

# Tears at parent-teacher conferences, science experiments, pantry discoveries, crab cakes, and more (7 Quick Takes)

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The school year is ending, and it is incredible to me to look back on our journey over the past year. A year ago we had just decided to change schools for this school year. It was scary.

I remember how at the last Mass of the school year at our boys' school, I sat there trying to pray as tears ran down my face. I didn't want to pull my children away from that warm community of faith, but our younger son's learning disability meant we needed to try another path.

Fast forward a year to my conference with our younger son's teacher this week. I sat there as she described his reading challenges, and my eyes filled up with tears yet again.

"Oh no," his teacher said. "You're going to make me cry."

"I'm just so proud of him," I said. "You just said he is reading slowly and that he has trouble with words like 'carries.' A year ago he was barely reading at all."

It hasn't been easy, but God has been with us every step of the way.

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That said, as much as I don't want to move on from our amazing second grade teacher who totally gets me and our son, summer vacation can really start now. We're ready.

~3~

You know summer is coming when I have something growing in a bowl of water in my kitchen. Usually it's a capsule or some egg that a dinosaur is hatching from. Sometimes it's a crystal or something. I can't keep track.



This week when Daniel asked if we could try to grow his plastic soldiers, I was immediately on board. Did I think they would grow? Nope. But I couldn't prove it. So we tried it. And now we know—thanks to our experiment—that they don't.

You never know until you try.

~4~



Does this ever happen to you?

I go to the store, see something I don't have on my list, bring it home, go to put it away, and only then do I realize that there's another of that very same item.

Why is it that I have no memory of having purchased that item until I go to buy an identical one at the store?

I'm fascinated by how the human brain works. And apparently I'm really in the mood for Spanish rice.

~5~

The night our new cousin and nephew was born we went out to dinner to celebrate—and also, maybe more accurately, because I didn't want to make dinner. We went to Pappas, where I had the absolutely delicious crab cake.



The greeter seated us in an area where there were couches nearby, so our boys took their pack of cards and played cards until the food came. It was this amazing experience, sort of like going to Chick-fil-A and letting your children play in the play space, but without worrying about germs or anyone getting stuck in the play structure. We had adult conversation while the children played happily without really treating the couches like a jungle gym. It was almost like a date.

It was one of those moments when I realize our children are growing up. Our lives are really different than they were a few years ago.

~6~

As a third child who followed two academic all-star sisters through school, I used to cringe when a teacher would say, "Oh, you're Maureen's sister!" I was delighted to be her sister, of course, but I wanted so badly to be my own person.

So I forged my own path, explored my own interests, and generally did my own thing. I very rarely am called anyone's sister now, and when I am, I enjoy it.

A few weeks ago I had to figure out new cell phone service, and I decided to join Maureen's family plan. I thought it was this brilliant idea, which I am so pleased about, and after a dozen phone calls and two trips to the store, I transferred my plan over, and all is well.

Now it turns out that when I call people, the caller ID says my sister's name—which, thanks to married last names, isn't my name at all. So I'm not just Maureen's sister now. I'm Maureen. I think it's absolutely hilarious.

~7~

Daniel's team is having a parent-son baseball scrimmage tomorrow, and my husband is busy with plans he has had for a while. So...do I participate? I would be happy to play and I would definitely grow in humility since I'm not sure you could find a parent who is less skilled in baseball.

Do I put a sling on my arm and stand on the sidelines pretending that I wish I could play? Or do I just play and not worry about embarrassing our little leaguer?

I'm leaning toward sending our 10-year-old in my place. But I may just play. I'll let you know.

***Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, find my latest Domestic Church column on lingonberry juice and my clumsiness and God's infinite mercy here, and have a wonderful weekend.***