

REGGIE JOINER

A
New
Kind of
Leader



**WHAT YOU BELIEVE CAN OPEN A DOOR
FOR A KID OR TEENAGER'S FUTURE**

7

THERE'S A NEW KIND OF
LEADER WHO BELIEVES

THIS WEEK MATTERS

WHEN IT'S REPEATED





THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 936 WEEKS FROM THE TIME A BABY IS BORN UNTIL THEY GROW UP AND MOVE OUT.

Sometimes when I speak to parents, I challenge them to get a jar and fill it with 936 marbles. Then I ask them to reduce the number of marbles in the jar to the actual number of weeks their child has left at home before graduation. Their next assignment is to keep removing one marble each week.

There's nothing special about a jar of marbles. But something happens when a parent begins to quantify the amount of time they have left with a kid. The jar is a constant visual reminder of something that's absolutely essential if you want to influence a kid or teenager: TIME.

936 weeks may seem like a lot,
but it goes by fast.

Just think about the number of weeks a leader actually has to influence a kid's faith.

A first grader has 624 weeks.

A sixth grader has 364 weeks.

A ninth grader has 209 weeks.

A senior has 52 weeks . . . and counting.

**This week matters
when you make it count.**

Putting a visual number to the time you have left isn't a new idea. One wise leader said it this way:

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

So, how does counting your days (or weeks)
give you a heart of wisdom?

I'm not sure.

But I can guess.

Think about what happens with the countdown clock in a basketball game. As the clock gets closer to zero, the intensity increases. The players become more focused.

In the same way, visualizing the weeks you have left to influence a kid may help you . . .

pace yourself,

narrow your focus,

guard your margin,

value quality interaction,

and become more intentional about what you do.

**This week matters
when you add it to next week and the next . . .**

The jar of marbles is also a reminder of the potential you have when you consider how you invest in a kid over multiple weeks. What you do this week matters, but you can't get it all done this week. That's why it takes a collection of weeks to influence a kid.

It's kind of like exercise. I don't usually use sports analogies (I assume you have to know a lot about sports to pull that off). But whenever I see an ad for something that makes you lose weight instantly or build muscle overnight, I usually assume it's a scam.

Some things take time.
Some things take repetition.

Some things can't be accomplished in one week.
It takes multiple weeks to . . .
discover a vaccine.
write a novel.
learn how to play the violin.
grow a hipster beard.
influence a child.

If you want to influence a kid's future, you have to resist the temptation to take shortcuts. There is no such thing as instant faith or character.

**This week matters
even when you don't think it matters.**

Did you every stop to consider:

The reason you can't see spiritual growth

is because it's too spiritual?

The reason you can't predict significant moments

is because they are unpredictable?

When you lead kids and teenagers, there may be weeks when you get discouraged. Let's be honest. Most of the time, you will never hear . . .

a baby say, "Thank you for changing my diaper."

a toddler say, "I'm so grateful that you spent Friday night sorting craft supplies for our activity."

a teenager say, "Wow, that talk you gave really changed my perspective."

But maybe the best thing you can do is to choose to keep . . . investing in what you can't see.

being present for what is not happening.

trusting that time will do what God designed it to do.



What if you started acting like

**WHAT YOU DO THIS WEEK MATTERS MORE
WHEN YOU DO IT EVERY WEEK.**

I could make the argument that God had an “every week” approach. Maybe He actually created time so He could communicate something that could only be communicated through multiple weeks?

Why didn't God send Jesus as soon as Adam and Eve ate the fruit? He could have resolved the issue then and there. But He waited. He used centuries of weeks to keep His promises and build relationships.

He gave Abraham a son.

He let Joseph sit in jail.

He sent Moses to deliver a people.

He let a nation wander in the desert for decades.

It was as if God decided,

“I can help you understand something with time that you could never really understand in a moment.”

If God proved His love for us week after week over time, then maybe that's the best way to cultivate what matters in the hearts of kids and teenagers.

The most significant gifts we can give the next generation are what we give them over time. That makes what you do this week, and next week, and the week after, strategic.

What you do every week will matter more in someone's life when you do it . . .
week after week,
month after month,
year after year.

Jimmy Mellado knows the power of what happens week after week in a kid's life. After 20 years leading Willow Creek Association to help churches win every week, Jimmy became president of Compassion International to help kids win every week.

