

**Dear Family:**

Happy Halloween!

In observance of the Sabbath day—and doesn't that just put the "trick" in trick-or-treating?—I wanted to dress the children as the *Holy* Ghost, Lazarus emerging from the tomb, and Queen Jezebel (the closest thing the Bible has to a witch). But as two of these people are male, we were forced to resort to the more standard Hermione Granger (Hannah), unicorn (Lucy) and pumpkin (Sophie).

Compounding the Sunday "trick" (from the children's perspective), today was Stake Conference, meaning that in lieu of primary and nursery (which they actually like) they got to sit through two solid hours of boring grown-up talks. Lucy, who spent approximately 117 of the meeting's 120 minutes ping-ponging between her mother and me begging for food (neither of us had any), finally gave up during the closing hymn and pulled from inside her tights some candy she smuggled in that she had been *saving for the drive home*. (I know adults who don't have that kind of foresight.)

Hannah is very bright, but Lucy has definitely become our most quotable child. A sampling:

**On her birthday (long after the party) when visiting cousins didn't want to play a game she chose:** "It's my birthday but nobody's following my commands."

**On occasionally being forced to make the entire 0.7-mile (mostly downhill) journey home from school on foot:** "I wish I didn't have legs, so I wouldn't have to walk anywhere....The only shortcut is the car!" *She thinks that Danielle, a little paraplegic girl with no arms who lives up the street, has a pretty sweet deal.*

**On not always being permitted to go first:** "The 'unpatient' person should always go first. Hannah is very patient. She doesn't have trouble waiting, and Sophie's little so she doesn't really care. But I'm the impatient person, so I should go first."

**When not getting her way generally:**

**LUCY:** Lord, Lord, Lord, please let me do anything I want.

**HER MOTHER:** Lucy, I'm sorry you can't do anything you want.

**LUCY:** I WAS TALKING TO THE LORD!



**Lucy, age 5**

I'm sure there are others. The birthday referenced above was Lucy's fifth and was celebrated on Conference Saturday (before the sessions) with all of her New Jersey, DC, and Maryland relatives. The unlikely geography that makes impromptu get-togethers like this possible still blows me away.



**Hannah, Lucy and Sophie with Ashya (their Indian neighbor/friend—real Indian, not Columbus Indian)**

**(...on our new front porch.)**

We're trying to be responsible parents and not unduly influence our children's future political views (yeah, right) but we were happy to learn that Hannah was one of at least two kids who correctly voted for Bush in her school's mock election. We live in a neighborhood where Democratic lawn signs probably outnumber Republican ones 10 to 1 (and many of the Bush signs have been defaced). This will be the second consecutive presidential election in which I will vote in Maryland (for a candidate who has no chance of carrying Maryland) early in the morning and then have to watch the election returns from a hotel room in a different state. Four years ago I was in Richmond, Virginia. This year I'll be back in Orange County (CA) for the fourth time in six weeks. At least I won't have to stay up until the middle of the night waiting for all the western returns to roll in. (Incidentally, if history is any indication, today's Redskins loss doesn't bode well for the incumbent.)

Hannah's soccer season wrapped this week. By the end she was the only girl on the team (one other girl quit), but this didn't deter her from wearing pink plaid flannel pants and other equally girlie apparel to practices. Crystal claims that she wouldn't have dressed this way, but she also subscribes to her mother's philosophy of allowing children to dress themselves no matter how ridiculous they look (so long as everything's covered). My own mother took a somewhat different view with us, but I prefer to take after my father and just stand clear on stuff like that. (Actually, I doubt dad really ever took much notice of what we wore.) Hannah described the best players on her team as "almost as good" as her cousin Noah, which is kind of sweet.

Finally, I'm still basking in the afterglow of what was possibly the most satisfying baseball postseason of my adult life. While I'm not exactly a die-hard Sox fan, I'm probably the only person who will read this who has ever been involved in a "Yankees Suck" chant at Fenway Park during a Yankees/Red Sox game. (It was Sept. 8, 1998 and Boston lost the game, but it obviously had a tremendous impact on me.)

Hope all is well with you.

