

# No sleeping in for me

Whenever I have had a subbing day this year it has almost always been a result of getting up early and hitting the web. Last night I was able to secure a job in 6th grade a little after 10 which didn't have a start time until almost 8:30, meaning I could sleep in, at least a little bit. Okay, knowing about the snow meant I should be up about 20 minutes earlier to get shoveling out of the way. Still, I could get up about an hour later than usual. Of course you know something was bound to happen, and happen it did at about 4AM. That's when I was jarred out of my sleep by what I thought then was the neighbors slamming the door. It took me about a half hour to get back to sleep. I was worried because it didn't *sound* like a door slamming, but what else could it be. Well, eventually I did get up at about 6:45 and didn't worry about it all day. Unfortunately it wasn't quite early enough as there was more snow than I would have hoped waiting to be shoveled, making me a little bit late. At least I still arrived before the kids.

Yesterday I subbed for music at one of hometown district's middle schools- I actually got a call for it about five minutes before the alarm was set to go off. Very uneventful. We watched videos in all classes. At least I got to see [Blue Man Group](#), a group I had never heard before though I of course knew about them. Other class videos included [Stomp](#) and [The Wizard of Oz](#). Today I was excited because I was subbing in an elementary school, and what that usually means is getting to teach instead of just babysit. Well, not so much. The plans didn't include videos, but they did include a test, lots of reading and working on their own, and skit performances for social studies, in which they are studying Greek Mythology- a topic I really enjoyed myself when I was in 6th grade. Well, there was a spelling game too, and at least that was interactive. I also worked in a short math review not on the

plans before they started working on their assignment, and at least one other subject, vocabulary, was more interactive as well. Additionally, I worked in some word puzzles which I like to do in elementary classes. Definitely a more productive day for me than yesterday, overall.

So back to what woke me up. On one of the forums I read someone who I know lives around here made a post humorously telling California to keep the earthquakes to themselves. Say what? I read his post then had to go to my newspaper website to see just what he was talking about. Sure enough, there was a 3.5 magnitude earthquake a short distance from us. An earthquake. In Illinois. At 3:59AM. That's right, not a slamming door. Well, I guess if our tornadoes can be exported to other areas, I shouldn't be surprised when earthquakes are imported to our relatively-geologically-stable part of the country. Here's a link to the story (click the title), and a short excerpt:

## [Small earthquake wakes up northern Illinois](#)

*To some, it sounded like a train derailling, a snowplow taking out a car, a plane crash, a sonic boom.*

*To dogs, it was clearly something to panic about.*

*But the U.S. Geological Survey said what woke people well before dawn Wednesday was a mild, 3.8 magnitude earthquake whose epicenter was about three miles beneath a farm field a short distance south of Pingree Grove, near Route 20 and Switzer Road in western Kane County.*

*It started rumbling at 3:59 a.m. Wednesday and lasted just seven seconds.*

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## Part II

Okay, long commercial break over. We are on Saturday now I believe:

7AM: Lights turned on outside in the hallway, I wake up for the last time with a little headache but much less exhausted since going to bed. I was exhausted because for three out of the four days prior I was up before 6AM looking for subbing jobs. I found them, but the toll it took was severe. So another sub-8 hour night, but I figured I would survive. So everyone got up and I let some kids head to the bathroom to change out of their night clothes (they were too modest to change in front of others even if we were all guys- just wait until middle school boys, when you'll be changing in the locker room in front of even more people). Myself, I just wore my day clothes to bed- I had showered and put on some fresh clothes just before coming to the retreat so I would be able to do this. 20 minutes later, we were in line for breakfast. The end of the line. Oh, well. Eggs, sausage, french toast sticks, fruit, and OJ. Well, I *think* they were sausages- didn't taste much like breakfast sausage.

