

CHURCH LIBRARY MINISTRY

1. What Is Church Library Ministry?

The Church Library Ministry carries out the vision and mission of the church by providing media for the purpose of leadership development, spiritual transformation, and leisure activities as it helps preschoolers and children **hear** God's Word, **know** God's Word, and **do** God's Word; students to **know** God, **own** their faith, and make their faith **known**; and adults **to connect** with God and others with an open heart, **grow** in body, mind, and spirit, **serve** with willing hands, **go** with ready feet.¹

2. Why Do Church Library Ministry?

The Church Library Ministry exists to distribute resources for the continuation of Christianity through the generations.

3. Who Does Church Library Ministry?

A Church Library Ministry Team leader (may be vocational staff member or a church member) and a Church Library Ministry Team (non-rotating team approved by the church) evaluates, plans, and coordinates the ministry.

4. Where does Church Library Ministry Take Place? A Church Library Ministry requires visible space in the church facility for the church's collection of resources, preferably conveniently located for ease of use by church members and those in the community.

5. When does Church Library Ministry Take Place?

The Church Library Ministry is a daily operation. The library collection is accessible to users when they are in the church facilities, but many of the responsibilities of the team members happen through the week.

6. What are Biblical Foundations of Church Library Ministry?

A. The **early churches** had libraries to enable and promote the use of Christian texts in worship, study, and discussion. (Henry Y. Gamble. *Books & Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995, 145).

B. Knowledge was important in the early church and continues to permeate the churches in the 21st Century (Phil. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:12; 2 Peter 3:18).

C. The importance of **maturing faith** undergirds the use of libraries in today's churches (Gen. 17:1; Job 1:1; Matt. 5:48; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4: 12-13).

¹ For your church, use the terminology of your church's vision statement or your church's disciple making process with each age level.

- D. The Church Library Ministry plays a significant role in the implementation of the **mission of the church** (Matt. 28:19-20).

7. What are the Basic Understandings About Church Library Ministry?

- A. The Church Library Ministry is led by **God-called servants** who strive to provide media resources and services that will advance the Kingdom of God.
- B. The Church Library Ministry provides **visionary support** to the pastor and plays an important role in the effectiveness of corporate worship, open groups (Sunday School classes and small groups), closed groups (Discipleship groups), ministry teams (committees and teams), and families through relevant resources and services.
- C. The Church Library Ministry has four areas of work (**administration, collection development, classification & cataloging, and promotion**) to be carried out in the context and attitude of ministry.
- D. The Church Library Ministry ministers to **individuals in the church and the community**.
- E. **Reading** is both important and popular in the 21st Century.
- F. The Church Library Ministry connects persons with resources and provides library services to support the church in **evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship**.

8. What are Considered Suggested Elements of Church Library Ministry?

(Church Library Ministry teams implement ministry actions that support and align to the mission and vision of their churches each year. The following elements are merely recommendations.)

- A. **Ministry Support** —The Church Library Ministry resources the corporate worship, open groups, closed groups, and ministry teams by providing leadership development resources, teaching helps, magazine distribution, and may sell the small group member books.
 - 1) The Church Library Ministry Team maintains, promotes the use of, and circulates resources for use in worship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and fellowship.
 - 2) In order to provide and promote resources for the support of other ministries, the team leader serves on the Church Leadership Team (Church Council or ministry coordination group) and the Church Library Ministry Team will be informed about the events of open and closed groups.

- B. Spiritual Growth** — The Church Library Ministry encourages an individual’s spiritual growth by providing leisure reading, devotional materials, research tools, and discipleship resources.
- 1) Many individuals cannot participate in open groups and closed groups because of work and/or family responsibilities (for example, caregivers and the homebound)—the Church Library can provide them an avenue for deepening their faith.
 - 2) Many individuals who do participate in open groups and closed groups may desire further examination of materials beyond the group study. The Church Library can provide them with the resources for more information.
 - 3) The **LifeSpan Spiritual Development Process** is an excellent guide for selecting media for each age level— to help preschoolers and **hear** God’s Word, **know** God’s Word, and **do** God’s Word; students to **know** God, **own** their faith, and make their faith **known**; and adults **to connect** with God and others with an open heart, **grow** in body, mind, and spirit, **serve** with willing hands, **go** with ready feet.²
- C. Administration** — The Church Library Ministry Team coordinates the ministry.
- 1) Library team development involves recruiting team members, assigning responsibilities, and training them to carry out their responsibilities.
 - 2) Library team participates in the church’s budget process.
 - 3) Library team operates the library by having well-written policies approved by the church that are communication tools designed to enhance a well-managed library. These include an operation policy, selection policy, and gift policy.
 - 4) The Library team operates the library by maintaining a schedule for team members, a circulation desk how-to manual called the desk book, and procedure manuals.
 - 5) Library team interacts and assists people as they use the library including technology.
 - 6) Library team connects the library with other ministries through strategic lines of communication and action.
- D. Collection Development** —The Church Library Ministry Team selects, purchases, receives donations, prepares, maintains, and distributes the church’s collection.
1. A church approved selection policy guides decisions for adding titles to the collection through donations and purchases.
 2. Processing items is the procedure used to prepare each piece of media for circulation.
 3. Adding to the library collection is done through purchases, donations, memorials, and periodic promotions such as Media Fairs.
- E. Classification and Cataloging** —The Church Library Ministry Team classifies and catalogs media for the church.

² Use your church’s disciple making process when selecting titles.

- 1) Classification is a systematic scheme for the arrangement of books and other materials according to subject or form. The Dewey Decimal System and Sears Subject Headings, used in combination, are recommended for church libraries.
- 2) The catalog is the index to a library's collection organized by subject headings. It helps users and librarians find resources in the library.

F. Promotion —The Church Library Ministry promotes media to make persons in the church and community aware of the availability of resources and to encourage their frequent use through the church library.

- 1) Visual, verbal, printed and various activities.
- 2) To promote the library, reading clubs are popular activities for all age groups in the church and community.
- 3) An annual church-wide awareness emphasis on the church library is an effective project to encourage people to use the library.