



# Kronicle

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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPARROWS

*"What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it." Matthew 10:29*

When I was little, I couldn't wait until I was big enough to go up to the ice cream counter and buy something all by myself. It seemed like such a milestone... a rite of passage. The day finally arrived; Mom gave me a dollar to order an ice cream. And with an ear-to-ear grin and a little awestruck fear, I marched up to the counter to stand in line. I thought through what to say in my head, the most polite way to order... at long last it was my turn... the excitement came to a crescendo! I breathed in to speak, opened my mouth and... the cashier looked over my head, and took the order of the next adult in line. Dissolving into tears, I ran back to my Mom, defeated.



Some of you may think I have issues, but before you schedule an intervention on my behalf, I also have a point: I thank God that He never thinks we are too small or insignificant to be noticed. He never passes over us, looking for bigger fish to fry. Look at Jesus, pressed on all sides by people all vying for His attention, including children. What did His disciples say? "Hey, kids, get out of here! the Master has more important business to attend to!" (my paraphrase). But what did Jesus say? "Let the children come, don't keep them away from me! God's kingdom is made up of people like these." Then He laid hands on them, and blessed them... and I bet they played a little hide-n-seek... or maybe hopscotch. Who knows?

So we, as ministers to God's precious people, need to prayerfully practice the same attitude, whether to children, their parents, volunteers, or fellow ministers. Children especially feel a sense of insignificance, which manifests itself in acting out for attention in a myriad of different ways— from over achieving down to violent outbursts. This continues through the teen years, when they are on the cusp of adulthood, but still feel they are treated as "not quite human."

Some practical advice in this arena: get to know the kids in your ministry!

1) Get to know kids' names, and pray for them by name. If your ministry is too large for this, break into small groups and make sure each group leader is getting to know the kids on an individual basis.

2) Instead of just talking "at" them, converse "with" them! Reserve a few minutes after church or after rehearsals to hang with the kids. Ask them questions that require more than a one-word answer like, "What are you doing to celebrate the 4th of July?" Let them talk and really listen to them. Much of what they say may seem insignificant to you, but remember the sparrow! God cares about every little thing!

3) If one of the kids draws a picture for you or writes you a note, keep it! Post it where you can see it frequently. I keep all my choir kids' notes and artwork taped on the back of my office door and the wall behind it. It's a colorful, jumbled-up mess! But whenever I need a boost, I just look at all those precious pictures and notes. Not only does it encourage me and remind me of who I am trying to reach for Christ, it recalls to mind answered prayers as well as new needs those kids may be experiencing.

4) Maintain a high level of respect for kids, and you can expect the same in return. Kids are people too! If you are talking to an adult and a child interrupts, patiently tell them you are speaking with someone and you'll be with them soon. When you are ready to speak with them, give them the same attention you give adults. Talking down to them in a condescending manner sends a message that they are not real people.

5) If you greet a new child with a parent, shake hands and introduce yourself to both of them. If you have questions about the child's age, grade, etc., ask the child directly. Try not to talk about the child as if he/she were not there.

The point is simple: it's a golden rule kinda thing. Treat kids the way you would like to be treated, or perhaps the way you wish you had been treated as a child. Jesus leveled the playing field when He died for all of us, large and small, old and young. Treat every young person with dignity, and an awareness that they are created in God's image. And maybe someday, the child at the ice cream counter will thank you!

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