

Back-to-school emotions, staycation fun, and life without a kitchen (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Our older son boarded the bus for middle school orientation this morning. I've been so focused on trying to make sure he was ready for sixth grade that I completely forgot to prepare my heart, too. His little brother and I watched him board the bus from our window because our mature sixth grader wanted to board it on his own.

I cried.

I'm so proud. So happy. So nervous. So sad. So overjoyed. So every emotion at once.

~2~



We went to sneak a peek at our fourth grader's desk and classroom yesterday, and now he and I are both excited for the new year.

I've been wondering how our sons would feel about going to separate schools for the first time in five years, but they seem fine with it. Children are always more resilient to big life changes than you think they will be. What throws them off are things like extra trips to the tile store in the middle of a glorious summer day.

~3~

School starts for real on Tuesday, and we finally have all our school supplies!

Remind me not to wait until the last week of August next year. Many of the shelves were picked bare. We've hit four stores to get what we need.

But it's done, items are labeled, and we have more pencils than we will ever need. Can a sixth grader really use four boxes of sharpened pencils? There's a word problem just waiting to be written here.

~4~



We have been making the most of our last week of summer vacation. We've been to the state fair, Dave and Buster's, the Walters Art Museum, the Strasburg Railroad, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and multiple tile stores. We have also relaxed at home, but that's been a little hard because our kitchen is under construction.

We also went to a puppy play date to meet our friends' new lab puppy, Peppa. Puppies are just so sweet.

Our younger son is starting to lobby for fish, which are just about the only pets we could probably manage here with our allergies and time. I'm still on the fence about the whole idea.

~5~

Our kitchen renovation project is well underway! I'm astonished by the progress. I took this week off from work, and that ended up being really great not just for hanging out with my children, but also being around to answer questions about the kitchen.



Living without kitchen appliances—including a garbage disposal, which may be the one I miss the most—is definitely a first-world kind of problem. But it’s a real one. As I try to think of meals I can make in a microwave and scrub my dishes clean in the bathroom sink, I try to pray for the people around the world who would be grateful for the conveniences I have that seem like a burden to me right now.

~6~



How do you choose tiles? Is there an art to it? I look at photos online, check out the displays in the stores, and ask friends how they picked their tiles, and still it’s a mystery to me.

People keep telling me it’s a personal choice, a matter of personal taste, and I understand that. But what if you don’t really care? There should be a tile store you can go to where you let them pick everything for you. Maybe there is.

This process has shown me that I am an opinionated person who has no opinion on tiles, especially backsplashes for kitchen. Or maybe I have an opinion, but it changes as soon as I walk down the next aisle in the tile store.

I can’t wait to show you the finished kitchen.

~7~

Not having a kitchen isn’t entirely a burden. My mother keeps inviting us over for dinner, so we’re getting some extra Grandma and Grandpa time—and Grandpa has been making freshly baked cookies for dessert.



I wonder how long that will last.

One afternoon I called my sister Treasa and asked if we could bring burgers and hot dogs over to grill on their grill. We showed up with a watermelon and meat for grilling and made ourselves at home. Treasa even made an apple crisp.

What if not having a stove shows me that I actually prefer to have people cook for me? Maybe this is the danger of a kitchen renovation. More likely, though, is that I will be incredibly happy not to have to walk around the outside of the house to go get the milk in the basement.

Read more quick takes on Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend. I'm praying for children, teachers, and families who are making transitions to a new school year.