

# Church

Yes, tonight I went to church service. It was actually a sort of unusual service in that all of the children's ministry was asked to attend the main service. Ordinarily the 4th and 5th grades would be in service anyway as the last weekend of the month they go to service with their parents (in preparation for junior high when they always attend regular service), but this time it was kindergarten all the way on up in a family service. It made sense though- the series my pastor is currently in is about family. What this meant though was there was no drama and no kid's ministry for me to be involved with this weekend. In fact, there is no drama for the next month. Though drama is fun, I appreciate the break.

Tonight they also did an "impromptu choir," meaning they called on people to come up front and sing the worship songs in the choir risers, children included. Well, because the children were part of the service, they chose a few children's worship songs in addition to some regular songs. During the kid's songs, they had one boy who came up, a 4th grader, stand in front of us (yes, I came up to sing!) and show the motions that the kids do when singing the songs. It was so cool- this boy has no trouble in front of large crowds- he actually has been doing drama with me for the last couple years. Incidentally, his dad was one of the worship leaders which probably gave his confidence a boost as well. His dad must have been quite proud of him (the *good* type of pride for another, not the selfish pride the Bible speaks against). Unfortunately he ran off the stage before I could give him a high five for doing it (and doing a great job at it too!) so I guess I will have to catch him next week in class.

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# Special Ed

One of the most common roles I fill in for is special education. Sometimes it's quite challenging, sometimes quite easy. Well, it is only truly easy when there are teaching assistants who pretty much take over while I take the role of assistant. This is commonly the case in mentally impaired classrooms (autism, Down syndrome, etc.). Yesterday was mostly on the easy side. I was subbing for a junior high teacher who actually only had one class of her own- the rest were "team teaching," which generally means the sub plays the part of assistant while the other teacher teaches. But what does one do when both teachers are out and both left plans saying the other teacher will take over? That appeared to be the case when I walked into second period and compared notes with the other sub. Fortunately, this turned out to be a non-crisis as the teacher he was subbing for left plans on the board in addition to saying that my teacher would take over. I can only guess his teacher found out about my teacher's absence only after writing the plans. Whew. The rest of the day was quite uneventful, just following the same group of students around through social studies, math, science and language arts. I also had to help look over a group of homework lunchers (detention really). It's just as it sounds- students who didn't turn in homework in one or more classes worked on it during lunch. I was told when they first started this program there were over 60 kids in the room at one time! Now that has to be against fire codes. I was quite happy there were only about 15. In any event this was definitely a position I would do again.

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# Finding Inspiration

Everyone has a passion in life. For some it is a hobby. Others maybe family. But whatever it is, most have to learn to balance their passion with what may seem like the mundane world of everyday life. In the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus*, one man struggles to do just that and along the way finds that his passion in life may have changed.

Richard Dreyfuss portrays Glenn Holland, a would-be composer who accepts a "day job" teaching music appreciation to high school students. During the course of his 40 year career, he finds that he has the power to instill passion in others. A clarinetist lacking confidence and an academically challenged athlete who HAS to take his course to fulfill his graduation requirements are just two of the students he encounters. My favorite student is the young promising singer who he encourages to follow her dream. Glenn not only inspires musically but in all aspects of life.

However, Mr. Holland's personal life is often filled with turmoil. He spends a lifetime searching for the inspiration to compose his one great piece of music. He struggles to find a balance between work and family. His musical passion and his family life are put to the ultimate test when his young son, Cole loses his hearing. A brilliant scene shows Mr. Holland attempting to bridge the rift with his son by performing a personal rendition of John Lennon's "Beautiful Boy."

Some intriguing historical flashbacks are used to show the passage of time. This creates the illusion that the audience is watching a movie based upon the events of a real person. The Vietnam War is seen through flashbacks and creates drama in Mr. Holland's life.

*Mr. Holland's Opus* is a remarkable movie for anyone who has inspired or been inspired. It is sentimental without being

sappy.


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## Holy Bologna, Batman

Sometimes a movie franchise which begins on a promising note can take a big leap downhill. One case would be the Batman films began by Tim Burton in 1989. The original *Batman* was dark, very atmospheric, close to the comics began in 1939. By the time *Batman and Robin* was made, the movies were an all out farce. In 2005, enough time had gone by to attempt a rebirth of sorts with *Batman Begins*.

*Batman and Robin* ended the franchise for several reasons. George Clooney did not a Batman make. He even considered the performance terrible. Perhaps he wanted to be part of a sure-fire money making movie series but upon reading the script found himself in trouble.

The villains were lame. Mr. Freeze was a carry over from the 60s television show and was a laughable character at best. Arnold Schwarzenegger seems well cast in movies in which he can deliver memorable catch phrases (Hasta la vista, baby; I'll be back; Chill out). That seems to what he does best in any movie he is in to say nothing of his ability to govern the richest, most populous state in the country.

