

Counting down

It is June already and it looks like warm weather is finally here to stay. Two weeks ago we somberly said goodbye to the 5th graders, sending them off in a prayer as we laid hands on them. They finished not only the 4th/5th grade ministry, but moved out of children's ministry altogether to student ministries where they will spend the next seven years. This weekend, the third grade room remained dark, as it will for the next two months or so as we welcomed them as the new fourth grade. At our church 3rd grade and up get bumped in June for camp reasons, but the younger kids have to wait until August. I guess it is a little strange, the first weekend or so in June, to be called a fourth-grader (for example) when many have not yet finished third grade at school.

We also kicked off our summer series, Transformers. Yes, we are borrowing off of a popular movie theme (yes it was a cartoon first, but seeing as how many of their *parents* weren't even grown up at the time, let alone their own existence...). However, the name is where similarities begin and end. Unfortunately our worship band moved up with the old 5th-grade or out (the college-bound ones) so we are working on replacing them. Hmm. Actually, it was the Saturday night band that is gone, but we still did the song videos instead of the normal worship at 11:15 even though those band members were still present- I wonder why?

Saturday night I think we need guy leaders now in a big way. I was the only one there, along with two gal leaders. I know one will be coming back in a few weeks, but we could use more. My "small" group was twenty-some boys- ideally, groups should be about six or so. So anyway, the lesson was one on being rooted in Christ, and not comparing ourselves to one another. As Paul wrote to the Phillipians, he had much call to call himself better than others as he was a "Hebrew of Hebrews," a Pharisee, and zealous for his religion. Instead,

he counted it as loss, rubbish compared with his identity in Christ. As His, we are equal no matter our station, our jobs, our finances, etc.

Moving on, did I mention camp? Oh, yes I did. Less than two weeks, and I am making trip #7 out there with an all new group! There is much to be excited about, but one thing tops all others. Every year we get something new. In the past additions have included a lodge building, a zipline, pontoon boats, and a waterslide (thankfully I started there the year *after* they got permanent showers...). Well, this year apparently we got something a bit different. Raise your hand if you ever wanted to be a hamster after watching them roll around in their hamster balls. That's right, our new addition to camp is in the form of two giant inflatable ~~hamster~~, err-*people* balls called Zorbs. Here is a random video found on youtube:

and from the inside:

Now *that* looks exciting. I hope they don't roll it down too steep of a hill though. Imagine what would happen if one got sick in one of those... Or, best not to imagine.

Anyway, a new year at church, a new post. I hope you enjoyed it. ☐

I really will try to post at least once more before Camp 2011. I mean it. That I will try, that is. ☐

“New” Kids on the Block?

Does everyone remember this boy band from the 80's? I remember them well because being a young preteen girl at the height of their popularity meant that their marketing was pointed directly my way. I went to 3 of their concerts, had my bedroom wallpapered in New Kids posters, and had everything from tapes (for younger readers – that's what we played music on in those days), buttons, t-shirts, books, magazines, and stickers to trading cards, shoelaces, and even a Joey McIntire doll. Yes, it was ridiculous and more than a little embarrassing. But girls will be girls, and the group had a clean-cut, boy band image, so my parents willingly obliged my fanfare.

You may have heard that the band has reunited. Yes, I'm serious, and yes, I'm talking about now, in 2008, when the members of the group are over the age of 30 and some are pushing 40. Why now, you ask? Probably because pop culture has a way of recycling itself. They often resurrect fads decades later when people who were kids at the time of the fad can now enjoy them again as adults (now that they have their own money to spend) and share them with their own kids. They did this with a number of fads from the '80's – My Little

Pony, Cabbage Patch Kids, Strawberry Shortcake, Transformers, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and now, The New Kids on the Block. What perplexes me most of all about this whole thing, is that they didn't change the group at all. They are out there, singing the same songs they sang as teens and early twenty somethings, about dating girls and "Hangin' Tough". They are attempting to perform the same dance moves they made popular decades ago, and results are not pretty. I was one of the biggest fans of the group way back when, and now I say they're terrible. I don't like the music anymore (it was of a genre they used to call bubblegum pop – and it's definitely the type of music you grow out of), they sound terrible singing it, the lyrics are ridiculous, if not downright creepy, coming from near-middle-aged men, and the dance moves are horrible. They are actually going to tour this (circus) act come fall.

So why now? Why do we need an updated version of New Kids on the Block? Actually that's not even right. There's nothing updated about this group except their ages. Everything else is EXACTLY the same! An updated version would be better musically and probably make a whole lot more sense. There's what I talked about earlier – the fad revival tactic. I guess that's why they did it. But I find it amazing that they found enough people who thought this was such a good idea that they made it happen – including the 5 original members of the group. Some have gone on to mildly successful movie or solo music careers. Some have raised families. But how someone got all 5 to agree to resurrect the New Kids on the Block circa 1991 is astounding.

If you don't believe me about how terrible they are or if you just like to watch train wrecks in action, check this out. Help me figure out who looks more ridiculous – the group or the fans. This video is part one of three, but you'll only want to see the first part, if that, trust me: