

Staying home during staycation, lessons learned from catching a bouquet, backyard picnics, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and more (7 Quick Takes Friday)

– 1 –

My staycation week is flying by, and I've thoroughly enjoyed it.



Daniel and I did some cooking on my break, so I will have recipes to share with you.

I haven't taken this many days off in a row to be with our boys—at least not without my husband—since we returned home from China after adopting Daniel in 2011. Being with them on my own really made me see how much they have grown. I'm actually [able to cook dinner](#) and even talk on the phone for a few minutes now and then.

It [wasn't like that three years ago](#), as special and wonderful as that time was.

“What a breeze,” I was thinking while smugly vacuuming one day this week. “I can actually work here and not worry that the boys aren't right next to me.” Then all of a sudden I heard raucous laughter coming from down the hall.

I struggled to find the button to turn off the vacuum—it would be easier to find if I used it more often—and went to check. They were wrestling wildly on our bed.

“No, no!” I said. “You can't play on the bed! You're going to....”

And at that moment the two of them plummeted onto the floor, falling in a pile of arms and legs and giggles.

So maybe this is not exactly a breeze. But it has been a fantastic week. We have done crazy things—moving the booster seats to the back seat of the van, letting the boys sit on the kitchen counters for a few minutes, take showers instead of baths, and run shirtless through the house.



I am definitely looking forward to my next staycation.

— 2 —

When I decided to take the week off, I wanted to plan some outings for the boys.

On Monday we met a friend and his mom for a play date at a fast food restaurant. The three boys played together for a couple hours, and the mothers got to have real conversation.

Then on Tuesday we met a few friends at the [Turkey Hill Experience](#) in Columbia, Pa., always a favorite.



But when we arrived home on Tuesday afternoon, Leo went and got a piece of paper.

“Mama, write this down,” he said. And he dictated this note. (I hope Sr. Suzanne doesn’t see my sloppy writing.)



I’ve been referring to it as “my contract.” And we have followed it carefully for the past two days, filling our day with structured and unstructured fun—all at home.



— 3 —

While we were home, Daniel and Leo decided on their own to make books. Leo asked me how to spell the names of the Transformers he had drawn for his books so he could write them.

Then Daniel handed me a pen and told me he would tell me what to write. But instead of asking me to write, “A crane lifts logs,” he started “spelling” for me.

“J. L. P. A,” he said slowly. Then he’d stop dramatically. “Kuh Kuh Kuh...”

“K?” I said, realizing he was imitating me.

“Yes, Mama. That’s right. Write K.”

I realized he didn’t want to be like his big brother, who writes the names of the Transformers. He wants to be like his mother, who magically pulls letters and numbers out of thin air and tells other people what to write.

Leo’s book is easier to read, but Daniel’s book certainly makes me smile.



— 4 —

John and I left the house last weekend to celebrate our friend’s wedding, and it was lovely.

My favorite photo from the day was one I was taking as a selfie with my sister and the bride when my husband jumped in next to me. I didn’t even know he was there.



On the list of other things I didn't know when I responded to the call for all women to come to the dance floor for the bouquet toss:

1. *Not everyone views a bouquet toss as a competitive event.*
2. *The bride was planning to toss her bouquet to her matron of honor, whose wedding is next weekend.*
3. *That bouquet was destined to fall into my hands. It just happened to be about 10 feet to my right before I dove for it.*
4. *My catch may have caused less angst than Yankees fan Jeffrey Maier's snatch of a fly ball from Orioles fielder Tony Tarasco's hands in that 1996 playoff game.*

For the record, I happily gave the bouquet to the matron of honor. But all that Wiffle ball practice in the backyard is finally paying off.

— 5 —

Happy [Independence Day](#)! Are you having a picnic today? We've been having picnics all week. The boys have been asking to dine on the grass in our backyard.



We are looking forward to many more picnics this summer, whether or not we leave the house.

— 6 —

When we [went to the Walters Art Museum over the weekend](#), Leo was riveted by this stained glass window showing Jesus with the good thief on one side and the bad thief on the other.



It reminded me of [how we first shared that story with him](#).

— 7 —

When we are talking about faith, children are full of questions and answers, of course.

One night at dinner I said, “Who can name some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit?”

Daniel looked at me and said, “God,” and went back to his meal.

And he was right, of course. God would know the answer.

Remind me to word questions properly in the future.

See more quick takes at Jen’s [Conversion Diary](#).