

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

Easter Adventure



They say everything's bigger in Texas, but since moving here, I still don't often encounter families that rival the size of my own.

With the count at eight, we've officially outgrown the minivan and usually cause a moment's hesitation in even the friendliest hostesses when we enter a restaurant.

In a country where the family size has been decreasing over the last century, my parents seemed to have missed the memo. But I'm not complaining. I love being a part of a large family, and I'm sad growing up has necessitated we go our separate ways.

This year, I'm in Texas, two of my sisters are in Nebraska and three remain at home in Holyoke. In what I consider to be an action taken to combat Empty Nest Syndrome, my parents are also hosting an exchange student. A big family just isn't quite the same once it gets spread out.

During Thanksgiving and Christmas, however, we gathered all together and filled my parents' house, recreating the havoc that once defined our everyday lives. Those glorious reunions don't happen often, but when they do, there is hardly a dull moment.

To my great delight, my family made the trip down to Granbury, Texas this Easter weekend. Unfortunately my sister, Nicole, had class, so she was absent from the reunion, but the remaining seven piled into the minivan and made the 14-hour drive to the country of Texas.

We shared some laughs about the southern accents and mannerisms, but I think the Texan characteristic that will last longest in our memories of that weekend is the kindness.

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Like I've said, it's always an adventure when my family gets together, and this weekend proved no different. In this particular escapade, the Brandt family was extended some good old-fashioned Texan benevolence.

Sunday morning, the family filed in, taking up an entire row in church. Everything seemed normal as we listened to the Easter message, but then I noticed my youngest sister, Dani, feverishly trying to twist a mood ring off her finger.

I redirected my attention to the pastor, but it wasn't long before Dani caught my attention again. She was tugging and pulling, but it didn't seem the ring would budge. Despite trying desperately to stay focused for the remaining 15 minutes of the sermon, I still couldn't help but notice Dani's continual attempts to remove the ring.

As the piano struck the first chord of the closing song, I suggested she go to the restroom to try some soapy water. With a somewhat panicked look in her eye, she said she didn't know where it was, and I offered to show her.

Now as much as I like to think I'm Super Sister and can solve any problem, no amount of cold water, soap, twisting or turning could get that darned ring past her knuckle. I heard the congregation leaving the sanctuary, and I looked to Dani with resignation. We had no choice but to tell Dad.

Probably the reason it's so hard for me to accept the fact that I'm not Super Sister is that my father is Super Dad. There's not a problem in my world he can't solve, so I led Dani back to him with total confidence that he would release her finger from its chameleonic captor.

In the midst of the Easter hustle and bustle, I weaved my way through the crowd and filled my parents in on the situation. My mom quickly suggested we head to the kitchen for some ice and cooking oil. There we ran into a gentleman who was eager to help us out.

Despite his kindness and our efforts, the ring still wouldn't move. My dad declared that we would have to cut it off. It took but a moment for him to clarify we would be cutting off the ring,

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not the finger. We thanked the thoughtful stranger for his help, but he insisted on giving us his number before we left, encouraging us to call if we needed any help at all.

Making our way to the parking lot, we met a second friendly stranger. This man happened to have just the tools my dad needed to cut the ring, and he happily let us borrow them.

We were all relieved when Dani got the ring off, and I think I speak for all of us when I say I'm thankful for those people in the world who are willing to help complete strangers in need. Maybe it's a Texas thing, or maybe people were feeling extra nice in the spirit of Easter. Regardless, that act of kindness was awesome, and it certainly makes me want to pay it forward.

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