

Resurrection Day is coming!

I say Resurrection Day because the word Easter is used in reference to the spring celebration with eggs and easter bunnies. Resurrection Day rather refers to the holiday we Christians celebrate at the same time, the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He was murdered on a cross by a reluctant Pilate at the insistence of the Jewish leaders who were blinded and could not see that He really was the Messiah they were waiting for as He came in humility rather than in power, to teach rather than to conquer. There *will* come a day of course when He does finally come to destroy the ones who reject him and build a new Heaven and Earth for Him and His people, but for now we wait and celebrate what He has done so far in offering a way out of the darkness we call sin. That He was resurrected shows all that He has victory even over death, what many think of as the final conclusion to ourselves.

First of course we must remember His death- His unfair trial, His suffering, and his being nailed to a cross in the most brutal form of execution know in those days. Good Friday, as it is known except by school districts that now refer to it as a "non-attendance" day, is the day we remember this horrible death. I of course have the bonus of it being a day-without-pay so I can really feel the suffering. ☐ Kidding of course, but it is a serious day. Our church is actually doing something a little bit different this year. We are still called to attend wearing black, but instead of a drama (I was in it 7 out of the last 8 years!) and a message it is apparently an open-ended service where we can come at any time within a 5-hour window. More on this after Friday as I really don't know anything more about it.

We are preparing for Easter with the choir and it is coming along nicely. Of course tonight we will probably have a train wreck as we're told to sing from memory- no sheet music for us

when we're up there! Of course the train wreck will be followed by further improvements as we improve in our confidence of the music and, just as important, will actually be looking at the choir director instead of the music! ☐ And once it's over, a week of (unpaid) rest follows...

I know you...

A date with the familiar happens all the time, déjà vu and all that. I think we can all think of more than a few times that has happened. Today I was in 6th grade science, a field which has sort of been a goal of mine for teaching. As part of the lesson plan, another teacher would come in for two of the classes and pretty much take over. This being a good thing of course as I don't have much experience with the applications they were using on a computer project (iMovie, iPhoto, Photo Booth), nor did I even know anything about the project. Anyway, I looked at her name and thought to myself, "isn't she...?" When it came time for the first of the two periods we got to talking and sure enough, she was the sub-caller for another district I once worked in. Apparently she got downsized last year when the district went to a computer system (*hmm. looks like I can sign up in that district again if I have to keep working as a sub...*) and so she got a job in the district I was in today.

But this wouldn't make for a good blog entry if she was the only one. During one of the classes I was handing out new textbooks and I came across a familiar last name, so I asked the student if his dad worked at another school I sub in. Yep. I told him I subbed for his dad a couple of times. Well, then a *third* coincidence happened. Well, possible coincidence. I was afraid to ask this time and push the

odds. She had the last name of someone I went to school with when *I* was in 6th grade. Now this has happened to me before, one at a time anyway, in other schools- which is only natural given the fact that I grew up in this same area. I have met my share students whose moms or dads I went to school with or whose parent I've seen elsewhere, like a professor at a local college.

Slightly related to this I just remembered I had one student with the last name of Fogerty one time. I joked about her being related to [John Fogerty](#), of [Creedence Clearwater Revival](#) fame if you don't know him, and she said he was her uncle. She was serious too; either that or a good actress. Anyway, I wonder who I will meet tomorrow?

What's in a name?

I had accepted a grade 1/2 assignment for today due to the trouble I had earlier in the week getting jobs. It's slightly below my comfort zone because of the 1st grade students. However, had I not taken it I wouldn't have this to write about! Well, it's not much of a topic, but it is a little different. Not much really goes into naming kids these days in Western culture. We choose a name usually because we had a relative with that name, there was a role model with that name (such as in the Bible) or we just like the sound of it. Once upon a time, and still in some cultures names carry meaning. But that's not what this post is about. It's also not about people who try to change names for [special recognition](#).

What it's about is why some parents choose to give their kids names that, well, just don't fit... I once read a story about new guardians who would go to court to get kids' names changed

because their parents cursed them with ridiculous names, like the drug-shot parents who named their daughter Cocaina (guess which was their drug of choice?) or the parents who [tried to name their child Friday](#). The name itself may not be ridiculous, but rather given to the wrong gender. I mean, do such parents regret having the “wrong sex” and give them the name they picked out anyway- like the parents who really wanted a boy so when they had a girl they dressed her up like a boy until she was to start school (and were mystified when she refused to put on a dress for her first day of school)? Of course there are some names that go both ways, at least the shortened version like Chris, Alex, Terry, etc. And I am still getting used to **Leslie** and **Cameron** being both male and female names. However, some just don't work. Can you imagine a girl named Matt or Mike? Or a boy named Elizabeth or Jessica? Well, you may have to have some Hispanic blood to understand this one, but a boy in the class I was in today was named [Guadalupe](#). That's right. Named after Mary in the Bible as **Our Lady of Guadalupe** (well, an [apparition of Mary](#), but I won't split hairs). Apparently a very popular name for girls (click the name for more information). Why?? This is just setting up this boy for future problems with schoolmates. I predict that by the time he is in Junior High he will be going by his middle name, whatever it is, assuming that it too isn't a girl's name. I really hope it isn't for his sake.

Not enough links for you in the above post? Try out [these unusual names on Wikipedia](#). I had forgotten that Nicholas Cage had named his son Kal-El (you know, Superman)!

How to get caught at robbery

Okay, not school- or church- related, but if you really want a connection this was done by two young adolescents. What is the number one way to get caught and arrested for attempted robbery? [Just hold up a police station. Unarmed.](#) Words cannot *begin* to describe the actions of these two, so just click the link and read on.

