

Let it go, castle building, Field Day memories, whistling in the dark, and more (7 Quick Takes Friday)

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The boys and I may have become the last people on earth to see Frozen last weekend, so now we know a few words to “Let It Go.” There’s nothing like hearing two cute little voices sing “Let it gew” in their charming Bawlmerese accent.

If you’ve seen it, you know there’s this great scene where Elsa builds an ice castle using her bare hands and magic in a matter of seconds.

Meanwhile, John—with some help from our sons—has been building his own castle using a Spanish-made castle building toy from his childhood called Exin Castillos.



Building the toy castle has taken a little longer to build than the ice castle, but it looks likely to last longer than Elsa’s castle.



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Today I’m volunteering at Field Day at Leo’s school, and I’m looking forward to Field Day for the first time.

I was a child who dreaded gym class. Often the gym teacher forced me to try activities I didn’t want to try and then failed at miserably. If I don’t remember ever being the last child picked for a team, it’s because I don’t know whether I was picked at all. I didn’t even care because I didn’t want to embarrass myself.

Field Day was the worst. It was a whole day of competitive sports, and I was awful at all of them.

Except one year. I think it was fourth grade and I magically made basket after basket after basket in a basketball shooting game. In the end I was facing off against a boy in my class, one of the smart, athletic ones. And we went back and forth over and over until I missed a shot and got a second-prize ribbon.

Never have I been so happy to win second prize.

I hope Field Day will be a happy memory for Leo, and maybe even for his mother. It would be fun to have a second good memory.

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Each of our sons has a chart and they are earning stars for specific actions, helping around the house, carrying their school items to and from the car, being polite, sharing, that sort of thing.



Cleaning things outside is better than going to an amusement park.

At the end of the week, John counts out change based on the number of stars each child has earned.



Leo has had his eye on a particular Transformer, and this week he counted his money and realized he had enough. We ordered it online, he gave us the money, and it arrived last night. He is the happiest boy in the whole USA.



Daniel wanted to use some of his earnings to buy a stuffed animal, so we went to the store. He fell in love with a white puppy that barked and had glowing collar. It looked like more trouble, less fun, and possibly had a higher price than a real dog. I talked him out of it, and we headed to a different store, where he found a \$3 stuffed penguin we both love. I might love it just as much for \$4. Maybe.

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While Daniel and I were shopping, I decided to buy the boys Orioles shirts. We are going to a game in June, and Leo was allowed to pay \$1 and wear Orioles gear over his uniform

yesterday.

I brought the shirts home and showed them to Leo. He said he liked them, but he refused to wear one to school.

His rationale:

1. Orioles shirts should be worn only to Orioles games.
2. If he wore it over his uniform shirt, he would have two shirts to take off at the end of the day.
3. He didn't want to create extra laundry for Baba.

I can't argue with that. And I can't recall putting that much thought into any outfit I've worn.

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John was going to a lecture on Sunday, so he went to an early Mass, and I took Leo and Daniel to my godson's brother's First Communion Mass. I haven't taken both boys to Mass alone in quite a while, and they behaved remarkably well.

The key, I believe, was giving each boy a bag of books so there was no sharing (or the opposite), telling them in advance that I got to decide who sits on my lap at any given moment, and feeling calm and praying hard for grace and patience.

It may not have hurt that I was in the middle of making a novena to St. Rita, patron of the impossible, and to Mary, Undoer of Knots, at the time.



A bulletin board inside Leo's school

Besides seeing our friend receive Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time, which was so, so wonderful, the most memorable moment for me was when Daniel was sitting and looking at me and had a realization.

"Mama," he said, in a voice that seemed to ring through the church rafters, "you are growing hair on your face."

It could have been worse. He could have been talking to another lady in the church. I just murmured, "Please use your quiet whisper voice," and handed him another book to read.

Daniel is going through a phase where he likes to repeat everything we say.

“Sit down in your chair,” I say, and he laughs and says, “Sit down in your chair.”

It can be frustrating, especially when I’m trying to get us out the door or through a meal. But the other day I realized I could have some fun with this.

So when he starts repeating, I make him say what I want him to say.

“I love my Baba,” I say.

He smiles. “I love my Baba,” he says back.

“My Mama is the best Mama in the world,” I say.

“My Mama is the best Mama in the whole *universe!*” he says.

See? It’s not so bad.



Can you whistle? If so, how did you learn? Do you remember?

I always imagined that anyone could whistle, but last week I met a 3-year-old who knows how to whistle without having been taught, and I learned that several of the adults in my life—including close friends and family members—cannot whistle.

So now I’m wondering, can anyone be taught to whistle, or are some people physically not able to learn? My Googling is not offering reliable, consistent answers.

I was realizing that in one of my favorite children’s books, *Lentil* by Robert McCloskey, the main character is not able to whistle. Instead, he takes up the harmonica.

I still feel that somehow almost anyone should be able to learn. I have been unable to teach my sons how to whistle yet, but they are 4 and 6. Am I wrong to tell them they’ll learn eventually, just as I have promised they will learn to snap their fingers? Or would they already know how

to do it?

I'm not losing sleep over this, but I will be curious to hear what you think.

See more quick takes at Jen's Conversion Diary.