

# New Year's Resolutions

**Grade Range:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade **Time:** 35 minutes

**Synopsis:** The New Year is an opportunity for renewal, a time to assess life and consider ways to improve. New Year's Resolutions are a great exercise for doing just that! In this activity, students will practice reflection, writing and making commitment through goal setting.

## Materials:

- Set of number pieces (1 per student)
- String (1 per student)
- Color pencils (1 per group)
- Scissors (1 per group)
- Tape (1 per group)

## Instructions:

1. Ask students if any of them have made a new year's resolution yet. Allow them to do a think-pair-share about this, then ask a few to share their resolutions with the class, if they have any. Also talk about your own, if you have one. This is just a casual conversation to get warmed up.
2. Divide students into groups and pass out materials
3. Ask students to write one goal behind every number.
4. Once goals are set, encourage your students to decorate each number
5. Cut the squares out. Add a hole for string with a hole punch. Loop the string through the hole.
6. Encourage students to look at each other students' work and give compliments.

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Start by going over the positive things your kids accomplished last year.
- There's a celebratory feeling to setting goals on New Year's that doesn't exist at other times of the year. "It's about happiness!"
- Present it optimistically: Every day's a new day, and you have a chance to reinvent yourself. A lot comes from your tone. If you're putting it in a punishing, preachy way, they'll be turned off.
- You've set the stage. Next, look ahead and ask, What are some of the great things you want to do this year? What do you want to improve? What will make your life better and happier?
- Suggest—Don't Dictate Resolutions.
- Guide and suggest general categories for change, help your child clarify goals, and make sure they're age-appropriate, but kids should come up with resolutions themselves. This is how they take ownership of their goals and learn to plan.
- Be concrete, specific, and manageable. As with adults, vague but good-sounding resolutions don't make for change. For example: 'I will behave better' is too general and will be out the window fast. Encourage goals that are within their reach, so they don't get discouraged.
- Some realistic resolutions for kids might be: I'm going to keep my room neater, I'm going to be a better friend, I'm going to read more, or I'm going to get better at tennis. Even these are broad resolutions that need to be broken down into doable, step-by-step pieces.

Examples:

- I will help more around the house ... by setting the table for dinner.
- I will improve my reading ... by reading 15 minutes before I go to bed.
- I will eat more healthful foods ... by eating one fruit at breakfast and one vegetable at dinner.

# My New Year Resolutions

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