

Resolutions Worth Making!

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Resolutions. We've all made them at some point or another. Most likely, though, our "resolutions" were things that we wanted to happen – *wishes!* – and not things that we were intentionally committing ourselves to pursue.

Lose weight. Get fit. Read more. Spend more time with the kids. Whatever it may be, our resolutions are usually pretty good ideas. They are things that, if they *did* happen, would greatly benefit us in some way or another. Unfortunately, often we don't follow through, and they become regrets (or simply forgotten wishes)!

As 2002 approached 2003, I came to the realization that I was fast approaching the age of 40! Only 18 months and I'd be there – where did the time go? There's so much I wanted to do, to accomplish, and I suddenly felt short on time. I decided, for the first time in many years, that I would make some resolutions to try and accomplish some of those goals. I called these resolutions my "10/40 Goals" – ten goals to accomplish by the age of 40. Beginning on January 1, 2003, I would commit myself to pursuing these goals. Now, over 10 months later, I realize that most of these goals, or resolutions, were just wishes. A few were good ideas, but most were not goals *worth* pursuing.

In Children's Ministry, as in any area of life, there are goals *worth* pursuing. Goals that, if committed to, would greatly benefit our ministry to kids. They are "*resolutions worth making*", and I encourage you to consider making these five simple resolutions a part of your daily and weekly routine as you continue ministering to kids.

"As an effective children's minister, I resolve to..."

Resolution #1 – "Immerse my ministry in prayer" - Oswald Chambers once said, "Prayer does not *equip* us for the greater work, prayer *is* the greater work." 1 Our ministry to kids should flow from our time with our Father! Jesus, throughout the Gospels, demonstrates this principal. What did He do before times of great ministry? He went away somewhere, usually during His "off" time, and prayed. If Jesus needed to pray in order to minister effectively, how much more do we?! You don't know what to pray for? Follow Jesus' example from John 17. Jesus started by praying for himself, then prayed for those around him (his disciples), and then for the community of believers as a whole. This is a great model to follow as we pray for ourselves in Children's Ministry, for other members of the Children's Ministry team, and for our kids and families we minister to. And as we do this, our ministry will flow from God through us, and be more effective than we could ever imagine!

Resolution #2 – "Understand the kids to whom I minister" – Do you *really* know the kids you to whom you minister? As a preschool Sunday School teacher, do you know the age level characteristics of preschoolers? As a 5th/6th teacher, do you understand some of the challenges in ministering to this age group? And do you know what causes little Johnny to be so quiet and aloof – have you found out about his family life? How about personality types? Learning styles? All of these areas are critical to understand in order to be able to truly minister to our kids. As one who is called to Children's Ministry, it is our obligation to invest time and effort into understanding our kids! Add a few minutes every week to your preparation time in order to learn about these areas. Perhaps you could visit the family of one of your kids each week, or every two weeks, to get to know that child's world. A general understanding of these areas will revolutionize your perception of your kids, and the way you present yourself and your teaching.

Resolution #3 – “Develop my ministry skills” – All of us can improve in most areas, and ministry is no exception. The question, then, is “Are we actively pursuing improvement?” Here are three easy ways to proactively develop our Children’s Ministry skills:

- *Read* – there are many wonderful written resources to help us develop our leadership or teaching skills. Commit to reading just a small amount every day, or one resource per month, and you’ll be surprised how much you can learn, and what new ideas might find their way to your teaching.
- *Attend at least one training event each year* – attending a training event not only exposes you to the content presented, but also to networking opportunities with those who are “in the trenches” with you. Attending just one event can make a big difference.
- *Find someone who knows more than you do* – finding a mentor can often be the difference between on-going frustration and critical skill development in your ministry. Don’t be afraid to ask someone with more experience and a greater understanding to help you learn.

Resolution #4 – “Create new and deeper relationships” – Ministry happens best through relationships – period! In fact, if it comes down to following a program (or curriculum) or investing in relationships, the latter should win out every time. If this is true, then we, as Children’s Ministers, ought to invest ourselves in building relationships – with our kids, with parents, and with each other. Two easy ways to build relationships are to: 1) take time with the individual to ask questions and listen carefully, and 2) be open to share yourself with them. Deeper relationships result in deeper, more meaningful ministry.

Resolution #5 – “Serve with passion” – What a *privilege* to serve in Children’s Ministry! Now, more than ever, we need to reach our kids. Are you committed to this calling? Are you serving passionately, with a sense of urgency, or are you serving more from a sense of duty, going through the motions because no one else will take your place? Children’s Ministry is a vital ministry in our church, deserving and demanding passionate servants. If we are called to Children’s Ministry, we must pour ourselves out for the little ones we serve. And, for those times when our passion is waning, I would encourage you to return to resolution #1. When our ministry is immersed in prayer, it’s hard not to serve with passion!

Resolutions. As a minister to children, there are some that are *worth* making. Commit to these five resolutions this year and see how your ministry grows, how you grow, and just what deep impact you can have on the lives of children in your ministry.

1 – Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*, October 17 devotional, Published by Barbour & Co., 1987.

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