

Card playing, crockpot worries, a meatless meal idea, how to swallow pills, Lenten prayer, and Pokemon (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Our children love playing cards. I try to carry a deck of cards with me wherever I go, and they have saved me many times. I don't even know how our boys learn all the games they know, but they can entertain themselves for quite a while with cards.

Their current favorite game is called "Nothing." I haven't taken the time to learn the rules, but I do enjoy that when I ask what they are doing, they say, "Nothing," and keep playing.

I have a feeling that's most of the appeal of the game.

~2~



Few things make me feel as accomplished as filling the crockpot in the morning before we head to school and work. Yesterday I prepared pork and sauerkraut, and when we got home, the house smelled amazing.

We ate our delicious dinner, and it was hours later when I realized we had lost power during the day. I don't know for how long, and I don't know whether we should have eaten our crockpot meal.

This is the only challenge with crockpot dinners—well, that and the fact that when I

am making breakfast, packing lunch, and preparing dinner all at the same time in the morning, I always worry I'll pack sliced onions in the lunch instead of throwing them in the crockpot.

~3~

Do you need a meatless meal for tonight? You might like to try these shrimp kabobs we made this week. I extravagantly bought shrimp that were already peeled, rinsed them to thaw them, put them in a freezer bag with olive oil and Old Bay, speared them with chunks of red and yellow peppers, red onions, and mushrooms, and broiled them for 10 minutes on each side—20 minutes total. (You can buy wooden skewers at the store and soak them for 20 minutes in water before you use them. I happen to have metal skewers that one of my most faithful blog readers sent me for Christmas.)



The kabobs were delicious. The children were arguing over who got to finish them. But nothing is as good as filling a pie plate with tomatoes, drizzling them with olive oil and a little salt and pepper, and putting them on the rack below the broiling kabobs for 20 minutes. The tomatoes might be the best part.

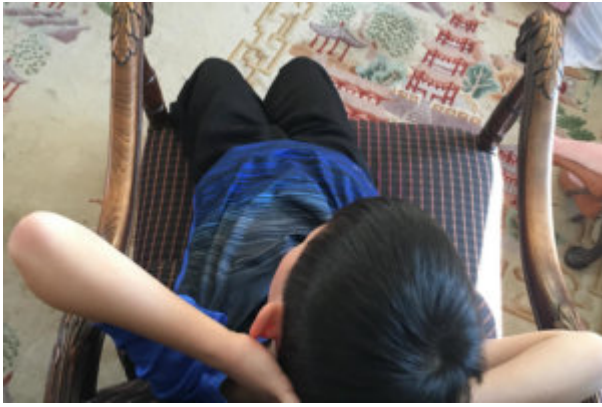
I'd love to try this with salmon or a white fish like tilapia. We might have to start doing kabobs once a week.

~4~

Our younger son, who is 8, has learned how to swallow pills! The pediatrician recommended that we practice with Tic Tacs, and he learned within a few days.

His big brother hasn't had the same success yet, so your mileage may vary. But if you're looking for a way to teach your children to swallow pills, you might want to try Tic Tacs. We had the best results with the orange flavored ones.

~5~



Our whole family was invited to our friends' baby shower last weekend. Before we left the house, I talked to the boys about what it would be like.

"It's a party, so we'll be really polite and talk to people," I said. "At lots of showers you sit and watch people open presents for the baby, so you might be doing that. And there will be food, too."

Then it occurred to me I should have started at the beginning.

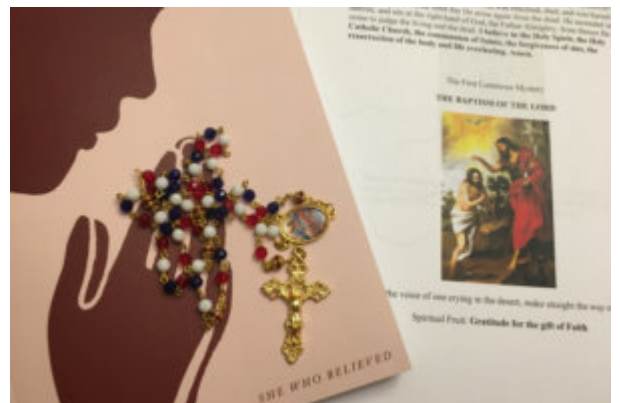
"What do you think happens at a baby shower," I asked.

"Do we get to see the baby take a shower?"

Sadly, no. And that's exactly why we have these conversations in advance. But they did have Chipotle catering, a TV upstairs for the children, and lots of fun people there. (And here's the piece I wrote this week afterward, offering a few pieces of encouragement to the parents-to-be.)

~6~

For Lent I'm part of a group of women who are meeting weekly to reflect on our experiences with the "She Who Believed" prayer journal that Laura Fanucci put together for "Blessed Is She." When I say we are meeting weekly, I mean that I made it to the session for the first time this week, and I offered to host it at my home.



It was lovely to be together to talk and pray and compare Lenten—and life—journeys. The book is just extraordinary, asking just the right amount of me,

challenging me in good ways, but not too much for me to catch up on a day or two if I miss. It is a highlight of my Lent, which I am failing in my typical ways.

I'm trying to remember that Peter denied Jesus on Holy Thursday and that even Jesus himself fell three times while carrying His cross. Lenten journeys aren't always easy.

~7~



Our children's hobbies come in cycles, and we move in and out of things like Star Wars and Transformers and Pokemon. Right now we are almost entirely about Pokemon.

I like the Pokemon excitement. It involves reading and math and creative characters and trading and understanding and playing a game that I fail to grasp—though I have tried.

I haven't tried as hard to learn to play Pokemon as I tried to help with a fourth grade essay last week—an essay that came home all marked up in purple ink. I might be able to write for a living, but I apparently don't know how to advise my son in how to write a compare-and-contrast essay for school.

Maybe I should stick with trying to play Pokemon. Or Nothing. I might be really good at Nothing.

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