

Promises, promises

Sigh. Never promise a post. It has been nearly a month since returning from camp, and still no post on camp itself. I guess I just don't feel like writing. I have wondered if I could make some extra cash by writing a book and selling it on Amazon in ebook form. Well, here is my answer- if I don't feel like writing a short blog post I certainly will never feel like writing a much longer work.

At the moment I am unsure what to write about camp. I can start with a summary and see where to go from there. I really didn't enjoy camp as much this year as prior years, but it was still the highlight of my summer. So what happened? Well, I will try to figure that out as I write. I do know that it was a day shorter than prior years. We were also rained out for a portion- all activities cancelled or moved indoors. I had a smaller cabin than ever before, but that should be a plus, right? □ Another change was- there was so much missing from prior years. Gone for the first time ever was an activity called counselor hunt where all the leaders hid around camp and the kids had to find us, trying to avoid being tagged themselves by a select few who were hunting *them.* Gone were the cabin video walkthroughs and awards for clean cabins. And of course some activities had to be cut because of the shortened camp week. One of those things I was really looking forward to- the talent show. Not enough slots for all the cabins since we were short a day. All in all, it just wasn't the same.

Well, this has been a negative post so far. How about what was fun about it? Well, I had a really good cabin. I didn't really know any of my five kids beforehand. I did remember having one of them in my weekend small group, but that's it. One was the brother of a 5th-grader I had last year (now 6th grade) who, like his brother, I have not seen since in the weekend ministry. One turned out to be the nephew of my small

group leader though I didn't know it at the time, not until he asked if I saw his nephew at camp. Yes, yes I think I did see him...

My junior leader was a freshman in high school- one of the youngest I have had. I think one other was his age. Get this though- his younger brother was also a leader, in a cabin with 5th-graders (my five were all 4th grade), just two years younger than him. I think the church has loosened the age rule a bit on junior leaders- just a couple years ago the rule was 11th grade, with the occasional special dispensation. This 7th grade leader was actually in my cabin in both 4th and 5th grade, as was another leader who I think may just meet that old 11th grade rule. Shows how long I have been doing this... While my junior leader this year was never in my cabin, he was a regular in my weekend small group when he was in 5th grade.

Well, I am officially tired of writing this post right now. I could just save it to drafts and finish it later, but I had better just hit publish so at least you have something to read for now. Coming soon- the return of Zorb, canoeing fun, and more. Until then!

Not just yet..

Okay you may ask, where is/are the camp post(s)? Well, in short, I haven't written it/them yet. As you can tell from the last sentence I don't know how many of them there will be. Work was quite busy over the last week and I really had little time for myself when I returned home, usually around 7-ish with photos to go through and upload. Aside from that my mother had an episode a little over a week ago that left her

with a slightly fractured ankle and so I have been doing some extra work helping with that. Her ankle will be healing for about eight weeks (one down, seven to go...)

So how about some "small world" news? Not about me, but about one of our church's pastors? Both of the main pastors at my church are from Canada, though now have citizenship here. What do most boys growing up in Canada do? Hint- it's not baseball, the past-time of this country. Even I participated in that for a couple of years- one tee-ball when I was very young, and one as a very poor player in intermediate league because my best friend at the time played it. Interesting story there- he was on the best team in the league, I was on the worst. What do you think happened when we played each other? A classic case of overconfidence of course, so we won. The only game we won if I remember correctly. Oh, well. My interest was never really there so I didn't practice, got stuck in right field, and the only ball I ever hit was an easily caught pop-up.

But this isn't supposed to be about me. I am sure you have figured out by now that what most Canadian boys do growing up is play hockey. You know all professional athletes start somewhere, and the story of a hockey superstar intersected with the story of one of our pastors on a team together as kids. The reason for him bringing it up in his message was about teamwork, the body of Christ working together in their separate roles defined by spiritual gifts. The story was how he tried and failed to score a goal on his own when a teammate was wide open to pass to. Wayne even came up to him afterward and asked why our not-yet-pastor didn't pass the puck to him. Oh, did I just give away the superstar? Even though I only gave his first name, I do believe that will be sufficient as all of you of course mentally added his surname. Being a very gifted player even at a young age, you know he would have scored that goal too. But anyway, just as not all hockey players are goalies or forwards, just as not all baseball

players are pitchers, we in Christ are not all teachers, not all pastors, not all bearing higher-profile gifts. God has given us different gifts and we are, as I already mentioned, to use them together whether our gifts are onstage, backstage, outside, or wherever.

So... how has your week been? Camp post(s) still coming soon.