Another great big flaw was in costume design. In some awful anatomical promotion, a cod piece was added to the Bat-costume. To add even more insult, nipples were added to the chest area. These may not have been so noticable had it not been necessary to blatantly display both in close up shots  . This must have been an attempt to promote the new and improved Bat-suit. And who to blame for this... the director himself,

Joel Schumaker (who should take all the blame for this mess).

After the success of *Batman Begins*, one can hope that the superhero will once again return to the movies in a good way.

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## Don't Worry, Be Happy

I was having a brain freeze today and could not come up with a suitable movie to review... until I read a blog from a friend.

Happy Gilmore is one of the funniest movies involving one of the most boring sports imaginable: GOLF... UGH!!!!. Adam Sandler is one of the funniest guys around. I abhor watching golf... it is so quiet that that you are just dying to yell out "FIRE" or some other attention grabber. But this movie makes it hilarious. My favorite part of the whole movie has got to be when Happy is in a celebrity pro/am tournament. He was lucky enough to be paired with America's favorite game show host: Bob Barker former star of *The Price is Right*. Happy's day on the course does not go well. Bob makes the comment that Happy's hockey playing could not be worse than his golf game. Then, the hilarity begins. Bob Barker gets into a knock-down, drag-out fight. When it seems that Happy is victorious, he exclaims: "The price is WRONG, B\*%#H." To which Bob goes into a fit of rage and gives his golf partner a good beating. After finishing Happy off, Bob returns the favor by saying: "now, you've had enough... b\*\$@h." All those days Bob spent boxing in the service must have payed off because the fight actually resembled a choreographed boxing match. It was one of the highlights of the movie to watch the normally composed game show host lose his cool. Speaking of boxing matches, Happy's golf mentor, Chubbs, was played by Carl Weathers who played Apollo Creed in the Rocky movies.

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# The Pampered Chef

I hosted a Pampered Chef party last night – it was just for fun. I do like their products, but I find them extremely over-priced. My experience of working for a company that imported goods from China doesn't help these opinions; that's when I got to see how inexpensive plastics can really be. But anyway... we did have fun. And an interesting note for all you stoneware fans out there – stoneware is an imposter! If you're not familiar with Pampered Chef parties, I'll give you a run-down of how it all went down...

When you agree to host a party, you choose one recipe to make with all the victims, I mean, friends, you invite to your party. I, being pregnant, could not resist the sound of the chewy caramel brownies. We were having a grand old time, measuring things, chopping things, and spilling ingredients all over my living room, until the consultant proceeded to burn the brownies to a **crisp!** The smoke alarm went off and scared the kids and everything! Which brings me to the subject of the mythical stoneware, noted for its ability to cook things evenly. Guess what? The brownies did burn **edges first!** So much for that theory. My husband, ever the conspiracy theorist, was wondering if she didn't burn the brownies on purpose trying to gain sympathetic orders from my victims, errr, guests. But, once we saw the effect of the stoneware, this theory was proven incorrect by the sheer failure of the purpose of the stoneware. Needless to say, I will not be choosing any stoneware items with my party-hosting credit! And I have to admit, the brownies were a big disappointment. Not at all cuz they were burned, but because they were TOO sweet and rich for my tastes, however pregnant I am. I did feel badly for the consultant; but stuff happens,

gotta chalk it up to gaining experience. Overall, I would recommend hosting one of these parties. It's fun to get together with your victims, I mean your friends and family and cook. You have to be a little bit willing to stand up for yourself though – the consultant WILL pressure you to invite tons of people, call them all constantly to remind them to come, and will also try her darndest to get YOU to be a consultant yourself! And since my “excuse” of having 3 kids 8 yrs and under PLUS 1 on the way wasn't really good enough – I had to “just say no” in the end – good luck to you! So as long as you can deal with the peer pressure involved, it is definitely worth a try to host a Pampered Chef party. And thanks to all my suckers, I mean, my guests who ordered things – that was really nice of you and I appreciate it – we had fun!

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## **The Price is WRONG, Bit...**

You know I'm not going to finish that sentence... if you've seen Happy Gilmore, you know how it ends, anyway. If not, rent it if you like comedies, it's a good one. In case you haven't noticed, I watch a lot of tv. Actually, I don't really watch it, I just leave it on to listen to while I putter around the house doing various chores and tending to children all day... it's nice to hear adults talking, even if they aren't talking to me – I can pretend. Anyway, I usually have The Price is Right on in my laundry room for my parrot – it's his favorite show. He likes to imitate the AWWW noise the audience makes when they get something wrong. I'm getting used to Drew Carey. He's no Bob Barker, but he is finally becoming less nervous and getting in the groove of the show – or so I thought. The other day when I started this post – it got POSTponed (HA) because the baby and I have been under the

weather – Drew was a little “off”. The opening prize was a train set, and he goes, what do you want to bid for that chainsaw? As he admitted, he didn’t even look at the prize! Then later on, he called one of the models Rachel Ray. Funny stuff – and though it might seem like I have too much time on my hands, I beg to differ.

