

BABYSITTING

Why babysit?

If you are planning to come on a Teen Missions team, it's likely you're in a great age bracket for babysitting smaller children. There are some really great perks to babysitting as a strategy for fundraising:

- You set your own hourly or flat rates, and can negotiate these with the families
- Evening babysitting doesn't interfere too much with the rest of your schedule (school, study). Depending on the situation, you can multitask and do homework after the kids are in bed.
- It is a great way to serve your church, neighbourhood or school community by giving a chance for parents to take a night off or out. Parents really appreciate the chance to have some time to relax.
- In getting to know some of the younger kids in your area, you can foster a closer friendship and role model responsibility in young people.

How can I get into it?

You want to get your name out there to let people know what you are doing. Try

- Practicing with cousins!
- Making an announcement at your Church
- Posting in your local school or church newsletter or E-news or putting up an ad on the notice board
- Creating a Facebook page or event and inviting prospective families
- Just asking a family you know if you can babysit sometime!
- A letterbox drop around the neighbourhood (it might be best to include some information about yourself and a contact number, as well as any experience you have)

How can I prepare?

Here are a couple of tips and tricks on how to make sure you are ready to make it a successful experience for you and a good time for the family you are helping out.

Ask the parents questions before they leave

Here are a few ideas of what you might need to find out:

- What time would you like your kids to go to bed?
- Are there any activities your kids aren't allowed to do in the evenings?
- What is your phone number? If I can't contact you, who else can I contact?
- Are there any behaviours I need to watch out for?
- What is your normal bedtime routine like?
- When do you plan to be home?
- Are there any allergies/medical conditions I need to be aware of? Are there any medications or asthma puffers I need to remind them to take?
- Do I need to prepare a meal or snack? When would you like me to do this?

If you are not sure of the street address, confirm this in case you need to call emergency services.

Ask permission to give them anything you might have brought with you (snacks) or to run specific activities.

Be early

Don't cut in on the time that has been set aside for parents to enjoy themselves. Arriving early will help you adjust to the environment, observe kids interactions with their parents, and ask any necessary questions.

Make a 'cheat sheet'

Sounds a lot like your last math test, I know. Write everything down, otherwise you are bound to forget, and don't want to need to interrupt parents to confirm bedtimes, etc.

Bring a babysitting kit

Kids love novelty! If you bring a bag of tricks with you, keeping those kids occupied until bed will be a lot easier.

Quick list of ideas:

- An easy-to-learn board game or card game
- A non-breakable toy
- Your favourite bedtime story (save yourself even more effort and make it an audiobook!)
- Snacks (If you want to share these, avoid sugar and caffeine, and check with parents first. Seriously.)
- Have a list of activities or puzzles for them to do with you

First Aid training

Many parents feel more confident if you have completed First Aid training. Look into what you can do in this area if you'd like to babysit as a long-term fundraiser or self-employment strategy!

What should I do while I'm there?

Keep the house clean!

Go the extra mile and do the dishes after dinner or make sure the toys you used are packed away. The parents will thank you for it as it takes extra stress off of them. The better you make the experience for the parents, the more likely they are to ask you again – and the more often you babysit the same kids, the easier it is!

Keep track of any mishaps

Parents do not want to hear from their children the next day about any broken items or arguments. Note any accidents, mishaps, broken items or tiffs, and inform the parents when they arrive home.

Want to aim a little higher?

Here are a couple ideas on how you can take your babysitting fundraising to the next level:

- **Host a sleepover at your place!**

So many good things about this! Parents don't even have to go out! They just send their kids and pick them up when they want. You can also do multiple families at the same time and boost the amount of money you earn in an evening by 2-3 times!

- **Employ your mates!**

Your friends may want to support you but are low on cash. Ask them if they would be willing to do a night of babysitting for you and put the money towards your trip!

- **Run a date night event!**

Get together with your friends or youth group and host a date night for parents with food, entertainment and babysitting services provided! You could make use of your church hall and set up your own restaurant and once service has finished move into the worship space and project a movie on the screen. Have your friends help out by babysitting the kids, preparing and serving food and cleaning up afterwards. Charge for each part of the evening separately and put it all towards the trip!

