

31 Days of the Little Way: The Beauty of a Children's Choir

At the beginning of the school year our younger son asked to join the parish children's choir. I don't know whether our 6-year-old has any natural musical talent, but I do know that he loves music. I was happy he was so excited to try something new—and that it was his idea.

Sometimes I can't believe I have a front-row seat to watching our children become the people they are.

When Daniel sang with the choir for the first time at Sunday Mass, we sat close so we would be able to see him sing. It was simply wonderful.

Our little boy didn't know every word, but he stood there and sang, keeping his eyes on the teacher leading the group. He may be squirmy and distracted on a typical Sunday, but I was struck by his focus and how seriously he was taking his role in the Mass.

At the end of a song, I would give him a thumb's up from our pew, and he would smile at me. Our little boy was so, so proud to be part of this group making music together. And all day he sang the songs they sang in Mass: "I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light," "The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor," "O, How I Love Jesus," and "Open My Eyes."



Watching Daniel sing made me realize, as I so often do, that he is growing up. He is starting to try new things that might become his things—rather than what I might pick for him. And he is mature enough to sit apart from us at Mass and sing with a choir.

As I listened to the choir, I found myself wondering, what is it about children singing that is so moving? Those sweet voices may not be perfectly blended or in the same key—not that I would necessarily know—but there is a beauty there that shines through.

For me, children's voices are inspiring because they hold nothing back. They are real. They sing because they are able to sing and they want to sing. They aren't self-conscious or worried that their voices aren't the best, or even concerned that they don't know the words. They sing anyway.

And why not? Singing in church, they are using the voices God gave them to praise Him, to lead the rest of us in prayer.

It made me think about myself. What talents am I not putting to use for God in the

way that I could because I am too worried about whether I'll make a mistake? Where do I hold back and not let my light shine? Why can't I be a 6-year-old who doesn't know the words but sings anyway?

"Open my eyes, Lord," I heard our little boy singing as he played at home later in the day. "Help me to see Your face."

Yes, open my eyes. And as the song says, "We'll speak in new ways, and we'll see God's face in places we'd never known."

That's what I've been trying to do, right? I'm starting to think I didn't choose this journey; it chose me.

