



[RSVP NOW](#)

## It was a crazy idea.

There were so many reasons not to do it. I remember clearly thinking—"This is a bad idea." It was 1998 and we were going to do a foot-washing service with 300 unchurched middle school kids on a Saturday afternoon. What could go wrong?

Like a lot of the best ideas at New City Kids, this one gave me serious pause as we were about to do it. I remember getting the basins, folding the towels, setting up the chairs in a circle, and thinking, "These kids are going to eat me alive."

Have you ever thought of an idea, started to execute on it, and then had a "wake-up" moment of dread and terror when you realize how hard it's going to get? That moment of doubt has reared its head again and again on the New City Kids journey over the last 23 years. We pray, we envision something beautiful, we start making plans and committing resources, we go public with the idea, and then, almost always, there's that moment of doubt.

And this is almost always where the moment of faith comes in. It's interesting to me how close faith and doubt are sometimes. What I mean is—they sometimes feel the same. Your stomach doesn't suddenly lose the butterflies. Your knowledge of the future doesn't change. But you decide to step forward in spite of the lack of certainty. You decide to act as if the thing God has put into your head is going to be reality.

So it was 1998. We spent 40 minutes riling the kids up, playing games, singing New City Kids-style worship songs, and then gradually calming down. We went on to preach a sermon about how Jesus came to serve, not be served. The sermon included a puppet show, drama teams, object lessons, and three-minute bursts of gospel punch lines designed to speak to an eleven-year-old urban preteen. And then the moment came. I invited

kids to come forward to the foot washing chairs, take off their shoes, take off their socks, and experience what the disciples experienced from Jesus.

Even as we were doing it, and for the weeks and years afterwards, I was not sure it had gotten through to anyone. There were more giggles, tickles, and screams of surprise than I thought possible. Even my teen helpers could not contain some of their laughter. There was more than one gasp of “gross!” as soap squished between toes. But like a champ, I pushed through as if this was actually God present among us.

But it was. In fact, it was 18 years later that I found out how much this day had meant to one of those eleven-year-old boys. His name was Jonathan, and I recently got re-connected with him. He said, “New City Kids changed my life. Do you remember that foot-washing service?” How could I forget? He explained how in his family and upbringing he never had much experience of doing something for someone else, things like serving others and washing someone else’s feet. For the next 18 years, that day stood as a marker in his mind for what God was like. God showed his face during an act of squishy, soapy, giggly, humiliated service. And God is still willing to do that for us.

This same young man went on to play in the NFL and is now the captain of the New York Giants. Last week I had dinner with him and he reminded me of the story. I asked him if he would be willing to do me a favor. I took out my cell phone and said, “Would you send a video message to a twelve-year-old boy who is you, 20 years ago? He’s going through a really hard time. His family is struggling. He’s been kicked out of school but he’s so special and has so much potential. I think a message from an NFL player might make a life-changing difference.” He then gave the most compelling, heartfelt, 90-second motivational message you can imagine—from one New City kid to another.

It’s these moments of unexpected breakthrough, of paying it forward, of giving your very best to another person (even while fighting doubt) that we are gathering to celebrate on November 30th. Our show is called The Red Guitar. I can’t let the whole secret of the bag yet, but it boils down to this: we need you. This assignment to reach kids in the city is too big for a few people at the corner of Alpine Ave. and 11th St. to pull off. We need you. Please, will you help us in three practical ways?

1. [RSVP for the Christmas Bash.](#)
2. [Like our Facebook Page.](#)
3. **Forward this email** to three friends and ask them if they will come with you to the show.

If you feel doubt as you’re doing any of those steps, be encouraged—you’re probably heading for a breakthrough.

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