

The emotions of the first day at a new school

Everyone was up early for the first day of school.

The backpacks were stuffed, lunches were loaded, and the newly minted second and fourth grader were fed and dressed.

Mothers are notoriously full of advice, but I couldn't think of much to offer.

"If you have any questions today, just ask someone," I told them. "Even the students who aren't new to the school will be asking questions."

Today, you see, was not just the first day of the school year. It was the first day of a school year at a new school. In one of the hardest decisions my husband and I have made, we realized we needed to switch schools to find the right academic services for one of our boys—and we wanted to keep them together.

So the new school year brings a new beginning.

Were we ready? I had no idea. But there was no more time to deliberate. It was time to go to school.

As we were walking toward the school, the boys started running, their feet hitting the sidewalk, their backpacks bouncing on their backs. They were nervous, I knew, but also excited. As we arrived at the front of the school, we saw the sea of families waiting for the doors to open.



Suddenly I was overwhelmed. Which way were they supposed to go? What were we supposed to do? We missed the chance for them to walk into the building with their classmates, but luckily a teacher recognized us and came over to help. And then they were gone, whisked away into their new school.

As I turned away, I couldn't keep from tearing up. I have cried on every first day of school.

But this time it was such a mix of emotions: sad that we had changed schools...relieved that we had found a school that might be able to help our son...nervous for what the day might bring...proud of how bravely our boys walked into their new school...blessed that I have the chance to be their mother...helpless to protect them and prepare them for whatever lies ahead this year...amazed that time is flying and they are getting so big so quickly.

As the day went on and occasionally I wasn't focused on my day and wondering about our boys' days, I realized it was Mother Teresa's feast day.

"Yesterday is gone," she once said. "Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

Wise words, rooted in faith. Here we go.