8AM: Eyes are really bugging me. The clothes weren't the only things I left on overnight. The contacts I have are extended wear, so I figured at least once I could wear them overnight. I had successfully worn them during naps before so I figured I could get away with overnight just once. My eyes disagreed. I put drops in when I woke up and several times since, but no go. Eventually I just gave up and went back to my room to

take them out and put on my glasses. Unfortunately the damage had been done and my eyes would be bugging me for most of the day. So, time for session 2 now. Each session started with a video that was just pure entertainment. I came back at the end of this video to sit with my guys (the high school leader in my room was keeping watch while I changed into my glasses). Up front game again- this time it involved two from each team, a boy and a girl, one from my own cabin (you can figure out which one...). The boys had to wear shaving cream on their faces and the girls threw cheese puffs on them. Hilarious. At the end of the time the one with the most cheese puffs stuck to them would win. In the end I think one other team had more than us, but their boy made the mistake of moving before they could be counted, losing half a dozen puffs. We won. Come to think about it, I think we won Friday night too. Worship followed with another four songs like last night.

9AM: Worship continued, and then Dr. Brian came on the scene and taught from Jonah 3, when the story started over with a better response from Jonah and this time and the Ninevites took the warning God gave them through Jonah seriously. According to the Bible, they all repented of their wicked ways and came to God, and He spared them. This has a fairly obvious (I hope) correlation to coming to Christ. We even ended the time with a prayer giving the kids an opportunity to repent themselves and accept Jesus. One of my guys raised his hand. Unfortunately for me I had to let my high school leader- did I mention he was my high school leader at camp just two summers ago?- take the pleasure in talking to him about it during small group time since we decided to split the group for today's small group times so we would each take five, and the boy who just accepted Christ was one of his five. Since my cabin was being used for piano lessons, we had to use the room across from us. We could have had both groups

in there, but Eric decided to take his group elsewhere. We talked about listening to God and accepting Christ for the next half hour. My church being what it is, by fourth grade it seems that 90% say they have already accepted Jesus at some point, so I decided to lead the discussion in who Jesus is to them to let them see if they truly understand what it means to accept Him.

10AM: At this time we were supposed to start cleaning up the cabin. Of course with piano lessons we had to wait so I let them exchange phone numbers with each other instead before we finally had to sneak in and grab our coats for game time downstairs. The game time was split in two this time with two teams playing each other in a game outside and in the gym. We were outside first. Has anyone ever played a game where a balloon is tied to your ankle and you have to try to pop everyone else's balloon before someone pops yours? This game was similar. A popsicle (still in its plastic!) was taped to the kids' arms and they had to try to rip them off of the other team. Once a child's popsicle was lost, he or she was out. Last one standing won. Well, at the end of the time the team with the most standing won, which was the other team. Oh well, can't win 'em all. No, the kids couldn't eat the popsicles during the game but they could at the end.

11AM: The teams switched. The second game was ice block relay. Only, one of the ice blocks broke so it became scooter relay instead, at least for the boys. I think next year they need to create extra blocks, several extras. Yes, this was the indoor game. One camper sitting on the block of ice, another camper had to push the other to the other end of the gym where they would switch places and come back. With one block broken, the boys were on scooters (the square variety that you sit on, not the sort that is long with a handlebar)

the entire time while the girls got to play the game with the ice blocks. At this time I felt like I was coming down with something. I sat down most of the time against the gym wall. At the end of this time we had won three games out of four, but since they had won the popsicle game it looked like they won overall. We went back to our cabins to take off our coats and head down for lunch. We weren't last this time. □

12 noon: I have to say I was very disappointed in this lunch. It was chicken nuggets and mac & cheese. Only, there was nothing to dip the nuggets in and the other dish was more macaroni than cheese. In fact, I couldn't taste any cheese at all. The economy is affecting everyone, and it certainly took a toll on the food here. One leader commented that he had eaten more junk over the last three meals than he had over the last six months. Hmm. Dessert was- not for me. I am one who doesn't like yogurt unless it's the frozen variety and this is what they served. Well, the lemonade was good. At the end of this meal I finally had to pull the pastor aside and inform him that I was running a fever and my eyes were **still** bugging me. Since I wasn't feeling nauseous he suggested I just stay and rest during the next session which followed lunch and see if I improved. After a short lunch, session 3 began. The game this time had something to do with singing familiar tunes, but I don't know exactly, nor who won. I was in the back of the room with my eyes shut trying to rest. The game leader I mentioned from Friday who stayed in our room because it was the one his boy was in kind of took over for me.

