

Pecha Kucha

Delivered at “The Conversation UK”

February 2017

From the Japanese, meaning “the sound of conversation” or just “chatter”. I delivered the words that follow (more or less) alongside the slides you can find in a Youtube Video [here].

Essentially, 20 seconds for each of the 20 slides. The shortest, toughest talk I have ever done! My theme was “family rhythm”. I considered those Kairos moments I have had with my family, especially my two daughters and created the images that accompany the 10 lead words . . . The order of the slides proceeds as “word”, “image” and so on . . . The pattern follows a fictitious day from first waking to children in bed.

#1. Murmur (the word murmur)

“Family Life” - Not so much a sense of rhythm, as a constant stream of kairos moments. Our children LIVE in the now of the moment. Are we willing to enter and inhabit the now of this moment? The day begins with a murmur - a soft sound of waking, a stirring - quiet like the still small voice. Hovering in the background, but now present.

#2. Light (the image of a lamp)

And then their bedroom lights go on! Our door bursts open followed, usually, by dramatic flops on our bed, or excited thoughts for the day - or, a hastily enacted play or a panicked remembering about forgotten homework.

#3. Play (the word play)

Our kids play from the moment they are up. Their play is punctuated by activities WE require of them. Getting dressed, going to school, eating . . . OUR lives are often dictated by the demands of responsibility. We, as adults, construct play as an activity - often to “do” something with our children. What if our life WAS play?

#4. Music (the image of notes and a piano)

Singing and music does not mean polite renditions at the family piano. It means full on and loud choreographed dance routines. These are not cute action songs - hours are spent rehearsing, tickets are created and sold for space on the sofa in the lounge. Music flows through our children, they don't need a manufactured play list or headphones to hear it.

#5. Chaos (the word chaos)

An outworking of constant play - because what is happening now is “it” - is constant chaos. As adults we seek to limit or eliminate chaos for the sake of order and a plan (we MUST have a plan!) What would our world be like - just for a day - if we embraced the chaos? What if we did not think of the next thing to be done?

#6. Bag (the image of school bag)

We have daily routines that need reinforcing every day. EVERY day. “How many times have I told you?” Repetition is essential to make stuff happen. Packing the bag for TODAY has never happened before. Now is all there is with a new day, new everything . . . including packing this bag that was packed yesterday! Do we expect children to just “Know” because we have already told them about the bag, their shoes, their blazer, to fetch their bobbles for hair to be tied, they are loved by God . . .

#7. Wonder (the word wonder)

“Godly Play” isn’t a structured activity with a script. It happens all the time, everyday in the imagination of our children. From deep thinking to “out loud just occurred to me” thoughts. Are we paying attention? Could we wonder along? What might we discover that we aren’t looking for and didn’t know we needed?

#8. Looking (the image of two children looking out to sea)

Asking, seeking and knocking are about going to places that are new. We ask - because we do not know; we seek - because we have not found; we knock - because what is closed to us now might open up!

#9. Joy (the word joy)

There is an unencumbered delight in my children at times. They know joy! CH Spurgeon said, “The joy of the Lord is strength of His people.” The joy of our children is the strength of our family. Could the joy of our children be the strength of the church?

#10. Hands (the image of my daughters holding hands)

When we ask our children what they enjoy the most or look forward to on holidays it is “being together”. Together in the family means choosing to be more connected to our kids than our devices. Our children don’t want stuff, things and great grand gestures - they want us.

#11. Create (the word create)

Do we MAKE memories? Do we create space for something to happen? In or families and those we work with who does the making? Do we have an “off the shelf here is one I made earlier” spiritual life? OR - do we aim for a bespoke, made to measure, “fit for

you” spiritual life? John Westerhoff says, “Disciples are made not born.” Jesus said, “go and MAKE disciples.” What are we making, what are we creating?

#12. Adventure (the image of a pair of shoes)

We go on adventures. Our kids like to go on walks that none of us have done. They just say, “stop the car”. We get out and walk, we get out and explore, we get out and discover new things. Do you get out much?

#13. Feast (the word feast)

Extravagance and choice! We LOVE a feast. Food is not just fuel. What our kids really love is to taste . . . buffet style - a little of a lot. “Taste and see” that the Lord is good. What kind of diet is on offer for our children - at home, at church, in life?

#14. Kitchen Aid (the image of a Kitchen Aid mixer)

Who makes the feast? What part do our children play? There is nothing like the taste of your own cooking! Participating and making - bringing their own hands and expression to the food, not just served it. Aprons, measuring, mixing, waiting, baking, waiting some more . . . How do we make disciples?

#15. Story (the word story)

Do you remember “Children of the Voice” by Ishmael? It was dystopian kids fiction before there was such a thing! Now dystopian fiction is huge, it puts young people at the centre - saving the world from corruption, injustice and the foolishness of adults. How do we invite children to shape the story of their families, the story of the church today?

#16. Book (the image of a book being read)

Our kids are different. There are just two of them, but SO different. There is not just one way of engaging with a story. For one it is about the “who”, who are these characters? What are they like? For another it is about the “what” when is the action going to start? They aren’t DOING anything! How do we share the story of God? How do we draw each child in?

#17. Ritual (the word ritual)

Do we have “the day has ended” rituals? Do we celebrate, remember, reflect on what has gone? We have a pattern - showers, change, milk, hair dried, story, prayers. What bookends your day? what bookends the days of the families you work with?

#18. Ellie's Ritual (the image of a journal, headphones, eye mask)

My youngest has a ritual. Journal time, for listening and then writing down what comes to her - sometimes with bible in hand, sometimes not. Classical music, she says this calms her and helps relax her racing mind! Eye mask on, that's it - the day is done - welcome the darkness.

#19. Rest (the word rest)

This is immediate. I'm in bed, light is out - now sleep! There is no restless tossing and turning over the day. We might worry about what has been left undone, what is yet to do. Living in the "now" brings a peace.

#20. Draw Near (the image of my daughter holding a stuffed elephant)

What do we cling to when we finally sleep? Our children both have a VAST array of stuffed toys to hold close as they rest. Conjuring up the picture from scripture that says, "Draw near to God and He'll draw near to you."

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The Resource

