

It's My First Day

Today marked an important day at church for our family – transition day, when the kids move up to their next classroom! My son, who is also our youngest, moved from the Toddler Room to the 2-year-old room. He seemed to really like the new toys: the wide array of trucks, the bubble window, and the slide. His next sister moved from the 3-year-old room to the 4-year-old room, and she really liked her new digs also. Our 6-year-old moved buildings all together, and she is now with the big kids on the north campus for a more school-like vs. a nursery / playroom setting. She really seemed to enjoy herself in the new building.

Today also marked a first for my husband and I – it was our first day trying our new positions at church. I am the first grade teacher during our 2nd service, and my husband is the large group storyteller. For me, things went quite well. I had 5 little girls and 4 little boys in my group today, and unlike when I substitute taught over the summer, there was no clinging to the parents' legs or fights to referee in this age group – at least not yet. My daughter was in my class, and she was one of the best behaved kids, for which I was thankful because when I substitute- taught her 5-6 year old class over the summer (before she transferred to the first grade class), she was one of my trouble makers as she had trouble listening to mom. But today things went smoothly, and one of the activities went so well that we actually ran out of time to do it again! The activity was for each kid to take a word from Luke 6:31 (Do to others as you want them to do to you) and say it on their turn so that the verse is completed. I altered the game a little bit, giving each kid a slip of paper with the word on it as a reminder and also walking around the room and touching their heads when it was their turn. This way, there was less freezing on the kids' part, and more control on my part since anyone who has worked with kids will tell you that any sort of down time will lead to chaos in a matter of

seconds.

Shortly after the kids arrived, we made our way to the Wherehouse, a fun gathering room for the kids. This is where we got to hear the storyteller (my husband, who did a great job even if he had to adlib when the “boss” forgot the charades cards) and where we got to “get our wiggles out” by dancing to some fun Christian music.

My favorite part of the class was the snack prayer – I kept it short and sweet because the kids were really hyper, and I didn’t want them to be disrespectful during the prayer. After we prayed, a little boy said, “Are you an angel?” I chuckled and asked him what he meant. “The prayer was really short,” he said, smiling. I guess he was hungry ☐

All in all, it was a great first day, and I’m looking forward to not only the rest of this year, but also to moving from grade to grade with these wonderful children and watching them grow!

And by the way, saying “it’s my first day” reminds me of an hilarious scene from a Simpsons episode. I tried to find the clip so that I could embed it on my blog, but I could not find it without having to post the entire episode, so you can read the transcript and visualize it if you’re a fan – I guarantee at least a chuckle! If you want to try to find the clip yourself, it’s from the episode called “Simpson Tide”, which is the 19th episode of the 9th season.

Mr. Burns: You did this? How could you be so irresponsible?

Homer: Eh... it’s my first day!

Mr. Burns: Since I’ve never seen you before, maybe it is your first day. Very well, carry on!

[Mr. Burns begins to walk off, when Smithers catches up with him.]

Smithers: Sir, that’s Homer Simpson. He’s been working here for ten years!

Mr. Burns: Ohh, really? Why did you think you could lie to me?

Homer: It’s my first day!

Mr. Burns: Well, why didn’t you say that be...[realizes] Yawoo!

You're fired!

Disney's Driving Lesson

My daughter Disney is 3 years old and full of questions. Today was her first dentist visit, and she had questions about every aspect of going to the dentist. On the way home, she had more questions: Can I still sneeze? Can I still drink? Can I still eat? She had no idea what life would be like with clean teeth. Before the appointment, she was a bit scared, but in the end she found getting her teeth cleaned fun and tickle-y.

After the dentist, something happened that will have me laughing for a long time. A stoplight turned yellow, and it was one of those with the pedestrian's crosswalk really far in front of the light, so I had to hard-brake, which for some reason prompted little Disney to pipe up from the back seat and ask me, "What the h*** are you doing?" I turned around and asked her where she learned that word, and her sisters looked terrified that they were going to somehow get blamed for this – the looks on their faces were priceless. "From Kirsten", said Disney, referring to her little friend at the babysitters. I was relieved to know that it wasn't something she had picked up from home, and we had a little chat about some words not being appropriate to say.

