

Getting cornfused in a maze, dress shopping, an apple pie in the new kitchen, and more (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Many years autumn ends and we haven't had a chance to do the fun fall things we look forward to all year. This year we are trying to be more intentional about fitting things in. We're trying not to over-schedule our weekends to leave time for the fall activities we really enjoy. Luckily, no one is playing soccer or any other sports this season.

So, Sunday after faith formation ended, we jumped in the car and drove to Showvaker's to visit the Cornfusion corn maze.

When we got there, I asked one of the employees on the hayride how long it takes to do the maze.

"An hour and a half if you don't get lost," he said.



I looked at my watch. We had to be back for the middle school faith formation program at 5. It was almost 2. And we were about to enter a corn maze located about an hour from our house. Still, what was the worst that could happen? We'd be late. Or lost forever in a corn maze.

We plunged right in. John and I let the boys take the lead on the whole experience, picking which way to turn, looking for clues, and listening for a mysterious whistle that kept us heading the right way more than once.

We made it out in about 45 minutes, and we felt quite accomplished. We even had

time to shoot some paint gun pellets, a few pedal car races, and one long slide on a gunny sack.

Next up might be apple picking. Stay tuned.

~2~

This weekend, though, our excitement is my cousin Kelly's wedding! We have been looking forward to it almost as much as our boys, who are excited that their 10-year-old cousin will be hanging with them while we go. They are ordering Chinese and having a pretend sleepover together with a sitter.

Meanwhile, we'll be at a wedding, which seems so appropriate a few days after our 15th anniversary. We can't wait.

~3~

I realized this week that I didn't have anything appropriate to wear to a late-September wedding, so I ran to the store. Nothing inspires me like shopping on a deadline. I pulled a dozen dresses off the racks and headed to the fitting room.

The verdicts came fairly quickly: No, no, meh, maybe, no, no, maybe, definitely no, worth taking a photo of this one to send to Treasa, also worth sending to Treasa, no, and yes.

The "yes" was a polka dot dress without a price. Is there anything scarier than deciding you want a dress without a price tag on it? I was fairly sure, however, that it had been on the clearance rack.

I headed to the register to ask the price.

It was \$7.50. Done.

How will I ever learn not to procrastinate when things always turn out this well?

~4~

Our friend made us a fresh, homemade apple pie to celebrate our new kitchen. I went to pick it up and brought it home to heat in our very own oven.



The house smelled so decadent. Even though I had done no work whatsoever, it felt like the new kitchen was living its best life, as the stove filled the whole house with an apple-pie smell.

The pie was such an amazing treat, and we enjoyed every bite.

~5~

Our younger son brought home reading and writing scores from some state test he took at the end of third grade. When I saw them, I almost cried. He has dyslexia, and seeing the scores made me realize how much progress he has made—not because of how he compares to others, but because of how far he has come through his hard work and the wonderful people who support him.

I took a photo of the scores and sent it to our friend who helped diagnose his learning challenges and tutored him through two summers. She was thrilled.

One of the most surprising things to me about parenthood—and one of the things I love the most—is looking at all the people who are helping our children become all they can be. Knowing that there are other people who want to celebrate their successes as much as we do is this extraordinary gift.

~6~



For our anniversary dinner, John and I took the boys out for pizza and pasta—always a win with this group. Maybe it doesn't seem romantic to have the children along, but I love being able to go out together and just spend time as a family.

Of course, right after we arrived at the table, one of the boys accidentally spilled a huge glass of water all over the table. A waitress dropped off a wad of napkins, and a busboy had to bring a mop.

But it was still a great evening. We were relaxed and happy and together.

~7~

Last weekend one of my colleagues at Loyola passed away. Jane was a really special person, and I miss her—but her closer colleagues who knew her best miss her much more.

Jane was full of life and always smiling. I think back on our interactions over the years and can only remember positive, upbeat conversations, often about work, and more often about my children and her grandchildren. I always looked forward to walking into the office together when we happened to be arriving at the same time. She was one of those people who lights up when she sees you.

I've been thinking this week about how we don't know how much time we have, and how we have to do what we can with what we're given. I find myself thinking of Jane and how the conversations we had were always about small things. But the small things are so often the important things.

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