

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single baptism invitation

Before I tell you what we did last weekend, I should probably explain that I grew up with a skewed understanding of what a day trip is.

I have a vivid childhood memory of the Easter Sunday when we woke up, went to Mass, jumped in the car, drove 5 ½ hours to New Haven, Conn., had a picnic lunch with my two older sisters, who were in college, climbed back into the car, and drove home.

Now let's fast forward 20-ish years to this past weekend.



Our niece, who was born a few weeks ago, was being baptized on Sunday. And John is honored to be her godfather.

Of course we would be there. The only question was: How?

The church was in New England. If we hit no traffic and barely stopped, we could make it in about seven hours—one way.

And John had to work until late Saturday afternoon.

Even though the situation wasn't ideal, we were determined. I requested couch/floor/bed space at my sister's house, which is sort of a midpoint, for Saturday. We drove four hours on Saturday evening and our boys were overjoyed to arrive at their cousins' house—complete with a Wii, a luxury they only dream of, and a cage full of rats just waiting to be petted.

We finally fell asleep, woke up early Sunday, and drove three hours to the church.



When we arrived, I said to Daniel, “This is your first time at this church, so don’t forget to make your three wishes.”

“All I want,” our kindergartener said, reaching for the church door, “is to find a bathroom.”

Well, at least that wish came true.

We went to Mass, watched as our niece and cousin became a child of God, let our boys play tag with their cousins in the grass outside the church, and then spent 90 minutes partying at my brother’s house with a delightful group of family and friends.



Then we climbed in the car and headed home.

It was a long drive. We stopped once to change drivers and once to get food that wouldn’t be considered edible if there were any other options. My usual policy is to stop fairly frequently so we all can stretch our legs. But we just wanted to get home.

Seven hours after we left New England, we pulled into our driveway. The entire 750-mile trip took 29 hours. It was exhausting.

It was also so, so worth it. We met our precious baby niece. John held the candle at her baptism and promised to help her grow in her faith. Our boys had the chance to spend time with eight of their cousins—and we were able to be with family we don’t see often enough. We made some great memories. And we learned that we will never consider Connecticut a day trip from Baltimore, but our children handled the long ride remarkably well.



As one final bonus, during the endless hours in the car, as our children gobbled their way through a smorgasbord of snacks with scarcely any nutritional value, we spent some time reading the two-page study guide for our second grader’s religion test on

Monday. The topic? Baptism.

Let's hope he aced it.