

# Well, that's all she wrote...

...for the 5th graders in children's ministry that is. What? Did you think I meant I was done with this blog? Today the 5th graders made their exit from children's ministry. In a couple of weeks they will officially enter student ministries as junior high students. Being Memorial Day weekend didn't help though as there were a few who didn't make it due to traveling, though fortunately not too many. The Junior high pastor (I think? I don't remember the other one leaving) came in with a couple other leaders and spoke with them about the welcome night, things to expect in junior high, etc. The kids were prayed over and given certificates- a sort of graduation I guess. Of course, some won't really be in junior high/middle school if they go to a public school in the area where 6th grade is still elementary, but at the church 6th grade is junior high even for them.

So, kids I have been working with for the last two years are now gone and in two weeks the third grade moves up to take their place. They should recognize me though, at least Saturday night kids, as I have been in the kid's drama. This is supposed to be the time then to heavily advertise camp, but the early bird discount will be over by then as camp is one short month away, and unless things change significantly, yours truly will be joining them for the week. I have said before that that one week last year was very powerful for me spiritually, and I hope it will be the same for me this year- and for whoever will be in my cabin this time around.

Going back to drama, the headline applies here as well. It is done for the season, not to start again until next fall with a new theme. My usual exit line, to tell the audience to be sure to tune in next week, reflected this as well, instead telling them to be sure to trust Jesus since He's the only one who can make us super human. I also added a line for the third graders- that they would see me ("someone who looks like

me") in two weeks. Heh, heh... So at the end, we added cast bows, and on reflection, I should have walked over to the puppet as well, since the puppeteer couldn't very well step out and take a bow too. Oh, well.

---

## The end is near...

Tonight I write this as I should be partying instead. Tonight is the end-of-year cast party for the children's drama. Or rather, that is what the schedule says. The party was actually canceled due to lack of interest, plus a general grim outlook on people showing up on Wednesday nights for past rehearsals. If it was going to be anything like last year's get-together then I really won't miss it. It was a low turnout then and pretty unexciting. Some ice cream and drinks, and a little bit of small talk. The kids if I recall did some theatre games. Those theatre games used to be part of the rehearsals, but this year they got cut due to time, though the director did do some one of the nights.

In any event, the end may have arrived for rehearsals, but we have one more weekend to perform- this coming weekend. I suggested we have the show "canceled" and have "extras" carry off pieces of the set as we do the drama. Unfortunately this suggestion was too late and Steve (children's ministry pastor) cringed at the thought of having to take down and put back up the set for each performance. I guess it was also kind of a negative note. The show rather ends more positively by finally discovering the formula my character has been searching for for so long. Of course the formula involves Jesus, the only super human. He is the one who makes super heroes out of all of us who are children of God. At the end we will take our final bows and the mock science show will

end.

I *really* hope the performance goes without a hitch. Last week I was the only regular cast member there for my performance time. Another was prepared as a fill-in, but the rest just didn't show up. Steve said he knew a couple wouldn't be there, but my guess is he didn't have much advance notice as we had to scramble to get others to fill in, and needless to say they had to perform with scripts. Something that was actually quite regular last year, but praise God was not so much of a problem this year. The last episode is supposed to be the most memorable, so I pray that it is memorable in the right way...

Well, this wasn't my regular sub-post, but you already knew I had PE at the one school again. Basically, same thing different students. Softball all day with similar pluses and minuses as the previous days' kickball. Until tomorrow then, when it looks like I will break the middle-school rut with second grade. I will also get to sleep in an extra hour... ☐

---

## Back to drama

It was a little exhilarating to get back to the children's drama this weekend. We had been off for over a month, partly due to Easter. So this weekend we were back with a vengeance, err- three of us were. I guess the other two were still on spring break or something. Fortunately the head director, I guess I can call him, was there with his son who plays one of the roles on Sunday morning (this is Saturday night I'm talking about), though unfortunately not one of the characters who was needed. Young as he is (4th grade!) he happily brought out a script and filled in. No, he couldn't be expected to

memorize it in a half hour. The other character was a puppet, so another drama regular easily filled in, no memorization even required for that role.

I play sort of a clumsy, bumbling, absent-minded TV scientist in the spirit (but not the intelligence) of [Christopher Lloyd's](#) Doc Brown character from [Back to the Future](#). There are two assistants played by kids, one an airhead-ish lab assistant and the other a geeky research assistant. The one tends to ask some very silly questions (to which my character has a wacky response) and the other is immersed in a computer and constantly correcting anything misspoke (usually by me). There is also a puppet I mentioned and a guest character, a recurring role played about once every other month.

The lesson was about being thankful. My character was the one who had something to learn about it, as almost usual, but comes up with the proper thankfulness in the end, attributing all power to Jesus, to whom we should be thankful. Presumably this leads into the actual lesson taught after the drama which should be on the same topic. However, I have never heard any of the lessons as I usually go directly to 4th/5th grade (drama is only for K-3) right after the drama, or head into the worship service if it is a last weekend of the month like this weekend.

I wish I could say it went perfectly, but a couple of us had some minor line trouble (nothing the kids in the audience would notice) and for some reason none of us thought of putting a microphone on our young 4th-grade fill-in so he was very hard to hear. Well, nothing can be done for it now but to move forward. I will be looking forward to the monthly rehearsal this Wednesday.

