

Getting Old... Er, Growing Up

Wednesday November 9 is the 2011 Country Music Awards – an event once so important to me that I would put my schedule on hold so I could enjoy watching this annual awards show on tv. For a few years now, I have committed my Wednesday nights to leading a small group for church's student ministries. The past 2 years, one of my kids happened to be sick on the same Wednesday nights as the awards show, so I volunteered to be the parent to stay home with the sick kid and I didn't have to miss the show nor play hooky from youth group – I had a legitimate reason for calling in sick. This year, there is again a virus circulating through our family, and I think I have a mild case... but things have changed. Even if one of my kids was ill tonight, I would be the one to go to youth group and let Hubby stay home with the sick kid(s). Luckily, I think we'll both be able to make it to youth group tonight, and I am so excited! The new series we started last week is about demons, and it gave me a great connecting point with my girls – we had a great group time last week! Now that I'm back from maternity leave and free from the distractions of pregnancy, I am stoked to build relationships with my youth group girls and help them build their spiritual relationships with Jesus Christ. I am so excited about youth group tonight that the country awards show hardly matters to me – I might try to set up a recording device so I can watch it later, but watching it live doesn't matter to me at all when once it was dire for my entertainment.

Maybe I'm getting old... no, I think I'm growing up! It's so cool to me that God is teaching me about prioritizing and also about using my free time and leading me toward hobbies that glorify Him. How amazing is it that I can be entertained, relaxed, refreshed, and feel fulfilled, not by doing something that only **I** enjoy but by doing something that affects others in a positive way as well?

Mars, Venus, Whatever You Call It

It seems like men and women can be from different planets at times. During a series at youth group called “Lovesick”, we were shown the following videos, and they illustrate the differences between the opposite sexes hilariously – Enjoy!

[cartoonconversation-outtoeat.mp4](#)

[cartoonconversation-pant.mp4](#)

CMA Time Already!!

It's that time of year again! Dust off your cowboy hat, put it on, and get ready for a rootin' tootin' time watching the 44th annual Country Music Association Awards!!



I'm going to try something different this year – I'm not going to watch it.

Not that I don't want to, because I really do, especially when

I [go to the website](#) and see all the stuff about live streaming comments and things like that. It wasn't too many years ago when I made my own blog of live streaming comments, and I had fun doing it. But I won't be able to watch the CMAs this year because I have something much more important to do: I lead a small group of 6th grade girls at our church's youth group on Wednesday nights. I'm not about to put a tv show above those girls, and I certainly wouldn't be prepared to tell them the reason for my absence was because of the CMA awards – that would not be acceptable. If one of my own kids was sick and I stayed home for that reason (as it happened last year on CMA night), that would be a different story, but it's a great thing that everyone is healthy enough for me to have to miss one of my two most favorite tv events of the year (not including a year the Chicago Cubs would make it into MLB playoffs, but that hasn't been anything I need to concern myself with in quite some time, Grrrr – my other favorite tv event is the other big country music awards show, the ACMs in the spring).

If you watch the CMA awards, HAVE FUN!! I'm hoping that whatever recording device my husband has in mind to record these will work – we often have bad luck with recording devices. Part of me will miss being a part of the event, reading the live commentary and providing my own, and part of me was ready to move on anyway – seems I've become increasingly disconnected with today's country music scene (now I just sound old). I'll still give my picks, but they are guesses at best because I really haven't been following the genre lately. I didn't even know until I looked last night to find out what time the awards came on that Gwyneth Paltrow, the movie star, has a hit song on country radio right now. I'm actually more into Christian music than ever before; there is some pretty good stuff out there. And listening to Christian music gives me a chance to practice my dances I have on Sunday mornings with the 1st graders ☐ But all of that leaves less time to listen and keep up with country music.

