

# A prayer gathering for a baby on the way, chaperoning a field trip, dipping chocolate, and more (7 Quick Takes)

~1~



I hosted a prayer gathering for an expectant mother and her baby last weekend. If you have come to one of my parties, you know that what I focus my energy on are the favors, inviting people the morning of the event, designing veggie trays, and scrambling to get the rest of the food together at the last minute.

This time I struggled to think of a good favor. I always make a holy card in honor of the baby and mother-to-be, but I do like to have something to go with it. I've given candles and ice cream dishes and tiny rosaries, but nothing was coming to mind. The day before the gathering I thought of holy water, something you can never have enough of and which seemed great for the Easter season.

Leo and I went to the store, and he helped me select little bottles, ribbon, tags, and a gold pen to write a message on the tags. Then we came home and assembled them.



I had planned to serve Divine Mercy sundaes in honor of Divine Mercy Sunday, but

then I decided it would be simpler to have appetizers and treats for grazing. So I made a Rosary-themed veggie tray, and everything else just sort of happened.

As one of the guests was leaving, she said to me, “These are my favorite social events! I was so excited when the invitation arrived.”

Having a prayer gathering for a baby on the way was never my idea—my sister-in-law had been to a baby blessing and mentioned it to me years ago, and I latched onto the idea. The lovely prayers we used for each decade were created by Bobbi at Revolution of Love. And honestly, you can feel the Holy Spirit in the room as the group prays together. Praying the Rosary as a group is so powerful.

~2~



I was so excited to chaperone a fifth-grade field trip to Annapolis last Friday. The teacher assigned me only my fifth grader and one other, so I had it fairly easy. I didn’t lose either child, and I had a wonderful time being with my son, while also trying to give him space to be cool and hang out with his friends.

We toured the Naval Academy, ate our lunches on a boat, and stopped by the State House. We even saw a dead fish near the water, which was extremely exciting for the children.

The forecast had called for rain, but the day turned out to be overcast and then sunny—but not hot. I even had a chance to tell my favorite fifth grade teacher how much I loved the poetry autobiography project she assigned to the children.

The evening I went to school to see our boy’s poetry autobiography, I stood there reading the poems he had written about his brother with tears running down my face. Luckily my fifth grader was out of the room at the time because I’m sure that having a mother who cries over your school projects is terribly embarrassing.

What can I say? Fifth grade is an emotional time.

~3~

As much fun as going on the field trip was, and it was, one of my favorite moments was getting to pick our sons up from school afterward. As a mother who works full time outside the home, I rarely get to pick the children up from school, and I really treasure those simple moments.



As it happened, it wasn't all that simple because there was a tornado warning, and the school had to postpone dismissal to keep everyone safe. But after the warning ended, and we were walking out, I was overwhelmed with gratitude for these children and for the people who love them and try to keep them safe.

~4~



One of my friends arrived at the prayer gathering with a tray of chocolate-dipped marshmallows and strawberries. When our third grader saw them, his eyes got big. He sat down and ate the marshmallows one after another.

Then he looked sadly at the empty plate.

"We could make our own," I said.

So, we did. Life is short, and there aren't enough chocolate-covered items in the world.

~5~

Do you have an encyclopedia? I love ours because our sons can go look things up without any worry about parental controls and such.

Even though I like that you can Google anything, I also think there's something beautiful about looking something up in an encyclopedia and running across other unrelated knowledge. You go to look up butterflies and find yourself learning about Budapest.

Last night our younger son sat in bed reading the encyclopedia, and now and then he would call out to us to share something he had discovered: "Hey, Dad. Did you know a robin's egg is blue?"

~6~

I went to my 25<sup>th</sup> high school reunion (from Roland Park Country School) last weekend and took hardly any photos. I was so busy connecting with people I haven't seen in ages and meeting new people. Twenty-five years somehow feels like a significant amount of time. I can't believe all that has happened in that time, and yet I also can't believe that much time has passed.

The girls I remember from high school aren't all that different. We have as much fun getting together as we ever did—and we have even more to talk about than we did as 18-year-olds who hung out in the library and pooled our spare change to get bags of Party Mix from the vending machine.



Our class was really close to Janice Moore, our librarian and advisor to many of us who is now retired. The school decided to surprise her and make her an honorary alumna—and a member of our Class of 1994. It was absolutely the highlight of the reunion.

Then a friend of mine who went to the boys' school across the street, Gilman, sent me a lecture that our former English teacher, Mr. Christian, offered about Dante. I

took his Dante class, and the lecture brought back so many memories. It's an hour long, so it took me a couple days to squeeze it in, but now I want to listen to it all over again. If you're a Dante fan, or a Mr. Christian fan, I really recommend listening.

Anyone want to read or reread Dante with me? I feel certain that it would be a totally different experience 25 years later.

~7~

Facebook has been trying to sell me two things this week: 1. a burrito blanket and 2. Rise Up, a devotional for kids created by Blessed Is She. I did order Rise Up for my godson, who will receive the Eucharist for the first time next Saturday.

I have not ordered the burrito blanket, even though I really want to send it to my 16-year-old niece. I am fairly sure she would rather have cash. But Facebook definitely has me pegged.

***Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend.***