

Trouble spelled C-U-T-E

Disney, our youngest-for-now, got into some trouble today. She went “missing” for about 10 minutes while I was making lunch, so I started thinking to myself, hmmm, she must have fallen asleep somewhere. So, I went to search for her and found this:



I went to the store and bought some toilet paper today. I had it on the stairs waiting to go up, and apparently she found it and thought it would be fun to play with. It was no big deal, as far as how much trouble toddlers usually get into. And, when I think about it now, the fact that I thought she was sleeping when she was “missing” really says a lot about what kind of baby, err, toddler she is. When my middle child was that age, if she went “missing” and the house was actually quiet, we knew there was going to be REAL trouble – and there always was. Our middle child went through a – how

to put this eloquently – a ‘playing with poop’ phase. She would wake up in her crib, take off her diaper, and paint with the contents of her diaper, all while we thought she was still asleep so there was little we could do to intervene before it happened. We even had to postpone opening Christmas presents one year because we had a huge poopie painted mess to clean up before we could see what Santa brought. Good thing big sis was really patient about that one. Our oldest child, Taylor, was kind of like Disney as a baby – never any real trouble. In fact, she also had a toilet paper incident – see flashback photo below, note the stream of toilet paper behind her:



So anyway, Disney is a very sweet and mild-mannered child. In fact, she really likes to play with my glasses and my Chicago Cubs hat, but she will only ask (yes, that's right, she asks) to play with them when I'm not wearing them. And unrolling toilet paper is her idea of trouble – for now anyway. She is nearing 2, so I am anticipating more trouble from her, but so far, this is it. I just hope kids

don't come in any sort of behavior pattern. Meaning, our first and third have been exceptionally good, our second is a HANDFUL (putting it mildly), so the fourth would be...

I'm not going to jinx us... we're hoping for the best. I don't know if I can handle another poop player!

Kids VS. Daylight Savings

No one likes to lose an hour of sleep. Usually I take it as it comes, however, because I do enjoy the extra hour of daylight. This year is another story. The kids have NOT adjusted well to the time change AT ALL! My oldest, an 8-year-old, comes into our bedroom EVERY morning and whispers, "Dad... Dad... DAD... Is there a delay?" This is partially the school districts fault. For awhile, we were having 2-hour school delays due to weather at least weekly. So now, she can't get used to the fact that the weather is finally nice enough to start school on time. Either that, or the district is sick of the heat of all the missed school and won't delay anymore... But much of it is because of the time change; my daughter just wants there to be a delay so she can go back to sleep for an hour or two.

My 3-year-old is back to staying up later than us. She has always been a toughie to get on a proper sleep schedule, and wouldn't you know it, we had her in an awesome sleeping groove until this darned time change happened. She is back to refusing to go to bed, and she is a crabby zombie in the mornings. The other night, she was sneaking peeks as we tried to watch Poltergeist in the living room – THAT'LL get her right to sleep! That movie scared me awake for years – that clown part is STILL scary!

The baby – actually, she is now an almost 17-month-old toddler – is the most affected. She cannot fall asleep before 10 at night, and she actually sleeps in a little bit in the mornings, kind of. She'll wake up at 5 or 6, then fall back asleep when Dad lays on the floor with her – poor Dad! Have you noticed a trend? They go to Dad when it comes to sleep issues – they KNOW better than to mess around with me – I get kinda grumpy when I don't sleep well. Unfortunately, the pregnancy has made me a light sleeper so I get woken up anyway.

Something tells me we'll get it all worked out, but then we will just have to change the clocks back an hour the very weekend the kids finally adjust, starting all over again!

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...

The Mayor and the Macarena



We went roller skating tonight for the first time in... well, ever, for most of us. My husband and I have never been roller

skating together, and we go back 11 years, so needless to say, none of the kids have tried it before tonight. The kids had a great time, and I was surprised to see how well our 3-year-old picked it up! It doesn't surprise me too much though – she's always been the “physical” one. Our 8-year-old is more creative and into arts and crafts than physical stuff, but she did well too... I was surprised that when she kept falling, she didn't get frustrated or upset or cry (for the first hour anyway) because she is a perfectionist with a VERY low pain tolerance. Sure enough, by the end of the night, Taylor (the 8-year-old) was “hurt” and crying. It was still lots of fun though. And, living in an area with a small population is where the title The Mayor and the Macarena comes in – The mayor is the owner of the skating rink, and was spinning the tunes tonight. When he played Macarena, hilarity ensued – I think he has the skating rink so he has a place to blast his '80's and 90's music.



