

Shopping for mac and cheese and feeling grateful to be a mother

As I reached for a few boxes of macaroni and cheese, I noticed a woman standing there staring at the grocery store shelves. Ah, I knew that look. She was overwhelmed by the choices, not sure where to begin.

“What’s the difference?” she asked.

“Some of them it’s just the packaging, or the shape of the noodles, or the color,” I said. “My children like the cheese to be orange, but they will eat it if it’s white, too.”

“I have two very picky children,” she said.



We chatted briefly about the challenges in finding foods children like to eat and parted as friendly strangers.

It was a meaningless exchange. But as I finished my shopping, I found myself thinking of the years when I put no thought into macaroni and cheese.

There was a time when I wouldn’t squeal with delight over a sale in the macaroni and cheese aisle.

There was a time when I didn’t know anyone could care whether it was white or orange.

There was a time, you see, when I wasn’t a mother—and I wasn’t sure I ever would be.

I know, I know. It’s just a grocery store trip. These are boxes of noodles and powdered cheese. Being a mother has nothing to do with what’s in my grocery cart, and everything to do with the tremendous honor and joy—and challenge, too—of helping our sons grow into the men God wants them to be.



But when we were waiting and longing and yearning to become parents, there were moments just as insignificant that would fill my eyes with tears. Often it wasn’t the big life changes—the

birth of a niece or nephew—that would upset me as much as the little encounters. Some nights it was just looking at the empty chairs at our dining room table.

Maybe that's why even now, more than five years into motherhood, I still catch my breath sometimes when I realize I am a mother.

Sure, it's just mac and cheese.

It's just me being silly.

But it's just one more opportunity to stop and pour out my heart in gratitude to God for giving John and me the wonderful privilege of being parents to our sons.