But what the hey, I've had fun trying to pick the winners every year so here goes. My picks are in green with random thoughts in italics:

♦♦Entertainer of the Year – Brad Paisley, Lady Antebellum, Keith Urban, Miranda Lambert, Zac Brown Band (*What?!? No Kenny Chesney?? That's great news for those of us who aren't big fans... now, who to choose to take his place?*)

Female Vocalist – Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Reba McEntire, Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood (*So great to see 2 of my favorites (Martina and Reba) back in the game! I don't think Martina will win, but I SO WANTED to choose her!! Carrie Underwood is great too – I'm not a big fan of Taylor Swift, but unfortunately, I think she will win this one*)

♦♦Male Vocalist – Dierks Bentley, Brad Paisley, Blake Shelton, George Strait, Keith Urban

New Artist – Luke Bryan, Easton Corbin, Jerrod Nieman, Chris Young, Zac Brown Band (*Explain to me how Zac Brown Band is still considered "new"? They have some great music and have proven themselves, as I would think being a nominee for Entertainer of the Year would prove!*)

Vocal Group – Lady Antebellum, Little Big Town, Rascal Flatts, The Band Perry, Zac Brown Band (*Let's be honest, I think Lady Antebellum will take it. But I just love the music of Rascal Flatts, and can't bear to vote against them. I'm not trying to get 2 votes in – officially, my pick is Rascal Flatts*)

Vocal Duo – Brooks and Dunn, Joey + Rory, Montgomery Gentry, Steel Magnolia, Sugarland (*The last year for Brooks and Dunn, and I don't think they'll pull a GARTH Brooks and pull out of retirement, so this powerful duo gets my vote – they are so talented, so they deserve it anyway. I was lucky enough to see them in concert 3 times, and they did not disappoint once!*)

♦♦Single – A Little More Country Than That by Easton Corbin, Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins, Need You Now by Lady Antebellum, The House That Built Me by Miranda Lambert, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

♦♦Song – A Little More Country Than That, Need You Now, The House That Built Me, Toes, White Liar

♦♦Musical Event – Bad Angel by Dierks Bentley feat. Miranda Lambert & Jamey Johnson, Can't You See by Zac Brown Band feat. Kid Rock, Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton feat. Trace Adkins, I'm Alive by Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews, Till The End by Alan Jackson with Lee Ann Womack

Music Video – Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton feat. Trace Adkins, Need You Now Lady Antebellum, The House That Built Me by Miranda Lambert, Water by Brad Paisley, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

Musician – Paul Franklin – Steel Guitar, Dann Huff – Guitar, Brent Mason – Guitar, Mac McAnally – Guitar, Randy Scruggs – Guitar

Hmm, 5 correct of the 11 I guessed... not too great. Oh well, it was a good show and fun to watch!

Class of 2015

We are winding down our first year of teaching youth group, and it's been an interesting experience, to say the least. Last week, my "small group" consisted of 17 girls, and it was totally crazy. We couldn't get much accomplished, but luckily they weeded themselves out – those who didn't want to participate (their choice) went to play in the gym, leaving

quiet for those who did want to participate. It's not like that every week though; last week for some reason the other two 7th-grade-girls teachers were missing, so I had to have ALL the 7th grade girls PLUS my 5th graders. Yeah, you read that right – I have 7th graders AND fifth graders, and it's been a challenge to bridge the gap between the two ages groups. It happened innocently enough – a new 7th grader brought her 5th grade sister. At our church, our student ministries typically don't usually start until 6th grade, but we didn't want to turn her away either. She liked youth group and started bringing friends, all of which are great things, but next thing I knew, I was getting a call from the office manager who handles attendance and things like that, wondering why I had all these 5th graders in my group. I explained to her what had happened, and she acted like she felt sorry for me rather than being upset – I was a bit anxious to know why I was getting called by my "boss". But no problem – the more the merrier! I just wonder what will happen next year – I cannot move up to 8th grade and 6th grade at the same time! I would think the now-5th graders would get a new group with other 6th graders, and I would stay with the 2015 group as the 7th graders are called for their graduation year. We'll see.

But anyway, it's been a fun year, and I've learned A LOT. Tonight is the final youth group of the year, and we're having a pizza party, plus another party in regular small group time. That will be interesting – I have a feeling that my girls will forget the snacks they pledged to bring as they've done in the past, so they'll probably just run around crazy doing gymnastics, cheerleading moves and whatnot as usual. Except tonight I don't have to interrupt them since we are supposed to be having a end of the year party! And, I'm bravely bringing my two youngest kids – my youth group girls have always wanted to meet my little ones, so I figured tonight is a good opportunity. I just hope I'm not going to overwhelm myself, but there's only one way to find out...