1PM: Session 3 continued. Worship, then the message by Dr. Steve on Jonah chapter 4 which I didn't hear, and then small groups. We had our small group time in our cabin (piano lessons were over) while Eric took his group back where they were earlier. Again, I didn't lead but sat while my stand-in

took over. In the end he had everyone take turns praying, which I was willing to do at least, but he chimed in immediately after the last boy. No big deal. We got ready for the final game.

2PM: Outside first again, the game this time was shooting popsicle sticks onto the church roof with really big slingshots. You read that right. They would have to pass a popsicle stick from camper to camper with their arms only and then the last one would run with the popsicle to the slingshot, set it in place, pull it back, and hope the popsicle made it to the upper roof for the greater point bonus. Then (s)he would run to the end of the line and start passing a popsicle all over again. Once all had the opportunity to shoot the popsicles, the game was over. Our team finished first if I recall correctly for both the boys and the girls (who were in separate lines), but I don't know who won for sure, only suspect from what place we finally came in for the entire day. The second game was inside the gym again, where we played human foosball. If you don't remember this game from the other times I've written about it, it's a game where the students are in four lines, hands held together, trying to kick really big balls into the other team's goal. The number of balls, and even the goals, changed over the course of the game. The other team toasted us, but that was only because of one leader they had at the end of the offensive line who kicked in a good 60+% of their goals. We had a leader at the end of our offensive line too, but he was smaller (a high-school freshman vs a leader in his 20s) and didn't score nearly as much. About this time I was on the upswing, feeling better overall.

3PM: Time for the group picture. Donning our coats once again, we headed back outside for the final time. The

children's pastor, Steve, stood on the roof with someone else whose name escapes me and took a few pictures with his, I believe, video camera. Meaning in the retreat video there may be more than just a couple of still pictures of this event. Afterward, they both grabbed all the popsicles from the slingshot game and tossed them onto the ground. A few of the more competitive kids grabbed the and... threw them back up! It was wild out there for a bit. After the popsicles were gone from the roof, they started throwing snowballs down at us. This was more acceptable to be thrown back as snow doesn't make as good a tasty treat as popsicles, so more joined in returning fire. Eventually this all ended and we headed back in to clean our cabin and bring everything down to the gym. After all, they would need the classrooms for church at 5:00. I made sure everything was picked up, and even had to look for the owner of a pair of socks. I found out when I got home that of course I left my own pair of socks from the night before (one article of clothing I *did* change). Hopefully whoever found them wasn't too disgusted as I had worn them for only a few hours.

4PM: All packs brought down and the room cleaned up, we started free time. This time wasn't really very free, but the kids were free to be in one of four places for the next hour and a half. In the gym they could play nuke 'em, another game returning from summer camp played on a volleyball court. They could watch a movie in another room- they showed Up!, a movie I recently watched in Blu-ray. In a third room they could play board games or, eventually, watch some of Wall-E. In the last room they could do crafts or play other games. I floated around this entire time, keeping track as best I could of my cabin. Most of my kids spent their time in the gym, so I did as well.

5PM: Free time continued until 5:30, after which we had dinner. Dinner was better than lunch and consisted primarily of spaghetti. Not much to say here really.

6PM: Dinner wrapped up and we moved into the worship/lesson area and watched videos until church ended and the parents started coming in. Once everyone was there, the final up front game commenced. A father-son team was called up from the leaders who were there the entire time with their sons and they played the frozen t-shirt game, where wet t-shirts were folded up and frozen. The dads had to try to get them apart and on their sons. Our team won again, giving us at least three of the four up front games. After this, we sang one worship song, Steve talked about the retreat to the parents, and jokingly as an afterthought the winner was announced. Since we came in third place, I suspect we won none of the big games. Remember, while I was able to see who won some of the games, I did not know who won Friday night nor who won the popsicle slingshot game.

