

Vacation Diary – Chapter Three

Tuesday, Oct 21 – We visited Universal Studios, Islands of Adventure, and the Out of Control Magic Show at Wonderworks. Universal and Islands are right next to each other, but there is a lot of walking between the two. A lot of walking and not so much for the kids. But they did have fun, especially Disney who got to see Barney Live. I missed the Animal Actors show this year, but I was more in the mood for rides, and we got to ride plenty. The new Simpsons ride is actually better than I expected. It's the old Back to the Future ride except you are now riding through Springfield. The waiting area is themed well, and you get to watch little Simpsons snippets while you wait – talk about making the time go by fast! The ride is very cool, and you actually feel like you're riding around Springfield. The Mummy ride is still my favorite thing in both parks, and it's as cool as I remember. I especially like sitting near people who haven't been on it before – it's a blast to see the reactions to the haunted house meets roller coaster. Over at Islands, we got positively soaked to the core riding the Bluto boat ride, but that was expected because I rode it twice – those huge raft rides are my favorite type of water ride. My 4-year-old Sammie hated it, much to my surprise because she was just playing in the sprinklers at Epcot the night before. But she felt better after going on one of the kids' favorites, the Cat in The Hat ride. Our two-year-old loved that one too. We were a bit strapped for time and didn't get to try some of the coasters and other rides I've never been on over at Islands, but oh well, we still had fun. And my husband got chosen again (4th time now) to be an "actor" in the skit they do before the Earthquake ride which is now known as "Disaster". They redid it and added a cool hologram of Christopher Walken. And they chose my husband to be the "hunky" lead actor – but then, I always knew that ☐

The magic show was a lot of fun and it made me want to produce something like it locally for our community theater. It's kind of like stand-up comedy AND magic in one, with lots of audience participation. My husband, daughter, and our friend were all chosen to go on stage, and I filled up the camera's memory card trying to record everything. And a note to Jamiahsh – you really don't know me well enough by now to not point at me when they're asking for volunteers?!? You are so lucky he didn't pick me – I would have blamed you and had your head! Just kidding... well, kind of, but don't do that again!

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 ☐