



Igniting Imagination

Joel Fitzgerald

My youngest son will go to kindergarten this fall. He is not happy about this situation. He articulately explains why he does not want to go, "I've never been before."

As funny as it is, he is right. He lacks experience with kindergarten; it will be a sharp departure from everything he has known to this point, and that can be scary.

As adults will also struggle imagining the future. Research and studies of the brain show that for most, it is impossible for us to envision ourselves in future. When change comes, we often respond like my son, declaring that we will do everything in our power to resist change from happening.

The problem is that change is often necessary. My son has reached the point where he needs school to learn and grow. It is necessary for his development. So, we will help him imagine this new future. We will take him to kindergarten roundup so he can meet his teacher and walk through his school. We will repeatedly explain what his new schedule will look like and what he will be doing. Additionally, we will invite him to name his fears, as well as his excitement about new possibilities.

This approach can help us in the church as well. We are in a season of constant change, and we can cultivate the skills that help ignite imagination, such as:

- Experimenting. Just like school orientation, we can visit places that are already doing new things. This helps us envision what the new really looks like
- Recalling the reasons why we need something new. Leaders, especially, must constantly name the need for new realities.

- Embracing courage. At the end of the day, doing something new is scary. As my son will learn in 2 months, at a certain point, he will have to get out of the car and walk through the door. That will take no small amount of courage on his (and if I am honest, me and his mom's) part.

The Foundation can help churches and leaders imagine new futures amidst this changing environment. One way we do this is through C3: Courageous Churches Collaborate process, which helps churches in discerning their next faithful step.

A second way to embrace changes is through a new initiative we will be offering in the coming months called Rooted Good. This tool will help churches discern how they can better use their physical space for mission and ministry.

If you are interested in learning about any of these programs, we would love to help you and your churches imagine something new.

What I am Reading Now: High Conflict by Amanda Ripley.

Ripley is a journalist who delves into different stories to show how people get caught in cycles of conflict and how they get out. If you have ever experienced a fight in church that seemed about the smallest things, but ended up leading to heartache and recrimination, Ripley's book provides a straightforward way to frame such conflicts.

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