In any event, at least they *were* unarmed. If they actually had weapons it could have ended up far worse for them.

Wake up sleeping student and get sued?

Apparently parents of a high school student are considering just that after a teacher woke up a student by slapping her hand on the student's desk. According to their claim he suffered hearing loss as his ear was on the desk at the time and the sudden sound ruptured his eardrum. If this is true, then I fully understand the parents' concern, but something doesn't seem quite right here. From the article:

Barry said the boy's ear hurt instantly after Nadeau hit his desk.

"He woke up and immediately felt pain in his ear," Barry said. "I think he was so taken aback that he didn't say anything at the time."

The next day, Vinicios' parents took him to the hospital after he complained of hearing loss and they discovered a

bloody fluid on his pillow.

If his eardrum burst as they say, wouldn't he have been in so much pain he would have said *something*? Screamed out in pain? Immediately gone to the nurse? I just don't know...

[Sleepy Student Claims Teacher's Wake-Up Slam Caused Hearing Loss](#)

Drop the candy and put your hands up!

Okay, it wasn't an arrest but apparently an 8th grade student got in trouble for buying a bag of *Skittles* of all things. Not pot, not meth, but Skittles. This boy was suspended, stripped of his title as class vice-president, and uninvited from an honors dinner as a result of this episode. What next, expulsion for running in the hall? I realize this school has a rule banning candy sales (according to the article), but this is just going overboard. Read for yourselves:

[Connecticut 8th-grader suspended for buying Skittles in school](#)

Expert or one-time-struggler

as a teacher?

I have often reflected on teaching a particular subject I was good at in school- math. Face it, either you're good at math or you're not- it's just one of those subjects. If you get it then you're well on your way to high grades, but if you don't...

As a great student in math I have struggled to teach it sometimes. It's like, "Why don't you get it? I just showed you how to do it!" Even now, with all this sub experience, I often either go too fast and leave some students struggling or I take too long to teach it as if I'm afraid of going too fast. It's difficult to find the right balance. Okay, to be fair as a sub I don't know the students, so getting the right balance is just not possible, but it doesn't stop me from wondering. Today I subbed in 6th grade, but this kind of goes back to last week too when I was in that 3rd/4th grade class for a few days and only taught math. Then, the teacher wanted one section taught per day if at all possible. Four days, didn't quite finish two sections. Well, three days really since there was no math on the last day.

Today was a little different- she assigned five journal pages out of **two sections!** Well, I guess she didn't really want me to teach it. I wound up just going over a few examples on the board from each section and letting them work, asking questions or work with a partner as needed. I think in this case working with a partner was almost mandatory since I didn't have time to teach full lessons. Did she want it done this way? I'll never know.

This makes me think of a proof that I am slow at teaching math: the University of Chicago math program. This seems to be used *everywhere*. Well, at least in elementary schools. This is a very structured program meant to be taught in about one hour. This includes a game included in most lessons, but I rarely have time for when I teach the program for some

reason. It starts off with a “math message,” which is a math problem that will lead into the lesson. This is followed by a full-group lesson that often involves some sort of manipulative which aids kinesthetic learners (touch), which believe it or not is most people. True, many can learn by seeing or even by hearing, but touch really makes a difference in many people. A Chinese sage once said after all:

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

In any event, following the full-group lesson there are small group, partner, and/or individual activities (one of which is the aforementioned game). I think I need a full 90 minutes to get through all of it sometimes!

Nothing today

I was home for most of the day (AM only job) but even so I don't have anything to write right now. Sorry. Until tomorrow then.

Half days

These are the bane of my substitute existence, next to holidays. No, I don't mean the days students get off early but rather days where the teacher take off only half a day. It seems I may have three of these this week unless I can find

a full day to take their place (I can cancel jobs in two districts via the web) or find a half day job for the other half of the day. The latter almost never happens. As for the first, it can happen but on this side of spring break with the testing going on it is very uncertain. Yet I keep trying.

One of the half days was today, for the afternoon. At least I got to sleep in, but I depend on this income so I really need to work as much as I can. It was for industrial tech, what used to be called "industrial arts" when I was a kid, and "shop" even earlier than that. Naturally with a sub the kids can't do shop, but many times they are allowed to use computers. See, that is the "tech" part, technology. They could be running some sort of modeling or simulation program, or programming a robotic arm. Today one class was working on ifilm projects. All stuff that didn't exist back in the eighties. We had metals, plastics, and wood. That's it. Now these teachers need to be trained on so much more to do this job. As for the other class (only two today! :)) they clearly were working on a project, probably woodwork, so they got to do some paperwork today. Oh well.

Just call in sick...

Well, that is just what half the class did today. Literally. The flu is just knocking everybody down for the count. Okay, the class size was only six students being a special education class so half the class was only three students, but that is still very high statistically speaking. Plus, the teacher I was in for was out due to the flu as well. When all was said and done, there were practically two adults per students, and apparently from what I was told the three that were out were the most *ahem* *challenging* students. Apparently it wasn't

just this class either. In the afternoon they combined our three students with another class's two students for speech, still less than the full six students of the **one** class! Wow.

As one can imagine this turned out to be a very easy day. So easy that a couple of the assistants just decided to disinfect the room in hopes of avoiding more illness. As for me, I helped a little bit with calendar time and yoga (very low-ability students due to their disabilities) and colored. Yes- I colored some pieces of a game that would be cut out, laminated, and added to the file-folder game collection. I'll tell you, there are days where they just don't pay me enough, but today wasn't one of them.