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Coaches Seminar - Growing a Quiz Ministry

By [LeSann Corrie Oglethorpe](#) on Wednesday, October 30, 2013 at 9:42 PM

We are posting our notes by request from others and hope they will be a blessing to your ministry. Nothing we have learned or experienced is private property. God has allowed us to have this information that has helped us and we freely share it with anyone who has a real desire to help parents and quizzers have an enjoyable experience in this ministry. Some of what we share are things we have learned through friendships with other coaches and some through hard knock experiences but the best ideas and wisdom comes when on our knees praying. The basis of a strong ministry is the relationship and trust between coaches and parents. We pray this information will do that for you.

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We have be blessed and honored to be a part of the Bible quiz family either in seniors or junior/beginners since 1992. Actually Terry quizzed in the dark ages before buzzer systems.

When we became involved with Junior quizzing in Texas we started with 4 quizzers and each year we added one or two more...As we grew we recruited parents as coaches and started training them..

The year Texas did a pilot run of the Beginner division we had quizzers for 1 beginner team and 2 Jr. teams. The next year we had 2 Beginners & 2 Jrs. teams. The past 3 years we have had 5 teams, 3 Jr.s & 2 Beg. That is with 3 to 5 quizzers per team. This year it looks like we will have 3 to 4 teams in each division. Our Junior/Beginner ministry started feeding our Senior program and has promoted 4 generations of Bible quizzers to the senior program. All but 1 quizzer has graduated from the Junior program full of the Holy Ghost.

Our Goal- to have a ministry that will be so much fun, children will want to stay in quizzing every year eligible to get as much Word in them as possible. To have a quiz ministry that is the "in thing" in our church. To see every child full of the Holy Ghost.

How we organize...

Organizing: If your ministry is large enough your pastor may want to select a person or couple as Quiz Director. This person/couple organizes the Jr or Sr. Quiz ministry in building a coaching staff, training, and over all organization of the ministry. They are usually also the Lead Coaches for your Quiz ministry and coach the more experienced quizzers to try to develop a team capable of going to nationals.

Usually if it's a couple, the wife is the organizer/promoter, what Sis Nash (Tx. District Quiz Masters) calls the "Nuts & Bolts" person. She plans the activities, awards programs, communication by text & email with parents weekly or when ever necessary, keeping the calendar updated and hotel & tournament info to the parents, travel info & parent encourager; organizing parents to take responsibilities in fund raising & special events,& delegating responsibilities.

The lead coach is the mechanics of quizzing; memorization schedules, the techniques, the digging out the verse details, concordance/charting work, graphing and teaching the verses. He works with all the quizzers for basic instructions and training, but with several teams, there is time for each coaching team to get with their team and study. Parents give support in all these areas, which is why there is a growing thriving quiz ministry.

Coaches, scorekeepers, and anyone ask to be over any area of the quiz ministry works with the Directors and keeps in contact with them on any decisions in the planning and seeing the project completed. The Quiz Directors is responsible to train or see that their coaches are trained; to meet with coaching staff and get ideas, opinions and input. They take this information and give direction. They delegate parents to be over different projects, such as the different events of fund raising, uniform decisions & ordering. They make sure everyone is on the same page on what the ministry's goals are and how these goals will be met.

Good Communication within the coaching team-

One key to good, strong organization is communication with the coaches/ parents & pastor... Too much communication is better than not enough. Between practices and church services we keep our parents and coaching

staff updated or reminded or encouraged through emails and text. The week before tournament it may be several in one day, or every other day. Other weeks it may be one or none. We use texting for short messages or reminders or if we email we text everyone to check their email. When needed we copy pastor. We report to our pastor following tournaments or when needed. Now with new technology we communicate through an App called "GroupMe". You can have a conversation with coaches and parents and post pictures and video.

**Good communication is preventative action.** We have not had this here in this church but have been in places where someone gets half the facts or information. A misunderstanding brings conflict (i.e. "can you believe they are doing this"?). If your parents/coaches and certainly your pastor is already aware of what is going on in the ministry, they won't be blindsided when someone comes saying "did you know they were doing this.. or "I don't understand why this was done". So the pastor or coaches can say the reason you don't understand is because you are misinformed, or "yes, this is true but you don't understand because you don't know the whole situation". Open communication with your ministry team, knowing who is doing what, and a informed pastor will avert problems caused by misunderstandings inside or outside the ministry. And, bottom line, good communication, will breed trust among the church family & the quiz family.

It is so important that the leaders maintain control in all areas to prevent confusion and things getting off track. Anything with more than one head is a monster and ends up in a scary mess. You can't afford to have that happen especially when you are dealing with children. Communicate your goals, give instructions on the path you are taking and the way you intend to reach goals. We communicate the way we teach quizzing and the courtesies we adhere to when quizzing. If a message is sent out respond, even if it's a thumbs up or "OK". Just be respectful of the person who took the time to communicate by answering with some kind of response so they will know you received their communication. If you do all in an attitude of love, you will gain their respect and trust and have a unified group that works together.