Kids will be kids, and I'm not worried in the slightest about my sweet little 3-year-old becoming as foul-mouthed as a trucker's reputation. Actually, I will think of this little episode every time I need a smile – it was so funny how she just blurted it out that way, it makes me laugh out loud just thinking about it!



my sweet little Disney

Summer Blahs

My kids are driving me nuts!! It's the middle of summer, and although I've scarcely heard the words, "I'm bored", my kids are driving me and each other up the walls and back down again. My 3 girls (ages 10, 6, and 3) are bickering constantly! By the time I get their brother (age 2) down for a nap in the afternoon, I'm so exhausted that I really cherish my "me" time, which is always laced with sounds of the girls' fighting and bickering. My husband suggested we do more activities together (we read books and color in the mornings, and I take them to the library every day to play), but it's a vicious cycle. The more they fight, the less I want to do with them, and the less I do with them, the more they fight, as if their fighting could increase. I am so thankful that Friday is the day when I get to meet their Grandma in South Bend and arrange a trade – 3 girls to Grandma's for the week!! I could not be looking forward to it more! Sure, I'll miss them, but given the way they've been acting lately, it will be a challenge for me to not dread the monotony of the summer continuing when they get back. I can think of plenty of things to do, but like I said, I'm so exhausted by the

constant refereeing (aren't refs supposed to be paid?) that it's hard to find the energy to facilitate an activity and clean it up. Wait, Grandma reads my blog, I better not dwell on the fighting too much. Wouldn't want to change her mind about next week!!

Only 39 days until school starts! One week at Grandma's and 10 weekend days, so really only 22 days left – not that I'm counting or anything... Now where is that countdown timer widget? ☐

Teacher, Teacher

Well, I survived. Today was my try at teaching my 3-year-old daughter's Sunday school class. Every summer, church members have the opportunity to serve in our church's Kids' Kingdom in order to give the regular teachers a much deserved summer break. Instead of requesting a specific age group where I might have been comfortable (last summer my husband and I taught 4th grade boys, and I'm used to teaching 5th and 7th grade girls from my youth group teaching experience), I decided to let the Kids' Kingdom coordinator put me where I would be needed the most – so the 3-year-old room it was. And lucky for me (cough cough), there aren't very many 2-year-olds at our church at this time, so they were just combined with the 3-year-olds, putting me in charge of fourteen 2 and 3-year-olds for over an hour. But it was SO much fun!!!

Not something I'd like to do every week (just because of my responsibilities at home with 4 of my own kids 24/7), but definitely worth a shot, especially since I was helping out. I might even sign up for another Sunday with the 2/3-year-olds; they were so cute!! In anticipating my teaching

experience today, one challenge I did not foresee were the kids who cried when their parents left. We had about 4 of those – their world was blown apart when this strange lady (me) was in their classroom in place of their regular teacher. 3 of them got over the shock right away; one little girl did an actual 180° turn in personality. She began the class by crying and clinging to the wall, only to come out of her shell later and insisting she sit by me at story time as well as wanting my constant attention. The 4th little boy held out a little longer; he was a cute little guy who clung to the wall for most of the class. He stopped crying for his parents within the first few minutes, but I couldn't get him to participate in any of the activities. I kept asking though, I didn't let him fade into the background, and I think that helped. Also helping was my teenage helper, without whom I surely would have lost track of all those kids.

Upon arriving, I was given a packet of papers detailing my lesson plan and ideas for activities related to the lesson which I will share:

Basic Truth: God Made Me

Key Question: Who can help you?

Bottom Line: God made people who help me.

Memory Verse: "Be kind and loving to each other." Ephesians 4:32, NCV

Bible Story Focus: God wants families to help each other.