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## Snakes... Why Did They Have To Be Snakes

Since this is to be a blog concerning movie reviews, I suppose I should start reviewing more. On May 22, one of my favorite movie franchises will be resurrected with *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Let me take a moment to deal with the previous 3 movies in turn. All four movies contain two essential elements: Harrison Ford and director Steven Spielberg

*Raiders of the Lost Ark* was one of the top grossing films of 1981, if not THE top money maker. It is here we meet the great archaeologist and follow him around the globe on his quest to find the Lost Ark of the Covenant. Along with his female companion Marion Ravenwood (played by Karen Allen), Indy battles Nazis, a treacherous rival treasure hunter, and the bane of his existence... deadly snakes. However exhausted he may seem, Dr. Jones rises to each challenge with courage and at times a bit of a swagger. In one scene, Indy shoots a menacing swordsman with one bullet fired from his gun. However, his favorite weapon of choice: his trusty bull whip.

*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* was released in 1984. The second installment was considerably darker than its

predecessor. In fact, Spielberg had to lobby for a new movie rating in order to avoid getting an R-rating. Thus, the PG-13 rating was created. *Temple of Doom* concerns our intrepid adventurer searching for the lost sankara stones which were stolen from a small village in India. These rocks may have meant "fortune and glory" to Indy but to the village they meant their very livelihood. Some of the highlights in this epic are a speeding mine car chase, a rickety rope bridge, and a sumptuous feast consisting of snake surprise, beetles, eyeball soup, and for dessert...**Chilled Monkey Brains** (a tasty treat anyone would enjoy).

The third part of the saga, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), had a lot to do with the background of the character: why archaeology, where his whip came from, and why the name Indiana. In a very brilliant piece of casting, Sean Connery was chosen to play Indy's father. Who else but the world's greatest superspy could play the world's greatest adventurer's father? After rescuing his father from Nazis, they set out to find the Holy Grail: the cup which held the blood of Christ at the Last Supper and gives everlasting life to anyone who drinks from it. In a flashback at the beginning of the movie, the late River Phoenix plays a young Indy on one of his teenage escapades.

Now, comes the next chapter. Very little is known about the new movie aside from the title and who knows what the purpose of the crystal skull is. Karen Allen is returning as Marion and Shia LaBeouf is cast as a young man who speculation suggests has a familial tie to the hero. Watch the trailer [here](#)

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# Pamper Me

NO... do not put me in a diaper. I was invited to attend a Pampered Chef party at the house of my very good friends. It was very entertaining. Everyone there got to help make brownies... (which ended up being slightly burned but with a little ice cream, were quite good). I ACCIDENTALLY spilled a smidgen of brown sugar on the floor as I was filling the plopper thing. THEN, I gracefully dropped a scoop of ice cream on the floor... sorry.

After the demo, we arranged an Oscar night party. I have not seen any of the movies nominated for any of the major awards. I have heard that *Gone Baby Gone* is not all that great. Only that it is Ben Affleck's directorial debut and has his brother, Casey in it. We briefly discussed *Little Miss Sunshine* which I have not seen but hope to. And while we were on the topic of Steve Carell movies, we mentioned *Get Smart* which will be coming to theatres this summer. I will say that I have seen *Norbit* on DVD which is up for Best Makeup. That movie should be a contender for WORST MOVIE EVER. I wonder how many movies have ever won both Oscars and Razzies.

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# Unexciting day

There's not really much for me to say today. I was with 3rd grade, which is about the bottom of my comfort zone. I have done lower grades, even preschool, but 3rd-7th is what I prefer. The day actually started out not looking so good with a **lot** of chit-chat while the kids did their morning work. Fortunately they improved throughout the day. Right after morning work was silent reading time and I have to admit they

did very well. When we got to math I had the pleasure of teaching a lesson I had a chance to teach twice before, believe it or not, in the previous weeks so in a way it was like teaching the second or third class in a middle school after getting the "practice" time with the first class. Not much to say about reading and writing. Another teacher came in to do a couple of writing assessments, which wasn't planned, so I only taught part of the original lesson. Reading was one of the "just give them this independent work" times where no lesson was involved.

Specials, read "break time for subs" are sort of a hit or miss thing with elementary school- some days you may have two, other days none. Today there was one at the end of the day, giving a little time for me to write some notes so I wouldn't have to stay a half-hour after the kids leave as I occasionally have to do. Rather than the kids going out as to music or gym, a social worker came in with a lesson. This unfortunately meant that I *still* couldn't leave the room, but at least it gave me that note-writing time. All-in-all the day wasn't too bad.

Interesting coincidence- the team name of the school I was at was the wildcats. The middle school, actually junior high as that district still uses that term though they run the schools like middle schools (there is a difference), where I will be tomorrow has the same team name. Nothing big, just interesting.