7PM: Parents were permitted to take their kids home and the gym rapidly emptied of parents, kids and their packs. I got to go home and enjoy my fever which, while I was feeling better Saturday afternoon, still persisted through the weekend and made a return Tuesday, keeping me home from work.

Well, that's it. I hope you enjoyed the read. I just spent the last hour and a half writing this second part, so please excuse me for not going back and proofreading it. ☐

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# 24

Best winter retreat ever! I had so much fun that nothing could possibly compare. I wish I could say that was this weekend but that wouldn't be honest of me. For sure, many can say that and completely mean it as it really was a good retreat. The reason will become clear, and you may even find it foreshadowed before I come out with it. From the beginning:

## Friday

6PM: Arrived shortly before this time, late for the 5:45 call time. I thought I was ready, but of course remembered a few more things before I left. At least I did remember everything. In the past I have been left with no pillow, no deodorant, or similar mishaps. Was given a gift bag at the meeting containing essentials- sugar, water, t-shirt, hand-warmers... The latter was most likely due to last year's bitter cold retreat- something that was blessedly not repeated this year, at least for this group (high school suffered just a couple of weekends ago). Oh, anyone for some gum? I got a box, but I don't chew it. Just send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and I will ship it off. ☐ Meeting ended, we took our posts for check-in which began at 6:15. I was a greeter by the boy's area. For awhile I was a little nervous as I only had two arrivals for my "cabin" (room) while others had four or five, but I needn't have worried- in the end every camper (retreater?) of mine showed up- others weren't so lucky. I think about ten boys failed to show up- the fairer

section fared about the same.

7PM: Check-in starts to die down. Did I mention all of my campers showed up? Actually, I did lose one. There are two mentally disabled 4th-graders at my church and their dads (who stayed with them) wanted to be in the same cabin. While changing cabin assignments was generally not allowed, we made an exception for them. In fact, neither of them wound up in their original cabin as ours were pretty full, but in one that had lost two boys who didn't make it. Anyway, throughout this time, after letting them drop off their things, we sent them down to watch [Jonah](#) until the arrivals trickled down. Jonah would be the theme of the retreat. At about 7:25, the last of us headed to the movie area where the intro was made and we were sent off to start the first big game of the weekend.

8PM: My assignment- auditor. I stood by an opposing team's drop-off bin, where the kids would drop off all their treasures. Oh? I never mentioned the teams? Well, there are four teams, following the theme from summer camp which was a medical theme this year. I was a Mr. Yuk over the summer but this time was a Red Cross. The cabins were actually given names. Do you remember when [Sly](#) mouthed "You're the disease- I'm the cure" (paraphrased) in a movie 20ish years ago? Well, the boys were the diseases with cabin names like H1N1, TB, and Mad Cow Disease and the girls were the cures (Neosporin, Aspirin, etc.). My cabin was SARS. So back to the game, auditors made sure the kids were following the rules. This may be church, but you know some kids- suddenly forgetful of the rules when it could gain an advantage if you know what I mean. Here's what the game was- in pairs, the kids would link up (hold hands or arms) and search for little plastic ducks and reflectors strewn all over the church. When they found one, they had to get to their team bin. Throughout this,

there were over a dozen leaders going after the kids with dodge-balls in hand trying to “infect” them. That may sound like a lot of leaders, but we’re talking about 150 kids! If infected, they had to drop whatever they might have been holding and hightail it to the medic to be “cured.” There were a few hundred of these things strewn about so the game lasted for awhile.