Boaz cares for Ruth and Naomi • Ruth 2:1-23

As kids were arriving (and some were bawling into the doorframe), I had them sit at the table and draw their favorite foods in the pre-printed basket they were given on cardstock. I got a big kick out of one little girl who drew chocolate fudgicles, chocolate soy milk (?), and chocolate pancakes. I attempted to draw my own basket (filled with spaghetti; I didn't think I could draw Greek food nor did I feel like explaining saganaki or kafta to 2 and 3-year-olds), but there was too much to do for me to finish my artwork.

Soon, we ran out of table space to color, so I moved on to this activity:

Get Up and Go

What You Need: Blue painters' tape, masking tape and different forms of transportation toys such as cars, horses, trucks, trains, buses, boats and airplanes.

What You Do: Make "roads" on the floor with the masking tape. Make "waterways" on the floor with the blue tape. Pretend you are traveling on the roads with the trucks, horses and cars and in the water with the boats. Fly the airplanes around the room. Make up places to go and let your imagination take you on a fun trip.

What You Say:

During the activity: "Who wants to go on a trip with me? These cars and trucks can take us places. These boats can take us places. Oh! And look! We have horses and an airplane too! We can use these to go all kinds of places. This white tape can be our road and this blue tape can be water. Come on! Let's get up and go!"

At the end of the activity: "Cars and trucks and boats can take us to all kinds of places. There's one more way to get somewhere that we haven't talked about...our feet! We can WALK to places too! In our Bible story today, two ladies named Ruth and Naomi have to use their feet to get to a new place."

So as you can see, the instructions were laid out pretty well for me. After the kids laid out their "roads" (and had a BLAST doing so, I must say! Gives me a great idea for an inexpensive, non-messy fun activity to do at home this summer with my own kids!), it was time to go down the hall for story time. Here we met up with the 4-year-old group and the 5-year-old group (of which my other daughter belongs; she was happy to see me!), and the kids listened to a Bible story. During the story, my teenage helper stayed behind to set out the snack, so it was solely up to me to keep our group of 14 quiet and listening to the story – yeah right. I did the best

I could, and I even got to dance with the kids.

We returned to our classroom, had snack, and then we tried the Foil Food activity:

Foil Food

What You Need: Aluminum foil.

What You Do: Give each child a piece of aluminum foil. Show them how to shape the foil into different food shapes like a hot dog, banana, apple, small grapes, chicken fingers, French fries and carrot sticks or anything a child could easily shape with foil.

What You Say: "Watch what I can do with this foil. (Shape the foil into a food item.) Look! It's a (name of food). I have some foil for you too. You can shape it into all kinds of foods like a banana or several small grapes or even an apple. Ruth and Naomi were very happy to find food to eat when they got back to Bethlehem. God gave them Boaz to help take care of them. God gives you people to help take care of you too. Who can help you? [Bottom Line] God made people who help me."

The kids had a ball with the foil activity too, even though some of them misunderstood – my little friend the chocolate lover, requested that I make her a butterfly out of the foil... oh, and there was one little guy who completely misunderstood and began to EAT the foil ☐

When the kids grew tired of that activity, there was still about 15 minutes left, so we did some free play with the toys and puzzles in the room as I did not feel prepared for the other activities on the list. One little girl kept putting a cow toy on my shoe, and she and about 5 others were loving it when I would react every time – OH, there's a COW on my shoe! Am I going to have to take this cow home with me?!? That lasted about 10 minutes; imagine if I had tried that one with my 7th graders – they'd be gossiping about me being bi-polar as they do about one of their teachers, gossip which I try to stop, of course.

My teen helper had to take about half the kids to the bathroom at some point, so I decided it was a good time to try this activity – I didn't want to try it with all the kids there since we were only given about 6 pieces of fake food. Having 4 kids of my own, I'm well-versed in kid-fight-prevention, so I knew doing the following activity with only 6 pieces of food and 14 kids was a recipe for disaster. But with about 8 in the room, I thought it was worth a try... until the bathroom group came back in the middle of the activity...

Fast Food

What You Need: Toy food items, a large basket like a laundry basket and a stopwatch.