## The Foundation :

- 1 The basis for a successful ministry is a Pastor who realizes the real value and is totally sold on quizzing and promotes it with enthusiasm from the pulpit.
- 2 We learned early on that you don't recruit the kids **you recruit the parents**. Kids may be excited about quizzing today but tomorrow something else may have their attention. Selling parents on quizzing is the key and they will make sure their child quizzes year after year.
- 3 Excitement keeps them coming back and promotes the Quiz Ministry to be the 'IN THING" in your church..Having a winning team every now and then,& making it to Nationals, fuels the fire of your quiz ministry. Because we push to win and get excited about the competition does not mean we have become carnal and forgot the real reason for quizzing.. We do have things in right perspective. We admit the facts ,& capitalize on what we know. Competition is the motivator! Face it,very few or no folks would be teaching their children the Bible at this level of memorization without the competition. **Don't for any reason miss a tournament or you will undermine your objective!!**

## Lay It ALL Out For Parents at a Yearly Orientation -

A yearly parent orientation educates parents to the benefits of quizzing, the **responsibilities, according to the Bible, of parents to their child** , the blessings and power this will bring to their child and family..the fact of discouragement, that there will be times you want to throw up your hands and run away screaming. But we drive home WHY we are doing what we are doing, the commandments and promises of God concerning children & that Bible Quizzing is the vehicle to accomplish this.. And, we must be aware, in those discouraging moments who is at the root of it.

It is important to make sure the parents have the **right perspective of the competition**..that none of us would be this diligent without competition. It is what motivates us all to study the Word.

We make sure they understand:

- 1 How we coach and push for team success not individual success...
- 2 That we want to be as successful as possible with this ministry, making it as fun as possible because this is not a 1 year deal. The attitude "we will try it this year" might be what folks say about Little

League or other involvements but it is not a part of Bible Quizzing. Bible Quizzing is putting God in your life and your child's in the most powerful way .

- 3 We want it to be something the kids desire to do every year they are of age. If the quizzer decides they want to do other things outside the church that has no spiritual value, that parents will be "the adult/parent" and take a stand, just as they would if a child was physically sick and needed medicine to get well. Any parent would force , if necessary, their child to go to a doctor or take medicine.
- 4 Successful, blessed parents will have the attitude that "Quizzing is what we do in this home"

"We may not eat our vegetables,brush our teeth or get all our homework but we will quiz". Sis Nash

So we do all we can to see that parents are on board with a healthy understanding of the importance of Bible Quizzing.. It takes prayer, organization and the trust and cooperation of the parents to have a strong ministry.

#### Importance of parents at tournaments-

All of our parents, or at least one from each family, travel to all tournaments. We found at the Jr./Beg. age the children get more rest and eat better with parents there, which helps them do better when quizzing. It also helps us as coaches get needed rest and have more patience with the quizzers. We don't go to tournaments and use Quiz Ministry funds to have a "sleep over" or "pallet party". We go and stay focused; we continue to allow the verses to be drilled into the quizzers by quizzing as many games as we can. If we aren't quizzing we are watching quizzes to get all from the tournament possible. We allow time for fun but we don't want to abuse the privilege of being at tournaments.

Another reason we feel it's important for parents to be at tournaments is If someone gets sick or has an accident or needs some personal correction or personal help with hygiene care, a parent is there to take care of the situation. Also, it is just safer in this day and age for the coaches to have parents there taking care of personal needs.

One thing we have seen happen that is so exciting, when parents come to tournaments the quiz bug will bite and the fellowship of the quiz family solidifies their allegiance to see that their child quizzes every year!! **We have seen more parents solidly won over to the joys and excitement of quizzing, because they are at tournaments, than with any other thing we do.** If the child was in Little League baseball that parent would be at the games every week..this is way more important and there is no reason that one or both parents can't make a once a month tournament. We do what we want to do ..Get them there and win them. Hand out a calendar of your district tournaments at your orientation or as early as possible and encourage parents to go ahead and put these dates on their business calendar, asking off for tournaments if that is required.

Parents must understand that at the tournament their child is under the authority of the coach until dismissed to the parent, and that at tournaments coaching the quizzers and correction concerning quizzing is for the coach to do not the parent. If we have a discipline issue not related to quizzing, we will call upon the parents to help with that. The parent should know they are not to take a quizzer off for any reason without the coaches permission. We also stress that the quizzers are given healthy snacks while at tournaments. No candy or sugar drinks that cause their little brains and energy to crash in the middle of a quiz. Our parents bring crackers & peanut butter or cheese, bananas, bottled waters to keep quizzers fed especially if we don't have time to break for lunch.