---

# Reflections

Well, this weekend it was mentioned that the next church anniversary in September is the its 20th. Yes I know that is nothing compared with some churches celebrating centennials and more. The church I grew up going to is a church like that, but the one I go to now is kind of mega-ish. That is, it is quite large, expands four campuses, and has a couple dozen “plants” following its doctrines and leadership style, but is still nothing compared to the likes of Willow Creek or Crystal Cathedral. Anyway, When I first started going to the church it hadn’t yet celebrated its 10th anniversary. I remember that celebration was done in the school it originally met at before they got their own building. It was still on only one campus, its campground was still in the hands of its previous owners, and even the building they were in wasn’t yet fully utilized. Inside was a big fenced in area of, well, *nothing* which would soon become the second half of a new improved worship center. Since then much has happened. Besides being on four campuses now (one of which used to be a plant but joined up for a reason I never found out) and having a campground, it has a chapel that didn’t used to be there, used mostly for weddings, a second floor in part of the building (the building was always one floor, with a roof high enough for two), a school, and has undergone much remodeling.

As for me, around that 10th anniversary was when I started working in the children’s ministry. It started with an ambitious children’s drama which took up much of the service time and was scaled back the following year due to the teaching volunteers wanting to, well, teach. I of course knew God wanted me there and so was part of the first cast. This lasted about three years. I even had a short stint at directing in the third year. Well, after the first year I wanted more so I started teaching as well. They put me in fourth grade with another teacher and we took turns week to

week teaching the lesson. On the weeks I was also in the drama (there were four casts- one per week of the month with any fifth weekends generally without drama) I would walk the kids down and then go backstage and get into my costume. Believe it or not, I wasn't the only one who did this. About that time a new combined program for 4th and 5th grades was just getting started. The prior year they had it as a Friday night program as a supplement to the weekend services, but now they were making it the weekend service. They started off with just one service on the weekend, but it wouldn't be long before it expanded to all weekends. Just why they did it this way I am not sure. Anyway, I switched to this service eventually. As I recall they went through a few staff members running it over the years to where it is at now with the current pastor hired about six years ago. I think I am the only one left still volunteering in that ministry from that first year (discounting the Friday night program). Like the church itself, this program has grown and is definitely in a mature state. I reflect on this because there is a high school student who volunteers in one of the services who was one of my first students in fourth grade. He is a senior in high school now. Well, actually from what he says he was a senior because he graduated in January.

I really enjoy working with the kids, and I know God placed me there and has kept me there. In fact, my best spiritual time I think was last summer when I volunteered as a camp counselor for 4th and 5th grade. Also the two summers before. I just wonder if God will ask me to move on soon like the others have, and if so where to? I am still involved with kids ministry drama as well, which after a hiatus of a couple of years came back as a different sort of program. Really, I am deeply immersed in this church and currently have no plans to move on, but eventually God may ask me to. Will I be able to if and when he does? Will I be willing to go where He wants me to? Would I be able to shepherd children myself as a pastor if called to do it somewhere? I can only make sure be ready I

suppose in case He does. And how about my own family? Has He been leading me toward this in a way? That is, I am single right now, but is this practice, along with subbing, to lead a family of my own one day, soon I would hope as I am not getting any younger...

---

## No teaching today

Normally I teach first weekend of the month at one of the morning services, but this month for some reason they have me down for next weekend instead. Of course I did have a surprise last night as I wrote. Today there was no leader problem either, just a normal day. For some reason though the boys are more rambunctious at the second Sunday service than Saturday night. I suppose it is probably for the same reason I tend to have more energy in the morning myself. The lesson if I didn't say was an introduction to the book of Judges. The kids were taught about the cycle that happened seven times in Judges and still happens today. When we get comfortable we tend to forget God and sin. Once in that trap, it leads to suffering. As we suffer we remember God and cry out to him to help us. He hears our cries and saves us, bringing us back to him. Unfortunately the cycle starts over from there. The message we got in the main service was part of the series on family first aid. It was about wrestling with God just as Jacob wrestled with God. While God could just crush us when we choose a path other than that which leads to Him (read: sin), He chooses instead to be gentle and let us wrestle a bit. However, no mistake is to be made on this: He leads us, His children, to a place of submission so we get back on the right path. The message can be heard here:

[This Week's Message](#)

---

# When teachers go missing

Okay, they didn't go missing they just got sick, but "when teachers get sick" didn't quite have the same ring to it. Besides, they were missing tonight because they got sick.

So when I arrived at church tonight there were already about five kids waiting outside the door. Not a good sign as I was a few minutes late myself and someone more punctual than myself should have been there. I checked the kids in and waited for other leaders to arrive. And waited. Eventually Steve, the one in charge of the kid's ministry, popped in and informed me that the one set to teach the lesson tonight called in sick and asked another leader to fill in for him. And she was, up until about an hour and a half before the service, then *she called in too*. Now this was a bit unusual, and ordinarily Steve would then fill in since it was so last minute, but tonight he had other obligations, so the duty of teaching the lesson passed to me. Well, I didn't study the lesson beforehand knowing I wasn't on for this weekend, but I could do this- I've done it before. Hey, I'm a sub, remember? Thinking on my feet is normal practice :). So I had to miss the game time and study the lesson. No biggie- just another game of dodge-ball and I'm usually doing drama at this time anyway (we're off this month). Oh, I guess I should mention that another leader finally arrived and handled the game time. So anyway, They got back up, sang a few worship songs while I kept on studying, and ready or not I had to teach. It didn't go too badly but when we broke off into small groups (well smaller than the large group anyway, there were only the two of us after all ;)) a couple of the boys mentioned they thought I was boring. Sigh.

Fortunately the other leader saved my ego and said she thought



the lesson went well :D.

---

## 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.