What You Do: Spread the toy food items all over the room. Place the laundry basket in the middle of the room. Challenge the children to see how fast they can get all of the food into the basket. Time them and be ready to tell them how fast they do it each time. Continue doing the activity as long as the children are interested.

What You Say:

At the start of the activity: "A girl named Ruth has to look for food to go in her basket in our Bible story today. Our basket needs some food in it too. Do you see some food that we can put in it? (Pause for response.) OK. When I say "go," I want you to put the food in our basket as fast as you can. On your mark...get set...go!"

At the end of the activity: "You got faster and faster each time you put the food in the basket. I wonder how long it took Ruth to put food in her basket? I can't wait to hear her story."

Ok, I wasn't given a stopwatch, so I just had half the kids hide food items and the other half find them... but then the bathroom group came back and we had too many kids and too little room and too few food items to hide. My little friend threw a not-so-little tantrum because she wanted to be the one to hold the basket – and she was going to have her turn as I

said, but first she had to wait, which wasn't cool with her (ADHD diagnosis, anyone? It's sad, but they seem to be slapping that one on kids left and right these days). But oh, great, now I had a kid screaming just as parents are starting to arrive. Luckily she got over it quickly, and the parents came a few minutes earlier than I had expected – good thing too, since I was out of activities for which I had supplies.

Overall, a GREAT experience – I'm so proud of my own little 3-year-old who was not only one of the best behaved in the group (of course), but who was surprisingly not very clingy to mom and let me be a teacher to her peers. I think the kids had trouble remembering my name, so by the end of the hour, I was known as 'Teacher, Teacher' complete with pant-leg-tugging – hence the name of this blog post.

Next up – in August I'm scheduled to help with my 5-year-old's class, and I'm excited to see the differences in behavior between the two groups. But after today, I'm quite tempted to volunteer for another Sunday in the 3-year-old room... they are fun kids who are quite sweet. My only regret is that there were so many of them, which impeded my ability to get to have more fun with them on a one-on-one basis. Plus there were a few that were handfuls (well, just my little friend and then another little boy who started all kinds of trouble all morning!), but it was still hard to give attention to the kids who were being good, and that should never be the case. Too bad I know in my heart that I'd be spreading myself way too thin if I volunteered to be a Sunday school teacher. I need to stick with the youth group kids I committed to, and both groups plus my own kids at home would be way too much... something to think about when my kids get older and my youth group kids graduate though!!

For those of you looking for ideas for Christian fun at home, for your small Bible study groups, or a Christian daycare, here are the rest of the activities I was given and didn't have the time / materials to do:

Looking for Food

What You Need: A clear plastic soda bottle or a large clean peanut butter jar, uncooked white rice, several pieces of Runts® candy and a hot glue gun.

Tip: Runts® candy comes in a mix of green, red, yellow, purple and orange. You can pretend these are little green apples, red cherries or red apples, yellow bananas, purple grapes and orange oranges

What You Do:

At the start of the activity: Fill the plastic container no more than 2/3 full with the rice. Put in several pieces of the Runts® candy pieces. Put the lid on tight and hot glue it.

Tip: Make one bottle for every three children to share.

During the activity: Show the bottle to the children. Point out that there are different kinds of “food” inside the bottle. Their job is to roll the bottle around in their hands until they see a piece of “food.”

What You Say: “Come and sit with me. I have something to show you. Watch the white rice while I turn this bottle. Tell me if you see anything. (Wait for a child to respond.) Yes! There are little pieces of food hiding in the white rice. There are little green apples, red apples or red cherries, yellow bananas, orange oranges and purple grapes. Here. You can hold the bottle. Keep turning it and see what you can find. Two women named Ruth and Naomi have to go and look for food in today’s Bible story.”

Make a Match

What You Need: “Food Items” (from the Activity Pages on the Web site), scissors and white cardstock.

