

Repentance, revival, and a whole lotta fun

RING *RING* *RING*

Yawn, time to get up already? Hey wait- it's not wakeup time! I distinctly remember setting my alarm for 7:25- it's only 6! Thanks junior leader- I know we didn't want a repeat of last year (no alarm went off, late for breakfast...) but this is a tad ridiculous... Guess what readers? He didn't even wake up- right back to sleep after I nudged him and told him his alarm went off. Let me clarify. ***He*** went back to sleep, I just lay there for the next hour... I don't think I'm the only one who didn't get back to sleep after the false alarm, but at least whoever else awakened they kept quiet. So, 7:25 rolled around and most of us got up. There was only one who didn't, and that is always a fun thing. No, no buckets of water. Can't have **that** much fun. ☐ Only one though, so again, not as much fun as it could have been.

Breakfast was great- eggs, bacon, sausage, I think there were pancakes? Starting to forget- good thing this is only two parts. They even had hot sauce out for the eggs- they know me well! Session 2- starting with a few Angry Birds shorts. Wait- Angry Birds is a 'toon now? Have I been under a rock? Anyway, find a bunch of them at [RovioMobile on Youtube](#). Here's one as a sample- they are in hi-def too, so change the quality and go full-screen with it!

Annnnnnd- we lost. I believe I said last time we didn't win any of the minute games, so you already knew this. Oh, well. Moving on, we worshiped and our family pastor gave part two of the lesson. We didn't focus much on the prayer in chapter two so much as what it meant- Jonah repented. Still miraculously alive in the fish, he went to his knees (figuratively I'm sure- not much room in a fish I wouldn't think...) and communed with God. In the end, as you probably know already, the fish (relieved I'm sure) spat him up onto land and so ends the chapter. Small group discussion back in the cabin and then-game time! Plinko (isn't that trademarked by a famous pricing game show?) in the lot- oh wait. The snow caused a change. Instead we played snow soccer. Not much to say here- one ball, then two, three, large balls, giant earth ball... I'll let your mind play this one out. Unfortunately halfway through someone caused the earth ball to deflate, meaning when we switched games with the other two teams they sadly didn't get to use it. We switched to acquire the tire- a steal-the-bacon game where there were inner-tubes (alas, I don't think 10-and-11-year-olds could handle actual tires- something about the weight of them...) ranging in size from small car to tractor, and point values from 50 to 1000. The big tractor tire was of course the 1000-pointer (how many kids would it take to lift a tractor tire? Good thing they were just inner tubes!). All they had to do was drag it over their line, with kids from the other team latched on to the other side of it dragging it in the opposite direction. Easy, right? ☐

Lunch time- the expected chicken nuggets and mac & cheese. This reminds me of a couple years ago when I was sure the mac and cheese was really mac and yellow food coloring, but the last couple years it was definitely pretty good. I still long for BBQ sauce to dip the nuggets in, but ketchup was fine. After lunch was cabin rest- wait, no it wasn't- this wasn't summer camp nor was it Michigan despite the constant references to cabins (classrooms, really), so we were allowed to treat the kids as if they were in a workhouse if we wanted

to. Okay, not really, but there was no cabin rest. Just straight to session 3: revival. Chapter 3 of Jonah started the story again, this time he entered Ninevah and gave them the warning from God. Much to Jonah's dismay Ninevah was repentant and God withheld judgment. Chapter 4 expounds on this more, but that was the 4th session which no one was there for since they had gone home. That's right, there was no fourth session. Revival was a good note to exit on, right? Following a good up-front game, good worship, excellent teaching, and very productive small group time was the next team game involving giant slingshots and fla-vor-ice popsicles. Last year the only goal was to get the popsicles on the roof, but this year they put up a giant target. They could go for the roof as well, but the biggest points were the bullseye and... the pastor. That's right, our pastor came out a couple of times and made himself a target worth double the points of the bullseye. I think the other team grazed him, but no direct hits that I could tell. Maybe the other two teams fared better. Or maybe he walked off a happy pastor. ☐

The other game was inside and improved from last year- an ice-block relay. The kids got to ride a large ice block to the other side of the gym and back. It was improved as they made the blocks thicker this year so they didn't fall apart after extended use. I think a couple teams last year had to switch to scooters toward the end. Extra points were given after awhile if they rode superman-style, on their bellies with arms held out in front like flying through the air. Leaders had a turn as well. Same with the tire game earlier- I forgot to mention it.

