

Divide and Conquer

“Mr. Tim, look what I made for you and Mrs. Lisa!” Autumn said as she handed Tim a paper snowflake. Tim took the snowflake, commented on it then turned his attention back to checking children in so club could begin. Autumn, like most of the other 30 early elementary age children we teach, wanted Tim’s attention. Several new children were being enrolled weekly and we couldn’t remember names without looking at nametags. We felt frustrated. With so many children how could we get to know them and meet their needs?

Early elementary children want recognition and approval. They need time to talk and share their feelings. Changes had to be made—we needed to divide and conquer.

The next week we were ready. We divided the group into four teams—team gold, team red, team white, team green. Yarn on nametags indicated team colors. Workers were assigned a team and sat by a laminated tag board of the team color. After checking in, children went to their appropriate team where their teacher was waiting to talk with them.

Instead of trying to get to know *every* child, each teacher could focus on seven to ten children. We talked personally to children about prayer needs, memory verses, home life, etc. Discipline improved because teachers stayed with their team. We had instant teams for review games and competitions. The small team concept helped us fill in the GAPS!