



Getting Started with CTS

What is CTS?

CTS stands for *Church Training Service* and is a program that has existed among Free Will Baptists for more than 50 years. It is a tool for churches to help students develop a deeper knowledge of Scripture while also identifying and honing talents for use in the local church. The program is designed to be a ministry development tool and should be used as part of an overall discipleship plan.

How do I start?

1. Determine Your Strategy

The first step is to determine whether this program will be church-wide (include all children or students in your ministry) or selective (only including those students who show a desire or aptitude to participate).

Church-wide: Determine what other content you will be using in addition to practice time for each student's event. Use the CTS Sample Schedule as a guide.

Selective: Identify students who you believe would be interested and determine the best time to invite them to extra practice outside of your regular meeting times.

You can also read "How One Leader Got Started With CTS" online at <http://verticalthree.com/how-one-leader-got-started-with-cts/> for other tips for how to organize your CTS Program at your church.

2. Review the CTS Categories

Review the CTS Category Descriptions or the *CTS Ministry Expo Guidelines* book to familiarize yourself with the different categories available to students. While there are a number of specific categories, most of them fall under the following categories:

- Bible
- Music
- Art
- Drama
- Writing

3. Identify Volunteers

If you have a lot of potential participants or categories, identify a volunteer coach in your church to help with one or two categories.

Provide your volunteers with the *CTS Ministry Expo Guidelines* book so he/she can be fully prepared.

Some of the categories (e.g., Bible Memorization, Bible Tic Tac Toe, Group Drama, etc.) may take up more time and energy for your volunteers than a Vocal Solo or Graphic Art piece. Keep that in mind as you schedule your time and the time of your volunteers.

4. Schedule meeting to gauge interest

Invite students and parents who would be interested in learning more Scripture or using their talents.

Approach students individually and encourage them to attend.

Use language like:

- "I would love to see you do more to develop your talents and prepare to be involved in the future of our church. Will you be a part of the CTS program we're starting?"
- "We are starting a new training program for students called CTS. Through it, we hope to help our children/students develop their talents for God. Please attend the informative meeting on _____ at _____."

5. Host Parent Meeting

Explain to parents and students the purpose of the program and then ask each child/student to choose two categories he or she would like to participate in. Let them know there will be some dedicated practice time at church, but it will be important for each child to spend time away from church studying and practicing as well.

Use this as an opportunity to encourage and equip the parents to be involved in the discipleship of their child.

If you are subscribed to Firebox online, use the Parent Meeting Guide and the Student Interest Assessment to help with this step.

6. Assign practice time and coaches

Be consistent. Start practice early and practice often.

7. Schedule a CTS Ministry Expo for your church

Consider having all students present in at least one of their categories on a Sunday night or Wednesday night for the adults in the church.

Use this as an opportunity to talk to your students about service and worship.

8. Attend a regional or state CTS Ministry Expo (optional)

If one or several of your students are interested and have shown some aptitude in their category, consider contacting your district or state association and entering the CTS Ministry Expo as a fun way to reward your students for all their hard work.

If students place 1st (1st OR 2nd in a Bible Category), they will be eligible to move on to the State or even National CTS Ministry Expo.

CTS Mission Statement

The mission of the CTS program is to provide an opportunity for students to identify and develop their God-given abilities for use in service to Him and His church.

Value Statements:

1. Every child is capable of worship.
2. All worship does not look the same.
3. The Bible is the Word of God and our guide.
4. Scripture memory and understanding is vital for a lifelong faith.
5. Music and the Arts are appropriate expressions of worship.
6. We must surrender our gifts to God for His purpose and His glory.
7. We are not gifted to bring honor to ourselves.
8. A student's participation or placement in the CTS Ministry Expo does not value one person's gift over another's.