

What taking our son to Mass taught me about God's love

Maybe it was when I noticed our 4-year-old was playing with a rubber band he found in the pew.

Maybe it was when I was fielding murmured questions about whether everyone has “infinity” strands of hair.

Maybe it was when I glanced down and saw that he was pretending his coat was a horse.

But at some point during Mass it hit me.

How I view my son's behavior in church may be similar to how God sees me every day.



Our younger son may not get much out of Mass. Maybe he hears a few words of one of the readings. Maybe he sees part of the consecration. But for much of the experience, he's wriggling and whispering or focusing on something he just found in my pocket.

I know he can encounter Jesus in so many ways at our church. But so many opportunities to experience our Lord are going right past him. He is only 4, after all.

Still, it occurred to me today that our Father in heaven may see me the same way.

He must watch daily as I miss so many opportunities to connect with Him. He must present Himself to me in numerous ways all the time, and I fail to see because I've just discovered the grown-up equivalent of a rubber band or a pencil or a piece of lint. And whether it's a work email or an aggressive driver or a spilled glass of orange juice, it takes all my attention in that moment, and I temporarily lose sight of Him.

During Mass I glance down at my son and he's sitting on the kneeler, facing the back of the church, not noticing that bread and wine is becoming Jesus' body and blood just a few feet away from us. How many times does God see me doing the same thing—looking the wrong way, overlooking some message He is sharing with me?

So often I'm distracted and busy and focused on the things that don't matter. Lent is the time

for me to try to move beyond that and connect more deeply with God. Today I was thinking how much I love our sons even after their most challenging Mass behavior. And I am confident that God loves me that much—and even more.



What a gift God gives me every day through his infinite mercy, patience, and love.

What a gift I can give our children by realizing that they don't need to understand and appreciate everything to be benefiting from merely being present with Jesus.

And, especially during this first week of Lent, what a gift I can give myself by trying to grow closer to Jesus, trusting that he will reach out to me again and again, knowing that my faith can continue to grow.

Joining Theology Is a Verb and Reconciled to You for Worth Revisiting Wednesday on Feb. 17,
2016.