

A child's wish: If I caught a butterfly...

Over the past few weeks Daniel has seen a lot of butterflies. And he has set his heart on catching one.

He runs and runs after them and never comes close. They dance away into the sky, far out of his reach. But that doesn't stop him from trying.



Then this morning as we were climbing into the car, a brown moth landed on Daniel's Star Wars shirt. Because I was busy trying to convince Daniel to be gentle, I didn't take a photo, but the moth looked sort of like this.

Daniel didn't care that it wasn't a pretty color or spotted or striped or even particularly large. It was the butterfly he had been waiting for and finally, finally it had come within his reach.

He could not have been more excited.

"A butterfly!" he shouted.

He took it gently—well, gently for a 3-year-old boy—off his shirt and held it in his hand.



Then he sprinted off down the sidewalk with his new friend inside his fingers.

"I got a butterfly!" he yelled. When he came running back, he climbed into the car and placed the moth on the comic book on his big brother's lap. They watched the moth flap its wings and flutter around for a few minutes before they were persuaded to take it carefully out of the car and set it down on the grass.



I'd like to tell you that the moth flew away, but he was still fluttering when we left. I'm hoping it recovered from our son's exuberant greeting, but I'm not sure anything that small could survive such enthusiasm.

As we drove to school, Daniel talked about catching his butterfly.

"I made my wish," he told me. It makes sense, I suppose, that if you get a wish when you blow a dandelion that you'd also get one when—in a much more extraordinary moment—you catch a butterfly.



His big brother wanted to know why the butterfly landed on Daniel and not on him. Why, indeed? I can't explain that, except that someone seems to have a lucky streak. I hope the moth is lucky, too, since I wasn't able to protect him from our little boy's excitement.

As we drove, I thought about how wonderful it is that our children can find such joy in these interactions with nature. What a blessing that God sent this moth just when Daniel has been yearning to see a butterfly up close. I am also grateful that I was there to witness the fulfillment of Daniel's wish.

Then I heard Daniel's voice coming from the back seat.

"Mama," he said, "now I want to catch a bird."

Oh, my. I hope he never gets that wish.