9PM: Pizza! Well, maybe I should have left that exclamation point off- we’re talking Papa John’s here. If you’re not familiar with them, think mass pizza chains in the style of Pizza Hut or Domino’s and you will know what I’m talking about. We chugged down pizza and pop and got ready for the first session, which started shortly after 9:45 with an upfront game followed by worship. What is an upfront game? Well, one camper (sometimes two) from each team was called up to play a silly or disgusting game- pure fun, though not always for the contestants... Tonight was licking names off of a tray. The catch? Part of what was used in the writing was sardines- eww. That’s apparently what the contestants thought too as none of them accomplished much in the allotted time. Then worship began with singing.

10PM: The session continued. Four worship songs later, Dr. John came out to teach (medical theme remember). You know how busy doctors get, so Drs. Brian and Steve would round out the retreat the next day. Starting in Jonah, we traversed chapters one and two alongside Jonah, teaching the kids about consequences of trying to ignore God and how God always pursues His children. After the lesson we broke off into our cabins. We were running late, so we kept the large group of ten kids and two leaders together and discussed the lesson, including a reading from Psalm 139:

*7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
9 If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
10 even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me.  
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light about me be night,"  
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light with you.*

11PM: Set up beds, get ready, and lights out. Another leader, the game leader of the week joined us- his son was in our cabin. He and I, the "old guys," naturally brought air mattresses to go with our sleeping bags... A little chaotic as expected, but by 20 minutes after lights-out time we finally got the boys laying in bed if not asleep yet. Someone came in with a ladder to unscrew the emergency light bulbs- you know, one of those lights that stays on 24/7 even if the room switches are turned off. This still left a flashing blue light from the router mounted in the ceiling unfortunately. I hope it didn't keep anyone awake. I got this bright idea that I would just leave my contacts in all night since they are extended wear after all. Up to this point I had done naps safely, so I figured why not? I had drops to put in my eyes in the morning.

Midnight: Finally asleep, or at least sometime before the next hour.

Saturday

Midnight-7AM: Z-z-z-z-wake up-z-z-z-z-wake up-z-z-z-z-you get the picture-z-z-z-z

*(to be continued)*

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## Still alive...

...I think. Haven't felt much like blogging lately. Tired, somewhat overworked from my car job. Last week I subbed for the first time in over a month (español), but still did cars four of the five days. Subbed today (7th LA), still hoping for tomorrow. Sorry I haven't been reading all of your blogs lately either- kinda' goes with the no blogging feeling. Some friend, huh? ☐

Less than three days to the winter retreat!

Oh, turned off the ads, something I had been considering for awhile. Didn't earn me anything so I figured why not make a cleaner look for everyone? ☐

[edited to make last paragraph a little less negative]

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# A day in the life of a car photographer

I had to write this up for work, and I figured it would make a pretty good blog post as well. Some may be edited from the original:

I wake up and first thing charge my devices if I haven't the day before- the handheld every time, the camera battery maybe every other time. After eating and getting ready for the day I will turn on the computer, plug the handheld into the USB port on the computer, and while waiting for the Windows mobile software I will load the web browser and go to the web site. By now the mobile software has loaded (seems to take forever, and often doesn't load so I will have to either turn the handheld off and back on or unplug and replug it into the computer), so I will click to connect without setting up the device. On the handheld, which is still on the sync screen from the last upload, I will select the right dealers and download. Back to the computer and web, I log in and one at a time go to the dealers for the day and the missing photo report page for each one. For most I have to do nothing but select print (I used to sort the list first, but have since learned that the printout is sorted by stock number even if the list on the screen is not). For my Oak Park store, I have to select all cars first. I used to only select new, but whenever Doug (used car manager) is working he stresses the priority of the used cars. I think this is unfair to Tim since he's the used car guy over there, but I can't really argue with the customer. Fortunately Doug seems to be off most Fridays.

