

I want my mummy...er, maybe not: overcoming childhood fears in an art museum

Ever since Leo and I went to the [Walters](#) Art Museum [a few weeks ago](#), Daniel has been asking to see “the mummies and the armor.” So on Saturday morning he and I set out on a special mama-son adventure.

“Guess who’s the strongest!” he said as we drove. Before I could even guess at an answer he said, “Just teasing! God is the strongest. He’s stronger than Baba and stronger than Bigfoot.”

After we parked outside the Walters, Daniel jumped out of the car and pulled me to the museum doors. When a staff member tried to interest him in some fun educational information, he was adamant. We were there to see armor and mummies.



But when we got to the armor, suddenly I realized he was glued to my side and pulling me toward the door. He did not want to stay. After seeing one small mummy, he froze in the hallway on the way to the Egypt exhibit and wouldn’t go any farther. He actually sat on the cold marble floor and gazed at the map.



The Walters staff couldn’t have been more gracious, suggesting kid-friendly parts of the museum, handing him clay so he could make his own sculpture, even offering him a knight costume to wear to go back to take another look at the armor.



I was drooling over the possibilities, but my son was done. Within a half-hour we were on our way to the exit, stopping briefly at the clearance table of the gift shop where he found a small bag of shiny pebbles.

I believe strongly that when he says no, I should respect his feelings. When I say no, I expect him to hear no. But I was a little disappointed that our outing had been such a letdown. So I suggested we walk down the street to the Enoch Pratt Free Library's central branch.



We crept up on his aunt, who is a librarian there, and he jumped out and yelled, "Surprise!"



We visited the goldfish.



Then we picked out a pile of library books, sat down together and read a few on the spot, and signed him up for his very first library card.



He wanted to sign the back of his card himself, even though he doesn't write his full name yet. Then we posed with the card outside.



Then we headed to the Paper Moon Diner for lunch at the counter, where he twirled on a yellow stool and pointed out fire engines and Army tanks hanging from the ceiling.



We discussed why chicken tenders might be called chicken tenders (does anyone happen to know?), and we played a fantastic game of I Spy.



We also talked about his fears in the museum. We decided that if we had had his brother and father with us, he might not have been scared. So the next day we went back as a family.

On our second trip Daniel was more open to seeing the museum.



Somehow having your big brother with you makes everything different.

And being in his Baba's arms made him brave enough to enter even the spookiest parts of the museum. We also made our way over to the Asian art exhibits, which I hadn't seen in years.



The next day I asked Daniel what his favorite part of the museum was.

"The mummies," he said.



"Really?" I said, more than a little surprised. "You liked the mummies?"

"I was scared of them when I went with you," he said, "I wasn't scared of them with Baba."



Of course he wasn't. Isn't it wonderful that God gives us people who have the ability to make life less frightening? And isn't it magnificent that our Father in heaven gives us that same courage at so many moments in our lives?

Now our job as parents is to help this little boy realize that even when his earthly father isn't at his side, his heavenly Father is holding him in His arms.

God is the strongest, after all—even stronger than Baba and Bigfoot.

We just need to help our little guy remember that when he's scared.

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