

When You Almost Miss a Blessing

Last week, my three middle children—Kenny, Lindsey and Jessica—and I went to see a baseball game at Globe Life Park in Arlington, where the Texas Rangers play. Although I can't quote you any statistics or tell you much about the history of baseball, I do understand quite a bit about how the game is played, including things like strategy and rules.

So I found it rather amusing when my kids, who know virtually nothing about baseball, began to make comments and ask questions about ... well, about everything.

"Mommy, why are those lights green?"

"Why are people clapping?"

"Do these guys get paid for playing this game?"

"Look at that plane flying overhead!"

"What just happened?"

"See those birds on the field? Whose team are they on?"

"Mommy, will the fireworks (set off when a Ranger hits a home run) kill any birds?"

"Mommy, why is there all that extra space?" (She was referring to the outfield.)

"Tell me if anybody hits a home run."

"When is somebody going to come by selling food?"

"Aren't we going to hit ANY runs?"

"I don't understand much about this game. You'll have to explain it to me."

Or the "Who's-on-First" routine between Kenny and Lindsey:

Kenny (reading the scoreboard): "Robinson Chirinos grounded to short."

Lindsey: "He's grounded?"

Kenny: "Short."

Lindsey: "Why??"

After awhile, though, the constant, stream-of-consciousness comments and questions began to annoy me. Could we not just *watch the game*? What did the kids think we were there for, anyway?

Apparently, they thought we were there for *five* trips to the concession stands and/or bathrooms. When the oldest kid you have with you is only 10, if someone has to go potty or wants a drink, all of you have to get up and make the trek.

Actually, to be strictly accurate, only four of those trips occurred in the first nine innings. Yes, you read that right: *first* nine innings. Because my kids got an unexpected bonus when the game went into 11 innings.

"Kids, the game just went into extra innings," I said.

"Woo hoo!" shouted 9-year-old Lindsey. "I'm not even tired! I've had too much sugar!"

By the bottom of the 11th inning, we were sitting in the very top row of the stadium, because the kids had noticed that nobody else was up there, and they thought it would be "really cool" to sit up so high. So when a Rangers player got a base hit, driving in the winning run, we had several rows to ourselves as we cheered and then jammed to the celebratory music playing over the loudspeakers.

It was a fantastic time, and the kids had a blast.

But I almost missed it.

It's not that I wasn't on time for the game. It's just that after the first few minutes of questions and comments from my children, I began to perfect the fake smile and fake polite tone of voice that you only use when you don't really mean it, and when people are around who might very well hear you. I was really annoyed. The kids were interrupting my enjoyment of the

game. I wanted to share my love of baseball with them, and they were paying attention to all the wrong things. I had paid for our evening with extra money I earned from babysitting my friends' son, and my kids were ruining it for me. Or so I thought.

Until somewhere about the sixth or seventh inning when I realized something: The kids were having a great time. As in, a *really* great time.

And all of a sudden, I was brought up short once again by my own bad attitude.

My purpose in bringing my children to the game was to show them a good time. And they were, indeed, having a great time. It just didn't look the way I expected it to look.

I wanted them to fall in love with the game; they wanted to enjoy every minute of *everything* that was going on—the amazing immensity of the stadium, the crowds, the junk food, the sounds, sights, smells and new experiences. The delight of being somewhere special with someone you love.

And I almost missed a huge blessing of enjoying it with them, of enjoying *them*, because the experience wasn't turning out quite like I thought it would.

God was offering me something beautiful, but because it wore other clothing than I expected it to wear, I almost didn't recognize it.

I wonder how often you and I miss out on God's blessings because we're looking for one particular kind of blessing, and that's not what God has in mind.

How often do we hope things turn out a certain way, and when they don't, we say, "Well, there's nothing to enjoy here"?

Perhaps you're facing disappointment right now. Is it possible that, if you could see the situation through God's eyes, you

would count it a blessing?

May God open our eyes to *all* of His blessings, not just the ones that look like we expect.

John 1:16—"We have all received from His fullness grace upon grace."

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is the author of *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy* and *Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure* (Regal Books.) She is also a stay-at-home mom with five children.*