We make sure parents understand we are not about promoting a star quizzer to make all tournament team. We are going to do whatever we think is necessary to see the whole team be as successful as possible for the benefit of all the quizzers. If that means pulling one quizzer out and putting another in , whatever it takes to help the team work together to be their best, that is what we will do. We want the quizzers to all feel a part of a winning quiz, not 1 quizzer proud of a ribbon, and no one person to take the weight of a loss. We will move quizzers around according to their talents in quizzing and according to if they are having a good day or not.

#### Communication & training is Key with parents-

Open communication with the parents is a must. We make sure we are open and understood about what is expected (parent responsibility) and

what our goals are as coaches, and for the quiz ministry. Everyone being in agreement, on the same page, is a must.

We are in constant contact with our parents weekly by text, GroupMe and by email concerning upcoming events or where their quizzers should be in memorization for the next tournament, what will be happening at quiz practice, tournament information and reminders, etc.

Calendars are handed out at our orientation for the year. In January we start feeding them hotel info & time we are leaving the church for each tournament. Depending on where the tournament is, we either call and get a block of rooms for our group or everyone makes their own reservations and lets us know they have their reservations made. At any rate we all stay at the same hotel if at all possible.

Children & parents are welcome to ride the church van. If a quizzer rides the van but the parent is taking their car then they follow the van to the tournament to help their child at any stops we make en-route.

Teaching the parents the way to help their child successfully memorize the verses (15 Phrase Method is proven the best. See file for details) is so important. Quoting **every verse memorized every day** is not an option but a must. We cover how long to allow quizzers to quote verses in verse order and when to mix up those verse cards for quoting out of order; the importance of accuracy; how to help their quizzer on problem verses; the importance of re-quoting verses that were a struggle or missed, & using online quiz games. All these things are necessary to get the Word fixed in their brains and for them to be able to be their best at quizzing.

Once we get the Word in their brains the Holy Ghost can work to get it in their hearts. Loving the Word is loving God and relationship. This is what we want to see happen. When it happens to a quizzer the power of the Word also puts that power in the home affecting the whole family. When parents have accomplished this with their child and a problem arises, they have firm ground to stand on to remind God of their obedience to his commandment to teach their child the Word..now they need God to move in there child's situation. And He honors that and moves. There is no better insurance policy on earth.

Things we do for quizzers-

We have a graph/chart that is a map of every verse the quizzer is to memorize. The parents mark on the graph the verses that each tournament covers and the quizzer colors in the verses as they are memorized. Most of our experienced quizzers stay ahead of the verses covered in each tournament. For new quizzers and younger/slower quizzers we encourage them to know the verses for the tournament 1 week before the tournament, giving them a week to review..

How do we keep up with where everyone is in memorization? “Weekly Progress Report” (see copy) is **a system of accountability for the quizzer and parent to us**. On the progress report they mark each day that they have prayed , quoted & memorized verses. If there are any problems the parent wants us to know about there is a place to write this or if there is a question or praise report.. At the end of the week they put the last verse memorized on this report and this is turned in at practice..**Accountability by parents and quizzers is important to their success in quizzing.**

Practice Schedule -

Every week before practice officially begins we do a spot checks of random verses from those the quizzer has memorized. (See Spot Check program at [UPCquiz.com](http://UPCquiz.com)) We have parents or other folks from our church who want to help with quizzing to quote the quizzers on the verses the computer selected for them..The week of tournament, no matter where a quizzer is in memorization they know that all quizzers are spot checked from all verses that are going to be covered for that tournament. We are pushing for them to get 80% correct.

If a team places at state, in order for a quizzer to go to Nationals they must know 80% of their material by state and complete it by Nationals. As previously stated , our experienced quizzers are usually way ahead of the schedule and this is not an issue.

Our practice schedule is, Spot checks as quizzers arrive, & turning in of weekly progress reports. We have blank copies of reports out so parents can pick them up for the next week as well as Student Release Forms, Maps or directions for tournaments etc. As the main practice starts we

have prayer request then pray, make any announcements and acknowledge Quizzer of the Week. At this point the Beginners are dismissed to their rooms and Jr.s stay in the main quiz room.

The Juniors stay together for teaching/instruction.. going over verses, talk about specific points in a verse that may help a quizzer understand it better or interruption skills etc. We then start quizzing and our coaching staff helps with score keeping and judging and coaching. While we quiz two teams the third team goes to a room to study concordance material or address quizzing problems with their coaches.

The Beginners are divided by age. The younger ones 4-6 go with coaches to work on elementary quizzing while the older beginners go to another room and work basically as the juniors do.

