

Spring fever in early childhood

I had both of the little boys with me when I stopped by St. Joan of Arc in Aberdeen on the Friday morning of the spring concert. I needed to hang some of the beautiful posters my 4th and 7th grade students made to celebrate each of the “American Bandstand” songs that would resonate from the voiced of our spectacular upper level students. (Roman’s “Beyond the Sea” poster transported me to a resort I’ll never be able to afford, but can still enjoy in my mind.)

I had a small window between Friday morning Mass and the start of the big show to decorate, and, as it is on so many other days, I had my two sidekicks, two-year-old Frank and one-year-old Leo at my side. However, I had left my stroller at home, so I was forced to hold both of them *and* the posters at the same time. I asked for one of the middle school students to help me, but they were on their way to a prayer service, and so, I found myself scrambling after Frank and Leo while the Kindergarteners (including big brother Collin) and first graders had recess.

It was like whack-a-mole. I picked up one and the other threw himself from my arms to chase after a dodge ball or fall in to a game of tag. I tossed the beautiful concert posters aside and grabbed them both at once. A wave of awe swept over my youngest students. They had no idea about the power my biceps possess. Within a few seconds, they’d wriggled themselves down again and joined the playground mayhem.

Defeated, I approached Collin’s teacher to apologize. She smiled and said, “You know, they get spring fever, too.”

I watched as my toddlers and young students amused each other. The breeze tickled them under their little chins and pressed gently against their backs as they dashed about the yard. The buds on the trees over their heads were just about to become leaves. Short sleeves were still a bit of a risk, so some wore sweaters or light jackets. The season of hopeful anticipation was upon us. All of us. Even the little guys who didn’t quite understand that it was spring. Somehow they knew that something wonderful was about to happen.

The songs my students would be singing later that afternoon reflected this excitement. “Walkin’ on Sunshine,” “Don’t Worry, Be Happy,” and even “Rockin’ Robin” (usually a source of torment for me, because of my name) all remind us that God sent us this time of year as a reminder of His endlessly renewing love for us. It’s the very force that causes animals and plants to reenergize and reproduce and kids of all ages everywhere to refuse to stay still and let the world pass by.