But anyway, a fun year that makes me look forward to the next one, despite the time commitment involved. Here is a typical schedule, in case you're wondering – especially since a friend suggested oh-so-nicely: “You should make more posts about your youth group.” ☐

6:30 – students have arrived and assemble in the Linc – a sort of clubhouse-type room. We watch a short video or two that's related to the message, usually 2-3 minute clips from movies. We'll play 2 audience participation games, and these are always really fun to watch. One had 2 teams of 2 kids each wearing pantyhose on their heads. They put bananas in the feet of the pantyhose, and their goal was to swing their pantyhose around until their pantyhose was wrapped around their partners – hilarious to watch. Another game involved speed-eating of baby food and another one had pies-in-the-face. Of course my girls were chosen for that one, and after they were late to small group after having to wash the pie off their face and out of their hair, that one wound them up all night!

Around 7pm, the worship band (not the same one we have on Sunday mornings) begins their set, and the leaders leave for a leaders' group prayer in another room. After this, the kids and leaders move to the Wherehouse, a room with a small stage where they'll sometimes watch another very short video and hear the youth pastor's talk for the week for about 40 minutes. We get to small group around 7:40 and have until 8:18 if we need it to talk amongst our small group. We leaders get a paper with discussion questions on it, but we are allowed much freedom with this – we adjust the questions as they apply to the conversation we have.

I love all my girls, but of course some are better behaved than others. And some are much more interested in developing spiritually and bettering their relationship with God than others. The 7th graders are much more mature about this than the 5th graders – they just don't get it yet. Probably why

our student ministries start at 6th grade, but they're worth a try! I wish that all my girls are on the same page, but they're not. There is one girl in particular who causes a lot of drama amongst the other girls (they're all friends in the same social group), so if there is drama going on that day or that week, it's difficult to get anything done. I now understand the process a little better from when I was a new leader – the other leaders “cherry-picked” their students and left me with the clique. Not that they're bad girls at all or anything like that, but I can see where it would be so much more fun if I had a group of girls who were all there for the sole purpose of improving their relationships with Christ.

Well, that's it in a nutshell. I'm really hoping to have more leaders next year so that our groups aren't so large, but it's been difficult to find leaders that have the 3+ hours per week this volunteer job requires. It's a shame, but then again, for a job like this, you only want people who really want to be there – the kids can sniff out reluctant and moody adults like bloodhounds!

The Fun Kind Of Chaos

Last night's youth group was... interesting, to say the least. It was the last session before a 2-week holiday break, and the kids were as hyper as they could be! We had decided to throw the kids in my husband's group and my group a pizza party, but last week, my husband had another teacher's group as well, so two 6th grade boys groups and one 7th grade girls group were invited. The kids ran in, ate pizza and drank pop (got all sugared up), and kept running around the room. Finally, we got them to sit down for a kid-friendly version of the party game Mafia (I've linked to it enough, if you want more info,

you'll have to do some searching thru my blogs or just google it). Well, that presented a problem we hadn't foreseen: once the players were eliminated from the game, what were they supposed to do with themselves? When adults play the game, players get "killed" in the game and then are trusted to sit there quietly, observe and gather strategy for future games. Not the case with a bunch of preteens. The boys were trying extra hard to impress the girls, and they were falling all over each other like a bunch of buffoons. One kid even decided to record the Mafia action with his cell phone while he was closing his eyes – cheating, but you've got to recognize his resourcefulness. The girls weren't running around, but they were busy texting with their cell phones and shooting the immature boys dirty looks. It wasn't quite what we had in mind, but it was fun nonetheless and a great way to end our first session as youth group leaders!

The Popular Social Networking Site Called "Book Face"

It's time for me to officially make my presence known on Facebook. If you watch the awesome NBC comedy "The Office", then you'll understand the reference in the title of this blog post involving a creative Halloween costume worn by Jim Halpert, a character on my favorite show – it was hilarious!

But back to me learning Facebook... some time ago I signed up for a Facebook account (don't even remember why), but then I stopped using it because it started doing freaky things behind my back – like randomly adding mere acquaintances and business associates as my Facebook friends. That was NOT the way I had envisioned social networking! But my youth group kids have

been BEGGING me to join Facebook, and since I took pictures of them last week, we decided that my homework challenge is to get on Facebook so I can post our pictures. So here I go, and the first thing I'll be doing is looking for a way to NOT invite everyone on my email contact list to be my Facebook friend!