So after syncing the handheld and printing the missing photo reports, I am ready to head out. I put the battery back in the camera if I charged it, check to make sure I reinserted the memory card the night before, then put everything in the camera bag (handheld included). I put the missing photo reports on my clipboard, then take the clipboard, bag, and printer bin (in cold weather I bring it in each night) and head out to the car. The bin goes in the trunk while the clipboard and bag go with me in the car. On to the first job. What time I leave depends on the day. Oak Park means I leave earlier because that dealer takes longer. I may only have my Elmhurst dealer on Friday so I will leave for that one after lunch to make sure more cars are ready, back from detail.

Arrival- time to walk the lot. When walking the lot I will mark off each car by the row or section it is in so I can find it again later. I generally look for stickers in the window, and at one dealer I can also check that I marked off a car on the windshield with my marker (I only got into that habit at one dealer for some reason). Of course, with this so far wet winter, checking for our mark on the windshield is difficult since snow usually covers it. After walking the lot, I will plug in at some of the dealers (in Naperville I wait until the end since the outlet is out of the way, and a couple others don't require stickers so no point plugging in until the end at these places). I will usually talk to my contact at this point to go over the list, though a couple don't really want to be bothered unless there's a question about whether or not to do a car (clean but not detailed, in a place that may indicate it is sold, damaged, etc.). After verifying the list, I will get the keys. Usually I get them all, but if there is another vendor around I may have to coordinate and share with them. Sometimes keys are out- as mentioned another vendor may have them, or a sales person, or repair. Really,

they can be with just about anyone. At sites with computerized key boxes the system may tell me who has the key, but for manual systems such as keys on hooks I am on my own. Usually I will just take what keys are there and come back for the rest when I'm done- I don't like bothering the people there unless I have to. So, with the keys on my key ring (so I don't lose any) I will fetch the first car and bring it around. Unless I am losing the light of the day and have to scramble to get the pictures done immediately, I will start with the handheld. Before starting, I need to make sure the wireless has connected to my router by clicking on the wireless icon at the top of the home screen (only screen that shows it in the handheld software) and making sure it shows my router in the wifi box. If it doesn't, I turn off the wifi by clicking in the wifi area, then turn it back on. Rarely, if it still doesn't connect (and the router is verified to be on) I will have to go to settings on the handheld, connections, and then wifi, and play around with the settings until it shows I am connected to my router. At my Naperville store I will skip this entire connection step (I may even turn wifi off and leave it that way so I am not bugged by the constant "connect to..." popups) until I am ready to print all the stickers and the invoice. So anyway, most cars are in the handheld so I can just select the right stock number (after selecting the correct dealer first on the home screen of course, then selecting the "no photos" option). For those that aren't I will check to see if the car is already there and has photos by refiltering to show all used cars, and if not I will manually add the car with the add vehicle menu item. I suppose it would be faster to just skip looking and just go right to the add item- if a VIN already exists it will find it that way and the stock number box will be filled. In this case I will jump immediately to the photos screen to see if it has photos already, marking it for restickering later if it does.

At this point I will go through the screens and adjust the mileage, make sure the correct style is selected, add the appropriate colors (choosing generic colors when I can't figure out what color the manufacturer meant- some have really odd names and sometimes there is more than one version of the color. Color codes can help, but not all manufacturers put them on the door and some of the color names are so long the color code doesn't show on the handheld), add "Cloth" or "Leather" (occasionally "Leatherette" or "Vinyl"), etc. By the way, when checking for the transmission type sometimes the field is blank. In this case, if the car is an automatic this will be a big clue that I will have to deselect "manual transmission" under the mechanical options tab and find the automatic transmission in the installed options. Once I view it and discover what "speed" the transmission is, I will quickly go back to the screen where the transmission type is and change it as oftentimes the automatic has one less than the manual. Once this is done, I will head to the options and go over what the car has, starting with exterior. A couple special notes here- often it shows that the mirrors are heated, but most of the time there is no evidence of this so I will have to deselect it and select our "power outside mirrors" option in its place. Also, if the vehicle has a power sun/moonroof, this is very often not shown on this page and will have to be added under installed options. There are others, but sun/moonroof is by far the most prevalent. Next I will look at mechanical for a couple of the options- most on this page I just have to trust the car has. Wheels (sometimes under exterior) and transmission are the biggest things here. Next up is the safety tab where I check primarily for the airbags (sometimes unchecked, probably by the dealer so in this case I leave it unchecked even if it has the airbags) and also look for "OnStar" here (usually in the interior options but sometimes shows up here). Last tab I go to is the interior options. There is so much to check here that it takes the longest. While going through the installed options, I make a mental note what doesn't show up and look for them in