What You Do:

At the start of the activity: Make two copies of “Food Items” on white cardstock and cut the cards apart along the perforated lines. This will give you one set of cards to play a game of memory match. To play the memory game, place all of the cards facedown. A child will turn over two cards at a time and try to make a match. If a match is not made the next

person has a turn. If a match is made the player can go again.
Tip: Make more than one set of cards so more than one group of children can play at a time. You can pair children up or put as many as four children with each set of cards.

During the activity: Show the picture cards to the children. Ask them to help you identify each food picture. Next, place all of the cards face down and play a game of memory match.

What You Say: "Boaz helped Ruth and Naomi in our Bible story because they were in his family. God wants families to help each other. God gave you a family to help you too. Who can help you? [Bottom Line] God made people to help me. That's right! In our story Ruth and Naomi had to look for food, right? Well, I have a game for us to play and we're going to have to look for food too!"

My Favorite Food

What You Need: No supplies needed.

What You Do: Sit in a circle with the children and play a food memory game. Begin the game by saying, "My favorite food is an apple." The child next to you will say, "My favorite food is an apple and (their food choice)." The next child will repeat, "My favorite food is an apple, (name of food) and (their food choice)." Assist the children in remembering when the list gets long.

What You Say:

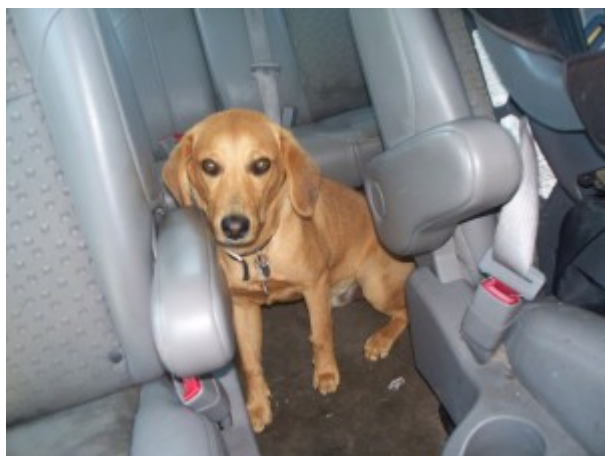
At the end of the activity: "Raise your hand if you like food. (Raise your hand really high.) Me too! We all like food and we all NEED food. Ruth and Naomi needed food in our Bible story today. They also needed help to find food. God gave them Boaz to help them find food. God gives you people to help you too. Who can help you? [Bottom Line] God made people to help me."

(Ok, so this activity didn't require any materials, but I found it way too daunting to attempt for a group of 14 2-3-year-olds...)

He's Not Half The Man He Used To Be...

Our little puppy Gizmo is now about 6 months old, and we've been marveling at what a handsome young man he's become. But yesterday, he had his appointment for his, um, fixing.

He handled it like a trouper, and we haven't noticed any behavior changes, positive nor negative. We're happy the little guy is ok, and he doesn't even seem to need his prescribed pain meds. I've always had girl dogs before him, and it seems to be a bigger ordeal for females since the incision is larger. Yesterday when we picked Gizmo up from the vet, he seemed happy to see us but still a little dazed:



And while we were waiting for the um, procedure to be complete, we had a few hours to kill, so we began at Meijer where the kids rode the 1¢ electronic horse. We also learned that our almost 2-year-old son knows how to say 'pop tart' since he loves the treats:

And then we went over to a nice scenic place on the Maumee River called Independence dam, but we had some unwanted excitement and had to call [our friend Mary](#) at work. Nothing bad, at least we don't think, but no one was hurt, if that's what you're thinking (Mary is a 911 dispatcher). The water level was very high due to all the rain in the area recently, and the current was swift around the falls from the dam. And we kept seeing something suspicious bobbing to the surface – some tires, some large beige objects, and a few other strange looking items that just weren't moving right. My first thought was that it was an ATV, and that someone had been 4-wheeling and went into the river. After a few more bobs, we saw that the wheels must have belonged to a full-size vehicle since we could still see the tires' rims. The kids' imaginations began working overtime, and soon they began to see heads and hands reaching out of the water. My husband and I saw nothing of the sort, but it was an odd sight, and we figured better safe than sorry so we called Mary's work number – 911 – and apologized for the non-emergency nature of the call. The officer that was sent to talk with us was very nice and completely understanding about why we had called, and as it turns out, he is head of the Sheriff's Department dive team. At first, he seemed to think that nothing was amiss, but as he watched the bobbing debris, he seemed to become increasingly interested. He told us he'd keep an eye on it, and we drove further into the park to turn around, and when we came back, there were more officers in the park. I'm curious to know what was found, if anything... perhaps our tip helped them locate a minivan that's been missing since it went down in the ice 2 years ago or something else useful. If anyone hears anything, let me know!

