

This Little Light of Mine

We adopted both of our sons when they were toddlers. They were full of opinions and wishes and preferences, but they didn't always have the English to make that clear.

Picking food or outfits or books was easy enough. They just pointed.

It takes more language, however, to tell your mother which song you'd like to hear. So I remember how delighted I was when Leo had learned enough words to ask me to sing "Old McDonald" or the ABCs.

When Daniel joined our family last August, I wondered how long he would take to make his opinion heard. The boys and I have a solid commute together each day, and we listen to a lot of music. For many of the CDs, Leo knows not only which song he wants, but the track number as well. "Number 10, please, Mama," he'll say.

Now, when I say, "We listen to a lot of music," you may think I mean there is variety. That is not the case. I just mean that there is almost always music playing in the car. We tend to commit to a CD and stick with it. For the past six months, we have been listening to a fantastic 25-track CD my husband compiled for us. Leo likes the "Dinosaur Train" theme song, "Charlie and the MTA," Johnny Cash's "The Old Account," and a dozen others.

Daniel? He wants to hear one and only one song: The Kingston Trio's "This Little Light of Mine."



Ever since he learned how to ask for it about three months ago, we have listened to it many, many, many times. I insist that the boys take turns—and sometimes even give myself a turn, just to mix things up—but it's fair to say that we have listened to what he calls "Mine" almost half of the time we have been in the car.

That includes our 45-minute drive each way on weekdays and the eight hours we spent on a round trip in March to visit my sister and her family out of state. I would have happily dropped the CD in a trashcan at a Jersey Turnpike rest stop—except that Daniel is so very proud of himself for being able to pick a song, and he thoroughly enjoys the music.

Now, don't get me wrong. It's a wonderful song—folksy, upbeat, and it includes a subtle Christian message. If we had to pick a song to listen to that many times, we could have done much worse. And fortunately growing up in a family of six children—and, for that matter, growing up in a world where most of the music was played on the radio—gave me a good foundation for not always getting to choose the music.

For the past two weeks I have been encouraging Daniel to branch out a bit. He is starting to sing along to some of the other songs—and ask for “Mine” a little less frequently. One of these days maybe we'll even be able to move on to another song—or another CD.

But not quite yet. Today we're still listening to “This Little Light of Mine.” Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Joining Theology Is a Verb and Reconciled to You for Worth Revisiting Wednesday on July 28, 2015.