the installed options. Now that the installed options show the details, I have to read them to make sure I can select them. For example, I have found that that the rear DVD system option might show that headphones and remote are included, but since these are used cars these are often \*not\* included as they tend to get lost so unless I see them I cannot select this installed option but instead have to settle for our own "rear entertainment" or "DVD system" option. Any options I still can't find listed I will have to go back to the appropriate tab and add our generic option. Note: some older cars have no VIN explosion so I have to painstakingly find each generic option that is listed, and even add some on the installed option screen if important enough. Fortunately most cars are new enough that they are in the handheld.

Once I finish the options, I head to the sticker screen (some dealers require pricing to be entered, but I don't serve anyone who does) and select the appropriate sticker and buyer's guide then print (unless I am at my Naperville store where I save printing until the end. If this is the first sticker at the dealer for the day I will verify the printer options and margins. Next, the billing screen where I check off the correct option before clicking done. Finished with the handheld, I turn it off, retrieve the stickers from the printer, move the car to the photo-taking spot if not already there (often I park the car by my car so I can retrieve the stickers quickly), take out the camera, and shoot the round of pictures. When it's getting dark or I am shooting indoors, especially for the interior shots I will often take more than one shot. If I can, I will lean the camera against something to keep it steady when shooting the interior. Sometimes I have to use the flash but I try not to if possible. I switch between four camera settings: P and closeup if the flash is needed, no flash and mountain if not. Each setting is useful in different situations. When shooting, I will skip any shots

that will show damage such as dents or heavy scratches. Once I finish the shots, verifying each on the camera screen and reshooting when necessary, I turn the camera off, roll up the windows, put on the stickers (taking down any if necessary- usually buyer's guides), and repark the car. I will also make note on the missing photo report of the order of the photo set- 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc and write our mark on the bottom corner of the windshield, at least at the one store I do this at. Then it's on to the next car.

Once all the cars are finished, I return the keys I have and check for any keys I didn't get the first time. I may have to ask around at this point. Then I repeat the above process for these cars. One note, at any time I may have to towel down, squeegee, brush off, or wipe off some smudges on the cars. This is all part of the service provided to the customer. Don't want any of the cheap companies to steal our customers, right? ☐ It takes longer, but is necessary. A dry summer is so much better than a wet winter...

Once finished with all cars, I will reprint any stickers for cars that have photos but are missing the stickers, put them up, and mark "reprint stickers" in the billing tab on the handheld for that car. Then I will print out two copies of the invoice- one for me and one for the customer, and see my contact to sign them. I may have to take the dealer copy to their accounting office, get a PO, or both. Once done, I exchange goodbyes, unplug, and head to the next store, or home if this was the last. At home, I will take everything in- the camera bag, my clipboard, and the printer during the winter. I may rest at this point, but before I go to bed sometime I will connect the handheld to the computer, wait for the mobile software to load again, click the button to connect without setting up on the mobile software dialog, go to the sync

