

# Cheering for the Orioles, One Beautiful Dream, conversation contests, geeking out, Pokemon, and holy water (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Last weekend my uncle gave us two tickets to the Orioles game, so Daniel and I jumped at the chance to go.

When we got there, we immediately found a hot dog and ballpark fries for our 8-year-old baseball player. Then we sat and watched the stadium staff roll tarps off the field—and then water it, which was intriguing since the tarps were there to keep it dry.

I noticed that a Detroit Tiger and a Baltimore Oriole were chatting as they stretched on the grass in center field. When they finished talking, they hugged quickly and jogged off to be with their teammates. Daniel and I talked about how you can be friends with people even when they aren't on your team.

~2~



Have you read Jennifer Fulwiler's new book, *One Beautiful Dream*? My copy arrived on Tuesday, and I finished it Wednesday.

That's not because I have loads of free time to read. To put things in perspective, it's only the second book I've finished this year—unless you count *Cricket in Times*

*Square* and other books we have read at bedtime. It's because *One Beautiful Dream* is that good—and I read it while cooking dinner.

What I loved about the book is that Jen comes to recognize that she can pursue a writing career while also raising her children, that chasing her dream to write doesn't have to conflict with her dream to be a mother and wife. I am very good at feeling guilty about not being able to be all things to all people, but I have also come to see that my writing, especially here, brings perspective and strength and helps me be part of a wonderful community. And that helps me be a better mother—even though I fall short in many, many ways.

~3~

I'm always seeing blog posts and essays about how to get your children to tell you about their days at school, but those tricks never work for me. Tonight at dinner I said, "Let's have a contest. If you can tell us something about your day that no one knows, you get a point."

We might not excel at conversation, but we do love a good contest. I learned that our older son had a substitute teacher today, that our younger son saw a dead snake near the school, that gym class involved some form of target practice using dodgeballs, and other little tidbits from the day. I lost because apparently I had already mentioned that I had a tuna sandwich for lunch.

~4~

One day recently a college student told me that in a job interview she was asked the last thing she had "geeked out over." She didn't think she had given a very good answer.



"The last thing I geeked out over was an electric-powered three-hole punch!" I said. I proceeded to tell her just how amazing it was. By the end of our conversation, I'm

not sure whether she felt better about her answer or simply astonished that anyone could care about a three-hole punch that much.

Maybe that's because I forgot to mention that it can punch up to 30 pages at a time.

~5~



For weeks our sons have been counting down to a Pokemon pre-release tournament that was held last weekend. If you don't have experience with this, a pre-release tournament means you go to the comic book store, get a set of the new cards before you can buy them, build a deck to play with, and then compete against the other Pokemon

players. If you win your battles, you win more Pokemon cards. (At least, that's how I understand it.)

I've gone in the past and sat and waited for hours while the boys played. By the end I was pretty stir crazy. This time I planned it so we would go while friends of ours were there, and we brought appetizers to enjoy while we hung out. I was still ready to go when we left 3 ½ hours later, but we parents had a great time. And so did the Pokemon enthusiasts.

~6~

My niece who made me an aunt turned 15 this week. This is my niece who loves rats and sings beautifully and writes exquisite poetry. She's phenomenal. And so is being an aunt. I remember so well how I felt the day I first held her in my arms. I couldn't believe that my sister had a baby. Even so many nieces and nephews later, I can't believe what an extraordinary gift it is to have these children in my life.

~7~

Our younger son is making his First Communion next weekend. I'm so excited for him! Many of his friends are also receiving the Eucharist for the first time at the same Mass, and so are some of the students I've been co-teaching on Sundays in our

parish's faith formation program.



I knew teaching second grade would make for an interesting year, but I have really enjoyed the experience. My friend and co-teacher and I wanted to give the students something special as their First Communion gift from us. So she filled little bags with orange candy—to match our Orange curriculum—and those were wildly popular, of course.

For our other gift, my boys helped me hunt down bottles at the dollar store and we filled them with tap water. Then I designed labels for the bottles, and we brought them to our Sunday school class. My friend invited one of our parish priests to come to the classroom to bless the water, and he told the students all about holy water before we prayed together and he blessed the water.

It was so beautiful. And I learned that if you have just a little holy water left in a bottle, you can fill it up with ordinary water and all the water is blessed.

***Hope your weekend is full of blessings! Enjoy more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum.***