Fool Me Once, Strike One

My kids have been totally crazy lately. End of school year I guess? Great, let's take a look at the irony in that... end of school year makes kids act crazy, which makes me dread the end of the school year when I will have 4 crazy, bored, unstimulated kids 24/7. Nice irony, that. But anyway, today it's been one thing after another. So much so, that I've decided to use my spare minute to blog it instead of doing one of the other many and more productive things that I had planned for today.

I guess it began when my son pooped and smeared it all over the bathtub. He somehow managed this while his sister was watching him so I could run to the kitchen for a minute to stir lunch which was on the stove. I had to turn down the stove and delay lunch while I cleaned up the mess. Don't worry, I washed my hands (many times), but lunch was late, giving my daughter less time than usual to eat it before school. I took extra time today to make their favorite mac n' cheese, but no one ate anything. So that also cancels my make-your-own pizza sandwiches I was planning for dinner. Like I'm going to allow the extra mess and time it will take for the kids to make their pizza sandwiches when they wouldn't even eat lunch. Besides, I have my end-of-the-year MOPs meeting to get to, and I'm not taking 4 hungry kids into MOPs childcare if they don't have time or refuse to eat. Let's take bets on whether or not I will actually make it into the shower before my meeting... I could go now, but then I'd have the company of my 3-year-old, who's been wanting to take showers with me lately. It's nice to have a buddy, but my showers used to be my downtime, especially needed on a day like today... By the way, did anyone see the [nice article about MOPs](#) in the latest American Profile magazine? I enjoyed the few paragraphs I've had time to read...

Back to today – I finally got my 3-year-old to eat her lunch

(had to drop what I was doing to chugga-chugga-choo-choo into her mouth), so she was rewarded with Cheetos. Next thing I know, she and her brother had stomped the entire bag into the floor.



While I was cleaning that up, they were playing in the bathroom sink and flooded the floor. In the words of Michael Scott from my favorite tv show The Office – “Fool me once, strike one. Fool me twice, strike three.” So rather than leave them unattended, even for just long enough to clean up yet another mess, I put the little guy down for his nap before I cleaned up the latest mess. Thought that little Office quote would make me smile, so at least I was right there ☐

And if you think that my 3 and 1-year-old kids were actually helping with the cleanup, you must not have kids because they only succeeded in spreading the Cheeto crumbs around further. But at least they thought they were helping, and they had fun while doing so. Plus, note my gorgeous Mother’s Day bouquet in the background of the one pic – It’s from the kids (yeah right). I ♥ Hubby!

I’m just extra stressed since I’m trying to keep the house nice since we’re having a birthday party this weekend. Don’t ask me why I’m trying to keep a nice house while waiting for 22 five-and-six-year-olds to run wild around my house celebrating my daughter’s birthday... that doesn’t make much sense, does it? Maybe I *have* finally lost it...

A Trip To Walmart That Made Me... Happy?!?

It's been awhile since I've posted a venting complaint post about Walmart. It seemed like every time I went there, they were changing around their prices in some way that added to their profits from my pocket – it was aggravating. I got used to it, and I haven't noticed anything new (or let it get to me anyway) for awhile. Today after a very long day, I had to go to Walmart, and I actually left happy about THREE things!

1. They had my shoes back!! The black Brahma Bravos they haven't carried for a year! It was enough to put a smile on my face and for me to give my cashier an earful about my quest for shoes. I've been toiling over my [shoe issue](#) for about a year, and now I found the exact ones I wanted, for the price I wanted – YAY!!! So tempted to buy two pair, just to put one away in case they decide to shoe-starve me again, but that would just be a waste of money...