After the games we cleaned out our cabins so the younger kids could use them during church later and not have to work around backpacks and sleeping bags, then we had free time. Not so free, just the appearance of free. That is, they were free to play the games within their assigned area. There were six areas. Really, five- they tried to separate the games in one

of the rooms, but we just let them play whatever they wanted instead- they were the games in the room they play every weekend so they already knew what they liked and what they didn't. The gym had the best games- a return of gaga-ball in a less-permanent court than at camp, and they got to play nine-square this time. On the other side was the explosive volleyball-like game of nuke-em. Look up my summer camp recap for explanations of all of these. The final room consisted of crafts, karaoke, and board games. Okay, scratch karaoke- apparently they didn't actually have it though the schedule showed it. Oh, well. The boys were only in there 15 minutes before dinner was called anyway, clever scheduling on the church's part as this is a less interesting thing for boys generally. The girls got a shortened weekend-games room time, but everyone got the full half-hour of gym time.

The end is drawing near. Dinner time with spaghetti, a video, then parents arrived for a short recap, worship time, and closing ceremony with the announcement of the winner- the team we played against all the Saturday games. The original idea (did I mention this already?) was to play against two different teams (Friday night was a four-team game), but the way they did the cabins that would have pitted boy-strong teams against girl-strong teams so we wound up playing the team that was most in line with ours. To clarify, there were three cabins that made up each team unlike summer camp where we had four. Two teams had two boy-cabins and one girl-cabin. Vice-versa for the other two teams. I would like to add that moi noticed the absence of the big song from summer, which became one of my favorites, and made a special request to do it since, after all, this was an extension of summer camp. The worship team practiced Like a Lion during the afternoon and had it ready for this closing worship time. Kudos to the band for that.

With the closing ceremony over, all that was left was to part ways. We moved to the gym and the parents claimed their

~~baggage~~ kids. It was a little sad parting ways after 24 hours of a blastin' good time (yes, there's a reason I used that word...), but part we must. And that includes us- until next time!

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You're still here?? It's over. Go home.

Go..! (Sorry, a certain recent car commercial based on a certain famous movie was on my mind)

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Okay, one last bit. I tend to avoid naming people and places and whatnot, but my church makes these videos public and I only have about two readers (partly my own fault I know) so I will just go ahead and link to the official video online. Now you don't have to imagine much of what I wrote- does the video hold up to your imaginations? ☐ No, you won't get to see me on the ice block, so keep on imagining. ☐ Careful eyes will spot me a couple times though... Sadly, no HD version. ☐

[vimeo]<https://vimeo.com/36104897>[/vimeo]

And hey, nice song they used! Adventurous people may find summer camp videos as well...

Rebellious ducks, or something like that

Continuing the medical theme from summer camp, enter the 2012 4th and 5th grade winter retreat held right at our church. The older kids get to go all the way to the camp in Michigan for two days, but as a cost-saving measure for the parents I

am sure, this crowd gets one night with no travel necessary outside of being brought to church. That suits me just fine and allows more to come who otherwise would not. I know of one family for sure whose junior-higher wasn't going to be able to go to his retreat though his younger brother was at ours.

I arrived Friday night just a smidgen late and check-in was well underway. In fact, most of my cabin was already settled in and watching the opening movie which entertained them while waiting for the official start. I joined my colleagues upstairs and helped settle in the stragglers. Did I mention that Friday was the day of a major snowstorm? After driving on snow-packed roads from Algonquin to Elgin and back home, I and a hundred moms, dads, and other leaders slogged down the roads to make this event, the only one not canceled. But I am sure parents would brave even more to ~~be rid of their young-uns~~ give their brood an opportunity to draw closer to our Lord and Savior. Though there was one cabin that had several boys missing by the time the main event started, mine was complete (at least it was by dinner time when the last trooper arrived). I even had a couple of repeat campers from summer, one of which I hadn't seen since then as he attended the church's school, but not regular church on the weekends- at least the one I serve at. Even my junior leader was the same. Yep, Mad Cow Disease was represented in full. What? Oh, yes. Remember the medical theme I mentioned? Well, all the cabins were named after diseases and cures. Most girls would never go for a cabin labeled SARS or mad cow disease, so they naturally got the cures while the boys proudly represented their diseases.

Once the movie was shut off in the middle (sorry for those who may not have seen it before...) and rules had been gone over, it was time to get into things with a game of course. That game was Duck Hunt.