screen on the handheld, and choose to upload. Once it begins I will remove the memory card from the camera and insert it into my computer. Once the explorer window pops up, I will go to the picture folder and then copy all the pictures to the folder I have set up on my hard drive by doing a ctrl-a and dragging all of them to my hard drive folder. Then I will go to that folder and start going through the pictures, saving the best of each shot and deleting the rest. Sometimes the best shot will be too dim (common for flash shots) or too bright. For these pictures I will load them into Paint Shop Pro and adjust the brightness. Rarely, I will have to adjust color- for some reason I sometimes get shots that are way too blue. I may have to crop off part of the photo if the car isn't centered properly or something undesirable shows up in the photo (like a light wire at the new Glenview store used for the indoor shots). These are the only things I will do to the photos- nothing else. Anything else can be considered unethical, like "fixing" damage. Most of the time damage will be fixed anyway by the dealer, but that is up to them. Better to just delete such photos. Anyway, getting off my soapbox, once I have gone through the photos, I will rename them according to the stock number of the car from the order I wrote down while shooting, then load up the photo uploading program. In this program I will import the pictures, then match them up for each dealer I was at during the day. Before uploading, I will verify the cars match the descriptions and that the order looks right. Then I will upload. As soon as the upload is complete I will close the program, go to the web site, close out the invoice, delete the pictures from the memory card (which I had saved up to this point in case something went wrong), safely eject the card and put it back in the camera, unplug and turn off the handheld, and if early enough charge up the camera battery (every other time unless I had a very busy day) and handheld. If there isn't enough time before I go to sleep, I will save charging for the morning.

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# A post? Really?

Sorry for the lack of posts. Time, stress, not feeling like posting- you know, the usual. Still nothing about my life at the moment, but here's a cute video. Merry Christmas!

Oh, I'll start reading some blogs soon too...

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## That's one career closed to me...

I don't know the original source for this picture, as it is just an [ImageShack](#) posting:



## Countdown

In a "been there, done that" moment for my fellow bloggers I have finally added some events to countdown to this site. Enjoy.

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## If Jamiahsh can do it...

...so can I. Besides, the other theme didn't show avatars in comments, so now that two of us have them it is nice to see them. Thanks Justj and Admin for the avatar idea! I hope you enjoy this theme. Note that you can click on the squares on the upper left for some quick navigation, such as to recent comments and posts without having to scroll down. Not my

idea, but part of the theme. Nice.

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## Football & Dreamcoats

Last weekend had some more involvement with kids than the usual weekend. In addition to the two services where I serve with 4th and 5th grades, there was an earlier event for single moms, a Christmas party. No, I am not a single mom, but I (along with another from my Monday small group) helped out by leading games in the gym for some of the boys who came with their moms. The age range was about 3rd grade through 7th grade, with a couple data outliers (I think that's the statistical term) in the form of one about six years old and another in 9th grade. What does football have to do with this? Well, Mike, the other one from my small group, brought along a football. We started with just one 7th grade boy, one I knew very well by the way since he was in my cabin at summer camp a couple years ago, while the younger ones were listening to a Christmas story in the other room. The three of us tossed around the ball for a bit before the rest came in, including more older ones (5th-9th grade) who joined us in a game of touch football played in half the gym- the volleyball ministry had the other half. While Mike led his team as QB, as a non-sports guy I let the 9th-grader take that position considering he plays at his high school. While we played, the younger ones played with various other balls, tricycles, and whatnot as Mike and I kept order. Eventually some left for awhile to do crafts or something in another room, but the football game kept going. It was a pretty fun afternoon.

The lesson for the weekend was part two of Joseph. Of course,

most knew the story, but with these intermediate grades the focus is on application. In this case, obedience and perseverance in our relationship with God even when things in our lives aren't going so well. On Saturday there are three leaders who rotate teaching from week to week so I never teach this service, but there are only two of us for Sunday, though somehow I still only teach every other month- huh. The other one does two Sundays a month while one of the staff rotates in the months I am not on. Well anyway this was my week so naturally I wore my bright yellow overalls I wore when I was in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat several years ago. I also sang from some of the songs from the show as we talked about Joseph before Pharaoh (where we left off last time), Joseph finally getting his reward after 13 years of obedience during hardship, and later Joseph before his brothers who were trying to get food during the seven years of famine. It was a fun lesson though I think I went a little long.

So that was my weekend in a nutshell. I'll have to think about if there is anything to write about my two days of subbing this week- one in early childhood, one in 7th grade science. Until then.