

# 31 Days of the Little Way: Praise for the sandwich maker

Once a week I pick our younger son up from school to take him to an appointment. I feel rushed all morning, worrying I won't get him in time.

Then we race to his appointment and afterward—since it's during his lunchtime—I take him for a quick bite to eat before we race back to school. It means he's away from school a little longer, and I'm away from the office longer too. But it also gives us some time together, just the two of us.

Last week we stopped at a Subway for a sandwich. Our little boy doesn't usually like sandwiches, but he loved his visit. So this week, of course, he wanted to duplicate the experience.

We went back to the same Subway, and the same soft-spoken young sandwich maker was behind the counter.

I didn't recognize her, but our 6-year-old knew her right away.

"You made our food last week, too!" he said.

She smiled back at him. She even remembered what kind of cheese he had had before, and she created the exact same sandwich this time.

Then Daniel and I sat at the table of his choice and chatted.



"Let's ask each other questions," I said. "If you could fly an airplane or a rocket, which would you pick?"

"No," he said. "Ask me something about school."

"OK, what's your favorite part of school?"

"All of it," he said, "and the end of the day and aftercare."

"What do you like better, music or P.E.?"

"Music!"

We talked on and on, and I learned how first grade is even more fun than kindergarten and how a new student is joining his class next week and how good his sandwich was.

"I'm going to tell the lady about my sandwich," he said, looking across the store at his friend behind the counter. He didn't know whether she had been working a long day, or how tired she might be of standing and taking request after request after request. He simply thought it was very important to make sure she knew he had loved every bite of the food she made for him.

So after we cleared our table, he walked back up to the counter.

“I don’t mean to brag,” he said, “but the food here is the best.”

Simple praise for a simple sandwich, delivered personally and immediately, and straight from the heart. It made me proud and humble at the same time. How often do I remember to thank the people around me who give in ordinary and extraordinary ways? How often do I even see the people who serve me—and remember them as my little boy did?

Our sandwich-making friend gave my son a big smile and said, “Thank you. I hope you come again soon.”

And we will.