The theme song of camp

The theme of camp this year, for the entire summer actually among all the age groups, was war. The years switch off between two themes for 4th/5th grade age group but this is the first time I noticed the entire summer was the same theme. Anyway, this song from Passion 2012 was this summer's main theme song:

Our next minute to win it game was up. Last night it was catching-things-in-large-basket-on-head (whatever it was called), this morning it was be-a-tp-dispenser-for-teammate who busily tries to wrap him/herself without breaking the paper. The boys and girls each had turns today (one boy, one girl from each team). Get ready- go! (press play on video below)

No, no, no, not **THAT** Duck Hunt. This was a game where the kids hunted for little rubber ducks invading the church. By little, I mean they were only about two square inches in size each meaning not that easy to find. But there were several hundred of them. All through, well not the church this year though that was the original intent. Thanks to the fresh snow, the venue was changed and the ducks were strewn all over the parking lot instead. Think a hundred kids mining for ducks in the still-falling snow. They had to find the ducks and bring them back to their team buckets. Sounds tedious? Well, add in dodgeballs thrown by zealous leaders (they had to drop any ducks they were carrying if hit, to be thrown by the leader to be buried once again, waiting on another miner) and it made for a fun time. There were also big balls the teams had to get to their buckets for big points.

The game eventually had to end and we went in for pizza and then our first session. As per the norm, we started off with an up-front game (we lost- I don't think we won any of the up-front games in fact) then moved into a couple worship songs before getting into the teaching. The theme this year was Jonah, session one was about rebellion. As many know, Jonah rebelled against God in chapter one, not only refusing to do what God told him, but actively going the opposite way, as far away from his responsibility as possible. The session ended with Jonah being thrown overboard for being the cause of the storm God sent. All sessions ended in small group time, so we went back to our cabins to discuss the application to their own lives.

Lights out and the kids were asleep instantly dreaming of peaceful things like rainbows and unicorns. Yeah, in your dre- hey, wait a minute... I remember a winter retreat where a couple kids ran up and down the length of the building we were in all night (or much of it). Things weren't that bad but we still had talking, fake flatulence, complaints about the talking and the fake flatulence... I had to get up more than

once and just stand over someone to deter further noise. I did sleep fairly well once I nodded off, at least until 6AM, but I'll save that for the next post. It's getting late. Talking of sleeping is making me want to be there...

zzz

3rd Time's a Charm

Or three strikes and you're out, but I prefer the title saying better. It is midway through the year of my third stint at being an AWANA leader. Some time ago, when I was still subbing, I was asked by family to break off a bit from the kids. After all, I was doing drama and serving in 4th and 5th grade on the weekends then working all week in K-8 classrooms. Not wanting to get rid of the weekend service, I dropped AWANA after the year was over.

This year things have been a little different but very much the same. Originally, 3rd-4th grade were known as Pals (boys) and Chums (girls) while 5th (normally 6th too, but at our church 6th grade is junior high and they don't do AWANA) were known as Pioneers (boys) and Guards (girls). I believe it was during time #2 that the switch was made to T in T: Truth **in** Training for all three grades, boys and girls. One year I worked with Sparks (K-2) but the rest of the time has been with 3rd-5th grade. Would you believe the kindergarten Sparkies from that year are in 8th grade now? Time does fly. Other differences this year include keeping points for my team- kind of a pain with over 15 boys, mostly 3rd and 4th grade though I do have one or two 5th-graders- and game time is no longer the normal circle games, though at the beginning of the year we did do them. Now we switch off between double-

kickball (two balls, two kickers, one set of bases) and dodgeball.

Last night was crazy hat night. Every week has some sort of theme with varying levels of participation- last week was ugly sweater night and few participated. Wristwatch night also seemed to be on the light side. Hat night must have been easier as there was much participation. Conservative, childless me didn't have a hat anywhere near crazy status and I didn't have time to think about it anyway since I arrived home from work after six and had to be at the church at 6:30. There were of course Dr. Seuss hats among the fare, a mohawk hat, a creative lad wearing two Civil War hats representing both Union and Confederate sides, and another one wearing stacked baseball hats. I am slightly chuffed to say the winner came from my own team, though of course I had nothing to do with it myself. Cole wore the same hat he always wears to AWANA- he usually leaves it on all night except for prayer- but over that he had on a full Air Force pilot helmet, meaning not just the helmet but the breathing apparatus as well. Technically not a hat, but it did go on the head, so... He informed me one of his relatives was in the Air Force. If he went to this church on the weekend (he attends a different church- he came as another's friend one week and signed up after that) he would fit right in at camp this summer and the winter retreat the following January- next year will be the military theme once again.

Anyway, speaking of winter retreat, ***this*** year's retreat is tomorrow night and it is now after 11PM. Time to hit the sack so I will have at least some rest for it. And perhaps a blog post afterward. Please pray for us this weekend- 24 hours from Friday 7PM to Saturday 7PM.