Jimmy is a strategist and a thought leader. Whenever I'm around him, I can't take notes fast enough. He has an MBA from Harvard and was an Olympic decathlete. And when he talks about kids, he gets emotional. Sometimes we both cry, which can be a little awkward in public.

Mellado is convinced that if you can connect a church to the same kids week after week it radically changes their future. And he has research to prove it.

Compassion had a turning point in the 1980s when they started working solely through local churches.

Economist Bruce Wydick conducted a study of more than 10,000 grown Compassion children to show the organization's approach nearly doubled the chances of kids completing secondary school and increased college graduation rates by 40 to 80 percent.

Again, what distinguishes Compassion International from other groups is that Compassion only sponsors children through churches.

As a result, those churches provide 4,000 hours of contact with a loving caregiver during the most at-risk years of a sponsored child's life. Meanwhile, other organizations, usually using social workers, only have 40 contact hours. This astounding 4,000 vs. 40-hour difference means Compassion has a direct, intentional impact in the life of every kid every week.

It's ironic. While this book is trying to make sure every church in America still has kids, Compassion's goal is to make sure every child around the world has a church. They understand the value a consistent leader brings to a kid's life week after week. We could learn a lot from their approach.



KIDS NEED A NEW KIND OF LEADER WHO WILL
KEEP SHOWING UP.

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Just like the people in ancient times developed their view of God as . . .
the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac,
or the God of Moses,

You have developed a sense of who God is because you have met . . .
the God of Susan,
the God of Carlos,
or the God of Jeff.

God uses people. That's the point. He always has. Sometimes we forget that the God of the Bible is the God of the people of the Bible. God has always used people to demonstrate His story of redemption.

Please don't miss this.
Kids can't see God.
Kids can't see Jesus.
Kids can't see the Holy Spirit.

But kids can see people who follow God.

Kids can see you.

The best chance someone may have to personally see God is to get a close-up look at the people who follow Him. That's why your mission is simple: Show up in a kid's life so they can see God.

Okay. Maybe you're thinking,

"Doesn't it take a little more than just showing up?"

"What do I do once I get there?"

Here's an answer to help you get started. You show up to help a kid do at least four things:

1. **Hear** from God by navigating the Bible, listening to stories of faith, and personalizing Scripture.
2. **Pray** to God together and learn to pray personally and privately for the needs of others.
3. **Talk** about God with friends and other adults who trust Him.
4. **Live** for God through giving, service, praise, and obedience.

When you show up week after week to help a kid hear, pray, talk, and live for God, you solidify faith skills that will outlast your personal influence. Just remember, showing up this week matters more *when you do it every week*.

Preschoolers need someone to show up weekly so they see a familiar face. Just think about what happens when you put a two-year-old on Santa's lap. Preschoolers may be afraid of even the kindest, most generous adult if the leader only shows up once a year.

Elementary kids need someone to show up weekly so they know you know them. Kids are eager to feel seen and known by adults. They need someone who knows their name, their interests, and their pet's name.

Middle schoolers need someone to show up weekly so they know you know them NOW. Things have changed since last week—they may have changed since last night. So, it's probably good to show up more than once a week. There's a lot to keep up with.

High schoolers need someone to show up weekly so they know you will be there when they need you. Eventually they will hit a wall, make a bad decision, or feel defeated—and it might not always happen on a Sunday. So when it happens, they need to know who to turn to.

A new kind of leader will keep showing up weekly because they know it's the best way for a kid to experience a consistent relationship with God.



THIS WEEK MATTERS

WHEN IT'S REPEATED



WHAT IF YOU STARTED ACTING LIKE

**WHAT YOU DO THIS
WEEK MATTERS MORE WHEN
YOU DO IT EVERY WEEK**

KIDS NEED
A NEW KIND
OF LEADER
WHO WILL

**KEEP
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WRITE DOWN SOME WAYS YOU CAN ENCOURAGE A KID OR TEENAGER TO HEAR, PRAY, TALK, AND LIVE FOR GOD THIS WEEK AND EVERY WEEK. (IF YOU WANT A FEW PHASE-SPECIFIC IDEAS, YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A FREE TIMELINE FROM WWW.JUSTAPHASE.COM.)

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