

# new year's resolutions

It's a new year. I know, the real calendar doesn't turn until January, but most youth ministries officially begin their year every September when kids start school. For the new year, I've decided to make (and keep) a few resolutions. For accountability purposes, I thought I'd share them with you. Better yet, perhaps you'll join me.

This is the year I will:

1. **Have an attendance and check-in table.** Although I have fewer kids than fingers and toes, I don't always remember who showed up at what event. Plus, I want to keep track of when young people will be away. So from now on, everyone's first stop will be the check-in table. (It's also a great way to connect one-on-one and eye-to-eye with each individual.)
2. **Send a "We missed you" card or email within two days of a young person's absence.** Because our group is small, this resolution can't be too hard to keep. Creating this new habit will just take a little discipline on my part. In fact, I'll try to do it that same night.
3. **Send each visitor a note or e-card.** While I'm working on my communication, I think I can send a "Thanks for visiting" note to newcomers at the same time.
4. **Keep updated contact information.** My laptop will accompany me to the check-in table, and I'll update each young person's info each week. When someone brings a visitor, I'll gather his or her name and number on the spot.
5. **Create a birthday tradition for each group member.** This could be as simple as a morning wake-up call, with me singing an obnoxiously loud "Happy Birthday." Maybe I'll even show up at the birthday person's house in my flannel jammies and deliver breakfast on a silver platter.
6. **Take the youth group to one school event per teenager.** Last year we had a blast attending Jordan's play together and texting him backstage. Not only was it an easy programming idea, but it was totally affirming to his self-worth.
7. **Invite myself over for dinner at each young person's house at least once.** Getting to know kids' families provides valuable insight. Plus, I can take pictures of kids' rooms to use for a fun guessing game later.

These resolutions are definitely doable for me, if I stay aware of them. That's yet another advantage of having a smaller-size group. ■