#### Funding -

Our church sponsors quizzing. We do several fund raisers a year but we mainly are sponsored financially by the church. We have a "Partners in Quizzing" program and every year our church family pledges an amount they will give each month to help cover quiz expenses.

We not only cover the registrations but we also pay for quizzers meals at tournaments, we cover hotel rooms for coaching staff & some on meals and pay a percentage, according to the number of quizzers in a family, on each quizzers families room as well as a percentage of fuel cost. On the day we leave for a tournament we withdraw cash & divide it according to what each family is to get and hand it out in bank envelopes before we leave. For nationals we try to cover all expenses of quizzers as well as a few entertainment tickets. We also help with parents fuel and room expenses.

#### Our Coaching Staff Organization-

The staff is mainly parents.. We divide teams by experience or age. If our Quiz Directors are a couple one oversees Beginners and the other Juniors. After we see how many quizzers we have we decide who to approach about coaching. We pair parents with their quizzers when

possible and when that's a good mix. Some children do better with someone outside their family. If they are willing to work with us and follow our lead, and want to coach, we usually keep parents coaching the same team as long as they want to .

We do use non-quiz parent couples to coach when necessary. We put them with a team we feel will probably be temporary. The closer we get to State Finals, if we have quizzers on a novice team who have advanced enough and who know their material, we move them to teams we feel that have the best chance to place for nationals. This gives the most quizzers opportunity to go to Nationals should our teams place at state. It also gives you a full team that if a quizzer is having a bad day you can sub an alternate quizzer in.

We have sessions with our coaches to make sure we are all on the same page as to how we coach , working to bring out quizzers strong points, and strategies for tournaments that are most successful, etc. We have our experienced score keeper to train parents to keep score

Everyone reports to Quiz Directors . You will have confusion and even disagreements if you don't hold the reins of leadership of the group. As we have said, too many heads makes a monster. If you have someone who is out there making decisions that haven't been passed by the director or stepping in to give other's instructions that the director didn't generate, that could be confusing especially to new parents. You have to gently and wisely take back the control in a way not to offend the person. Let them know you appreciate their willingness to help but that you have it covered...then if there is something you can make them responsible for , give them a job..

Keep it Fun and Exciting - (See file for Fun Activities)

Quizzers love candy quizzes (buy up bags of candy at WalMart's 50% or more off sale after Halloween or Valentines. We do not purchase anything from Halloween with characters from that holiday), money quizzes, prize question quizzes.

We give a weekly award for Quizzer of the Week. Points for this comes from having their Progress Report completed each week, points from Spot Check, & number of verses memorized that week. (See form for Quizzer of the Week Points System for details. Also Progress Report Forms are available.)

Points for the youngest children in Beginners are for things like , no fouls in a quiz at practice, correct answers in a quiz. (See file for Activities) (We do not do Spot Checks with this group) .

We have a Year End Awards Party that quizzers must earn points by participation at tournaments to attend. A base number is required to attend & after that points go toward a game card for the game room and we award some type of trophy or award for 1st -2nd place highest scores on each team. Or we do 1st - 3rd place for Juniors and for Beginners.It depends on how many quizzers we have. We also give a fun award and personal awards to quizzers that have excelled that quiz year. (see file for points & details)

The Bottom Line is -

- 1 Get to know your parents & develop a friendship and trust with them...knowing your quizzers is a given. Develop a good relationship with parents by helping them to understanding the views of coaching, so they will learn to trust your calls as a coach.
2. Share good news...make a big deal out of things...Hearing the testimony of older parents and the blessings of quizzing on their families helps the unity of the group..
3. Organizing everyone possible into some kind of involvement is key.
4. Too much communication is better than too little. Keep everyone posted on what's going on , on being on schedule (quoting every verse every day), and excitement of how great their kids are doing ...
5. Realize God loves this ministry..appreciate that you have opportunity to be involved in it and the many blessings and miracles you get to witness & enjoy because of it. Get consumed by it.

6. Realize the devil hates everything about it. Plead the blood over every family. Keep them encourage..Help them to remember where negative thoughts come from...that “quit” cannot be in our vocabulary. Help them understand and appreciate the many advantages, even of the disciplines it require and above all the eternal value of quizzing.

Our mission statement is "To lead parents to understand their duty, as a parent, to teach the Word to their children daily and to cultivate a burden for their child and a passion for Bible Quizzing that it becomes the priority in their relationship with their children and in their home. To make the quiz ministry exciting and fun that children will want to return year after year to learn more of the Word. It's not a one year involvement but a life style of good habits, right priorities, strong disciplines that build their relationship with God that will make them a powerful part of the body of Christ. To see every child receive the Holy Ghost before they graduate to the Senior program. To God be the glory, this is what is happening in our quiz ministry.