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A CHANGE WOULD DO YOU GOOD

"Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy!" Psalm 33:3

I was at Target the other day and I saw those three little words... You know, the ones most moms smile at, seeing a welcome light at the end of the tunnel, and most kids grimace at, seeing that light as an oncoming train...

BACK TO SCHOOL!

But let's face it... in children's ministry there really is no "summer vacation!" With Vacation Bible School, Summer mid-week programs, volunteers for Sunday morning classes dropping like flies, I'm not sure what to think of that light at the end of the tunnel either. Our team of children's ministers is in the thick of planning for next September; we feel the need to constantly revamp and pump out fresh ideas to retain the children's interest. The truth is, the interests of children have changed drastically over the decades, so when you finally find a teaching method that works, you'd better head back to the "drawing board," because the kids will soon be just that: BORED. This means singing a "new song," or learning some "new tricks"...



No, I'm not trying to add yet another element to your already-crammed workload! But the competition is fierce for capturing the attention of our youth. Lots of music, media, and videos... If you have not embraced new technology, it's time. I know, I know, everyone struggles with this at first, with the old church mantra echoing in our ears, "We've never done it that way before!" But these days, with computers becoming so user-friendly, almost any 12-year-old can put together an excellent video complete with sound effects, transitions and music clips in no time at all. The great thing is, this is one area of children's ministry that you can hand off to a responsible high school or college student... something they can really sink their techno-savvy teeth into.

I've been inspired by Karl Bastian, a Children's Minister with an online children's ministry resource called [KIDODOLOGY](http://www.kidology.com). He has created a number of crazy, fun videos with Biblical themes by using a myriad of toys and action figures. He simply takes the toys in hand, gets in front of the camera and acts out a Bible story, complete with goofy voices, using every character imaginable: from Kermit the Frog to Arnold Schwarzenegger. These videos, called Toy Box Tales, are available to watch and purchase at www.toyboxtales.com, and they are a fabulous springboard for new ideas! Our children's ministry started our adventures in video creation by making a short "Toy Box" video to introduce each segment of the program (Worship time, Lesson time, Small groups, etc.)

After seeing the success of our "Toy Box" videos, we started a monthly series with a "News Room" theme, where 2 or 3 live actors come out as news-casters and introduce the story, then a video plays with actors depicting Bible scenes, and the live actors do an interactive commentary. Since then, we have launched several other lesson series, utilizing videos and live interaction, to enhance our Sunday morning kids church services, and the kids are listening... and loving it! These kinds of series are also a great way to involve more people who may not be available for Sunday mornings, but can participate in filming and editing on another day.

Don't get me wrong; teaching directly from the Bible is still essential – there is no substitute! But skits, videos and other interactive tools are great for keeping the kids focused, introducing lessons and, maybe most importantly, teaching application. Kids can hear how "David killed Goliath with a slingshot" a million times, but do they realize that God can be faithful to help them with the "GIANTS" in their lives as well? They need scenarios and applications which bring the Biblical truth to their understanding and experience level.

So if this all seems scary and foreign to you, wait until your head stops spinning, and ask God for help in this area. He knows all this techy stuff inside and out... after all, He created the people who created the technology! Ask Him to bring people to mind who can help add some multi-media pizzazz to your kids' worship experience. That will keep them coming back for more, and in the process they will learn Biblical truth that will stick with them ... eternally.

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