turn the students' articles into a newspaper.

Have the community theater member and the writer prepare a readers' theater script.

The students would read the script out loud.

A master gardener brings flowers and reads poetry about flowers. The students write a poem.

The traveler provides a book about a location she has traveled to and brings items to share. The book is read and differences between the travel location and the school location are discussed.

7) You have a pre-school reading program and you don't really know if you are making any real difference in the children's lives. Consider some methods you could use to evaluate your program.

Observe the children as they discuss and participate to evaluate their reaction and involvement.

Can the children retell the story or act it out? Do they 'get' it?

Are the children picking up on sight words or key themes? If not, what can you do to facilitate that?

Ask for feedback from teacher/parents.

To enhance the story, bring props and consider sight word flash cards.

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8) Your chapter decides it wants to provide field trip experiences for a local inner-city school because all of their extracurricular funding was cut. You have the money and your partner is on board. But NCCS keeps asking you to do a literacy program! What can you do to structure a field trip as a literacy program? Give some specific field trip ideas.

Books on the bus – kids in rural areas with a long bus ride would benefit from a mix of available books. Create a mobile library. No electronics!

Field trip to the zoo with age appropriate books about animals. CCS could provide a picnic lunch during story time at the zoo.

Theater production – read an age appropriate book with a similar theme.

Bring a field trip to the students. Have a professional in some area visit the school to enrich a reading experience.

Art exhibit field trip with a book about the artists.

9) Your chapter decides to facilitate field trips to supplement your reading program. What challenges will you face? What do you have to budget? How will you incorporate reading activities?

Be aware of legal issues that may arise; check with your partner school first.

Take students to the library (some are within walking distance). Choose a book to read and discuss. Perhaps a librarian can give a tour of the library to get the kids comfortable with visiting it.

A museum tour. Choose a book about something in the museum beforehand.

Go to an apple orchard. Read a book about healthy eating, apples, anything related.

Pick apples for the kids to take home.

Challenges? Finding an appropriate book. Security and transportation. Food, health and handicap issues. Might need certifications for volunteers. Budget issues.

10) Your current literacy program is doing great and you wish to expand. What are the necessary steps and information needed to begin courting new partners?

Assess resources, funds and volunteers.

Is it filling a real need?

Consider logistics – location, transportation, resources.

Volunteers have great skills, some not used. Do a skills inventory continually as membership changes.

Use personal outreach to expand to new areas.

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11) Your chapter has arranged to read teacher-selected books to 25 children in a preschool connected with a local under-resourced Catholic school. You will also do a follow up activity with the children. The school has just enough materials on hand for their own activities and so has left it to your chapter to design and supply follow-up activities for the reading sessions you conduct. What you need to consider as you plan activities for the children?

Plan a book party. Coordinate with the teacher and determine the budget, including purchasing of books. Determine the number of volunteers required.
Find a theme – book, treat, song and exercise coordinate with theme.
What will children take home? Picture from the book, a toy, guidance for parents on how to read the book with the children.
Follow up with teacher to evaluate success.

12) Your chapter's literacy program has been going on for 20+ years. Your program volunteers are getting older and are dropping out. How can you generate a new enthusiasm for the program in order to draw some new and younger volunteers? (SAME as #1)

Have reading programs on different days based on the school schedule and volunteer availability. Maybe Saturdays or half days?
Expose newest CCS members to literacy programs. Require some participation in their first year.
Pair younger chapter members with their own children so the children can 'volunteer' also by helping with crafts or snacks.
Divide responsibility into smaller 'chunks' of the program. For example, someone who cannot attend the program can help prepare crafts, research books or prepare snacks. That will take work off the attending volunteers.
Add hands on activities and food.