2. The whole reason I went to Walmart in the first place was to find a snack for my daughter's Kindergarten class. Our turn to bring snack is tomorrow, and you are supposed to bring a snack that coincides with the letter they are learning about that week. Our letter? X – quite possibly the most difficult letter in the alphabet! I've been pondering this one for a few weeks ever since the snack list came home, and I came up with nothing. That's why I had to make the last-minute trip to Walmart today, exhausted as I was. So I went up and down a few aisles, searching for X snacks – I had long since decided to settle on a snack with an X in it instead of one that started with X, so that made it a bit easier. Trying to also be budget conscious (there are about 20 kids in my daughter's class), I boiled it down to 3 choices: Trix, Chex Mix, or

Stax potato chips. Hmm, tough decision. Of those, the cereal seemed the most healthy, although the Chex Mix had a double-x... I could not decide. But then again, I was up at 6:30 this morning to get to the middle school to attend a puberty talk with my daughter. More on that later, aren't you excited? So I called my husband about the X snack – I was so tired, I just couldn't figure it out. He said to go with the Stax based on how much the kids would like it and the fact that it was the best value. Fine. No one ever said these had to be healthy snacks.

3. I found a booster seat for under \$15. Ohio is one of the last states to pass that booster seat law – you know, the one where kids under 8 years old or shorter than 4'9" have to be in a booster seat? Well, that would include two of our kids, and we had only 1 booster seat. I think it's a dumb law; sure they say it's safer, but who funded the studies -Graco et al.? I'm from the 80's – you know, the era where we kids lay sprawling in the backs of the station wagons, free as birds, feeling safe as can be while our parents braved the Chicago expressways... Me and everyone I played with in the back of our parents' station wagons made it into adulthood just fine... not that I'm saying it was safe, but I just spent \$13 on a booster seat, so I deserve to go off a little. But I expected to pay much more, so I was happy. Besides, like I told Hubby, \$13 is a heck of a lot cheaper than the \$100+ ticket it would have cost had our kids not been in the booster. And I have a question – what about adults who are under 4'9"? Do they have to ride in a booster seat in Ohio? You know what, I won't go there – it's rude ☹

So, yeah. Three reasons Walmart made me happy today; that's unusual. Maybe they're messing with my brain – I had 5 items on my list and came out with a \$60 bill; how could that make me happy unless they're brainwashing me? That must be it...

Or maybe I'm just excited to have gotten out of the puberty talk at the middle school unscathed. My husband (bless his

heart) was the only male in the room. We asked our daughter last night if she wanted both of us, just me, or none of us to go, and she chose both. I won't go into detail, but it was kind of a reality check. Man, kids sure don't stay little for long, do they? Luckily for us, the talk was given by the school nurse, who is also a friend of the family from our church. She handled it wonderfully, primitive sketch and all. And that's all I have to say about that. 1 (puberty talk at school) down, 3 to go...

The First Time I Had To Call Poison Control...

...was today, and I hope it's the last. I have 4 kids, the oldest of whom is 10 years old. So I've been doing this kid thing for more than a decade, pretty much a third of my life if I shave off a couple of years, which I'll gladly do. My older kids are girls, so why am I not surprised that the boy is the one who prompted the call to Poison Control. The good news is, everything is fine.

This morning, Beeber (an affectionate nickname for my son Christopher because this is what his older sister called him when she was 2) was out of my sight for just a few minutes – I think I was cleaning up some sort of mess he made as usual. In the back hall we have a pet cabinet (which will now be moved) where we keep leashes, dishes, rawhides, etc. Back by the pet cabinet, I found an open, empty package from a dog's heartworm pill. It was opened neatly, and it didn't look like it had been opened by a 21-month-old expecting to find candy. I checked his breath and his teeth (the heartworm medicine looks like a chunk of dog food – I would think if my son had

eaten it, then some would be stuck on his teeth), and there were no signs that he had eaten it. Perhaps the last adult to give the dogs the medicine had put an empty package back in the cabinet. Or, knowing my son, he might have just fed it to the dogs. But I had to call Poison Control to be sure; the chemicals listed on the box sounded frightening. Poison Control said they didn't expect a problem, which I thought was a strange response but a better one than I had hoped. I thought they would at least tell me warning signs of trouble or something, but I'm just glad they gave the all clear and that we didn't have to make a trip to the ER or worse.