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.

ANOTHER forward?

I hope you're not getting the wrong opinion of me – I'm really not a big fan of email forwards... it's just that I get so many. I don't religiously forward every one to everybody I know. And I am certainly not superstitious and don't believe that I will get bad luck for not forwarding emails. But occasionally, I will follow the directions on a forward, or sometimes I even pass it on to my friends and family because I find something cute, fun, or just a little bit entertaining. One popular forward is the "4 Things About You" forward. I've recently received this one for the umpteenth time (wish I had

been keeping track), but I don't mind since filling out questionnaires about yourself tends to be fun, I don't know why... maybe to get a chance to think about your favorite things and put them in a list? Anyway, I've decided to post my answers here:

A) Four jobs I have had in my life:

Mommy

business owner

receptionist

office manager

B) Four movies I would watch over and over: (I'm just gonna put my favorites even though I wouldn't watch them over and over – Forrest Gump is just too sad, but it's still my favorite even though I haven't seen it in years)

Wizard Of Oz

As Good as it Gets

Forrest Gump

Nanny McPhee

C) Four places I have lived:

Warrenville, IL

Lincoln, NE

Pioneer, OH

Wheaton, IL

D) Four TV shows I watch:

The Office – writer's strike is OVER – can't wait for new episodes!!!

Lost

Dr. Phil

Friends / Everybody Loves Raymond reruns

E) Four places I have been:

Orlando, FL

Washington, DC

Idaho

California

F) Four people who e-mail me (regularly):

Sue

Vickie

My mom

Elizabeth

G) Four of my favorite foods:

gyros off the spit

saganaki

spaghetti

cheese

H) Four places I would like to be right now:

home

somewhere warm

at a zoo

at an animal park

I) Four friends I think will respond:

Elizabeth

Jamy

Vickie

MB

J) Four things I am looking forward to this year:

The birth of our 4th daughter

having 4 kids

warm weather

the Cubs season

Snow Day!

Yet another snow day is upon us... that makes #6 for us this year, and it's now officially time to start making them up in the summer. Which I guess is good news for me, because the kids now have at least 1 extra day to attend school in the summer, near the time when the baby is due and I wouldn't know how I'm going to handle all 3 of them alone anyway! But for today, we are stuck here, buried under about 6 inches of snow which is still falling. My gem of a husband had already shoveled twice – it's our "date night", and he says he wants

nothing to stop the car from taking the kids to the babysitters later. But I feel badly for him cuz it just keeps snowing and burying our sidewalks yet again. And speaking of being buried, our garbage is no where to be seen – oops! Once a month where I live, we have big garbage day, when you can put all your garbage out for free, no special bags or stickers needed. So today was ours, and even though none of the neighbors had theirs out, we put ours out, like idiots... my idea. So now it's buried, and I don't know how they're going to pick it up. Don't think the neighbors would be too happy if we leave it there until next month!

So the kids are already fighting, and Dr. Phil isn't even over. I still have to make lunch, get my load of laundry in, finish this post, and make sure the kids pick up the mess they made all morning. If I get all that done and I can bundle the kids before it gets too cold and windy outside like they are forecasting, we might go sledding. I'm not a big fan of the snow days; it throws our whole schedule off, but at least they'll be going one more day in the summer – disappointing for them = freedom for me!

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.

Finally, a Walking Baby!

She finally did it! Tonight was Disney's first serious attempt at walking! Well, she has tried before, but tonight she was doing it over and over, 5 steps or more at a time! I tried to get it on video, but as soon as I took out the camera, she got all distracted and started crawling toward the camera saying "cheese, cheese" – it was really cute, but I had to put the camera away and get back to walking! It's like she knew the deadline was nearing, because we have a Dr. appointment on Monday just because the Dr. wants to make sure

she's walking – she was really surprised she wasn't walking at her 15 month appointment so she asked to see her again in a month to make sure... Now she has until Monday to practice, and her sisters are a big help with that! Since tomorrow is her 16 month birthday, I was wondering, how late is she? Beyond average, I know, but I'm curious about how late kids start walking... let me know if you know of any lazy late walkers – it's kind of like a poll, let's see the latest we can find, hope it's not Disney though ☐