

Monsters VS Aliens

We took the kids to see the Pixar movie [Monsters VS Aliens](#) last Sunday after church. The good news is, we didn't end up with any nude children running around the theater (see a previous post of mine; I forget which one, but I think this happened more than once so take your pick – we haven't been to the movies in months, and now you know why!). The bad news is that I didn't think this movie lived up to the hype. But I couldn't be sure; I didn't get to see much of it. It seemed to me like they showed all the funny parts in the previews, but then again, once you read what I was doing instead of watching the movie, you'll see why I could be wrong...

Our family now takes up an entire row at the movie theater. Our oldest started pouting because she was stuck on the inside and complained that she couldn't see. To her credit, she got over it right away and ended up being the one kid of the four who actually stayed awake for the entire movie. The movie was about to start, and I felt something pelt my back – HARD. I turned to my husband and said, "I think someone just threw something at me, intentionally because it was hard and it hurt!". He said, "It probably was intentional – turn around and see who it is!" Duh – why didn't I think of that? I'm not the type to want to draw attention, so I figured it was some poor kid who was going to get in trouble if I turned around or something... so I turned around and saw some game-nighters grinning at us. "Good thing you finally turned around, " they said, "we were almost out of Junior Mints!" Haha – that was funny, and I learned my lesson, if you get pelted in the back at the movie theater, you should turn around to see who would actually throw candy at the movie theater – you might be surprised to find out it's NOT kids!

The lights dimmed, the previews came on, and my son dirtied his diaper. By the time I got back from changing him, I had already missed a preview – my husband and I love the

previews. Oh well, better than missing the movie, I thought... little did I know we would be missing that too. So my son, who is 8 months old and just starting to crawl, didn't want to sit still for a movie. He was happy munching on things, but he was pretty rambunctious when I was holding him. So I spent most of the movie trying to calm him down and keep him busy. My 2-year-old daughter, who is usually the problem (and the nudist) at the movies, actually fell asleep. My husband went to put her in her seat to sleep so we could enjoy the movie, and there was a horrible gushing sound followed by gasps from the people behind us. Apparently, my husband's pop had gotten knocked over, and wouldn't you know it, it was almost full and of course it poured directly into the lady's purse who was sitting behind us. OOPS! How can you possibly apologize for something like that, especially while trying to be quiet so others can watch the movie? All the commotion of course woke up my daughter, so now we had her to deal with again. Not more than 20 minutes later, my son made a lightening-fast grab for my drink, and I didn't catch him in time, so SPLOSH – another one bites the dust. At least this time it was in MY diaper bag and not the woman's behind me again – that would have been lawsuit-worthy! But now we were drinkless, had 2 rambunctious kids, and were only about halfway through the movie!

Well, we made it through, my 2 youngest daughters fell asleep before the movie was over, and my son was out about 10 minutes before it ended – he waited long enough to keep me from seeing the movie, and long enough to wake up when we left and screw up his nap cycle. But I guess I learned yet again that my kids are too little to go to the movies – at least all 4 at one time. And the lady behind us didn't say anything when she left, thank goodness. But I wouldn't take my word for it that Monsters VS Aliens isn't anything special – I didn't see most of it!

Back To School And Redirection

Today is the first day back to school (already?!?), and it's really quiet around here. I guess my oldest two are my loudest two, and we have reduced the traffic in the house by 50% since half the kids are now at school during the day. Thank goodness for school; I'm enjoying myself already. So far, I've gotten two loads of laundry done – folded, put away and everything, and I have somehow also found the time today to put away most of the clutter that's been haunting our dining room table for the last week and a half. I even got to work on my e-book a little bit, and it's not even 1 o'clock! And, the kids at school are learning stuff, getting exercise, and socailizing with their friends; they're not vegged out in front of the tv or outside fighting in the wading pool. Everyone wins!

While the oldest 2 kids are in school, I also have time to focus on my toddler, Disney, while her baby brother is napping. Today, I got to sit on the floor and play puzzles with her; something we haven't done together in months, almost a year because of my pregnancy and c-section. And she was down for her nap by 12:30, which not only means some quality time together for me and baby Christopher, but also that my toddler should be to bed at a decent hour tonight. Win-win! While I was on the floor playing with my daughter, I was getting up to tend to the laundry and whatnot. My daughter was following me around the house, and this is where my day becomes challenging – trying to keep our clingy almost 2-year-old out of my husband's home office so he can work. The home office isn't a room where he could close the door and utilize the out-of-sight-out-of-mind tactic. The office

is on the landing on our second floor, so if my toddler begins to head up the stairs or even *looks* up the stairs, she sees her best friend, Daddy, and it's over. She tantrums until he holds her, and he can't get any work done. Today she got upstairs and in the clutches of Daddy, so when I chased her down, of course she was upset. But I used one of my favorite child-rearing techniques: redirection. I taught her how to clean the toothpaste off the kids' bathroom counter, which she happily did. We went downstairs for a popsicle, puzzles, and Barney, and all was forgotten. Wow. I had totally forgotten about the magic of the redirection technique because the last 2-year-old I had in the house was our "spirited" child, Samantha. Sammie was **never** re-directable. She has always been so strong-willed that it's literally impossible to re-direct the kid, let alone being able to trick her into helping around the house. To this day, she will fight for her cause, whatever it may be, until she gets what she wants or she passes out. And now that she's older (she's 4), the crying doesn't last as long, but she will remember what it is she wanted and bring it up throughout the day (or week or month) until she gets it. So I am actually *enjoying* Disney's terrible twos a little bit – it's so refreshing to have a kid who listens. I know, she's not yet 2 and things could get worse – so much worse. But I've been there, done that, and after what Sammie put us through, no wonder Disney seems like a breeze. And even if she does get completely crazy, soon she'll be old enough to go to school, and we'll start the terrible twos all over again with Christopher. After 3 tantruming girls in their terrible twos, I'm curious to see what a boy will be like. Probably no big deal, at least compared to Sammie ☐