Ah, Poison Control, the number every mom should know: **1-800-222-1222**. They are very calming, friendly, and they can actually speak English unlike a lot of places that we call these days, so don't hesitate to call them if you think your kid might have gotten into something they shouldn't have. Better safe than sorry!



Dead Forever

A cute Spring video I shot the other day of my 3-year-old daughter Disney explaining what would happen if a ball rolled into the street and got hit by a car:

Finishing Out The Wonderful Weekend

After our fun Friday game night and awesome anniversary celebration on Saturday, Sunday after church we decided to take the kids to Chuck E. Cheese. We decided to bring along Sammie's little 5-year-old friend (the one who is moving to Mexico – the new one, or New Mexico if you don't speak 5-year-old), and that turned out to be... an *interesting* decision, for lack of a better word – more on that later...

We had a blast at Chuck E. Cheese – we don't live really close to any like many people do, so it was kind of a new experience for my kids, and they had a lot of fun. We found some great internet coupons, and we were able to escape with minimal monetary damages – plus the kids didn't blow through their tokens nearly as quickly as I had expected; thanks no doubt to my husband's brilliant token allocating. My son, who will be 2 in July, just loved Chuck E. and called him "Mouse" pronounced "Mow" like rhyming with "Ow". He kept saying, "Where Mow"; it was so cute! Here's a video; he's saying "Right there, mouse".

And luckily I didn't capture any of this on film, but I have to give a bit of a public service announcement here. Sorry if it gets graphic and disgusting, but just remember we had to witness it; you just have to read my blog about it. If you go to Chuck E. Cheese or just out in public in general, please keep your pants on. I know it sounds obvious to most of us, but you would not believe how many, er, how much we saw that we did not want to see. I guess those low-rider jeans are in style, but I don't like them. And I especially think that women who have small children should not wear those at all, especially at a place like Chuck E. Cheese where you are constantly bending down to talk to or pick up your kids or squatting to get tickets or whatnot. Use your imagination if you don't know what I'm talking about because I certainly don't feel like describing it. Thank goodness we hadn't planned to eat there or appetites would have been lost – YUCK. Enough said.

We had a great time, except that my daughter's 5-year-old friend was extremely hyper and by no means a good listener. She was the kind of kid who made me truly appreciate how well-behaved my own kids are, and I'm still working on un-doing some of the bad habits they learned on the hour-long car ride to Chuck E. Cheese – like putting Mike & Ike's in their noses and spanking butts. At Chuck E. Cheese, they have a kid-friendly check-in system, so we wanted to let the kids roam a little bit, but this was next to impossible since our little friend was the kind of kid who was constantly climbing on the outsides of rides while other kids were on them. Then, she came up with two little finger rings, and my husband asked her where she got them. She led me to someone's table, and I was horrified to realize that she had taken the rings from the table. Could have been an honest mistake, but I could tell by her face that she knew she didn't really "find" them – at least she was honest about where she "found" them. Luckily she had no trouble putting them back, and kudos to Hubby for being so head's up. Maybe it sounds mean, but we high-fived

each other all day that she is moving. Don't get me wrong, she's not a bad kid and she and my daughter get along great, but our 5-year-old is our biggest challenge behavior-wise and having a friend prone to misbehavior would not be a good thing for her. Besides, she's only 5, and she will make other friends – friends that will listen to their parents as well as to their friends' parents.

Overall, a great day to finish out a fun-filled weekend! Even though it will probably take me all week to recover sleep, it was well worth it! ☐