

## **Might as Well Laugh Now**

My mind's eye can see my little Benjamin, around three years old. His brother and sister were in school, so he and I took our weekly trip to the library. I never bothered trying to make him sit with the group of children who were there for story time. Expecting that little fireball to sit still for more than two minutes was almost funny. I would let him play in the section where they encouraged the children to build blocks or work on puzzles. They had cars and dinosaurs too, so it was a moment where I could let him play while I found new reading books to take home for the week.

When I was finished, I sat with Ben in the play area, just enjoying watching him play with the other children. I glanced over to the story time group, and saw that they had finished reading and were engaged in some sort of project on the floor. I turned to a very kind voice asking me if we would like to join the other children working on their project. The children were lying on a large piece of paper while their parent outlined their body. After the parents cut out the shape of the child, the children were to color their 'body'.

I know this sounded innocent enough, but this kind woman did not know my little Ben. I politely said, "Thank you, but we'll just stay over here." Before I knew it, she had my little guy by the hand saying, "Come on, it will be fun!" I had no choice but to follow. All I could hear at that moment were the warning bells going off in my head, and they were in full alert mode!

First, I couldn't get Ben to lie down. Second, when he did finally lie down, I couldn't get him to be still. When he had enough of that, he was up on his feet and to my dismay he was jumping from body to body, unfortunately landing on some of the real bodies and not just paper. I could see 'friendly voice' watching with her mouth dropped open, obviously regretting that she had invited us to join them. As I usually did with this all too common scenario, I apologized profusely while carrying my little Tasmanian devil away from the carnage.

Our library has two floors. Imagine if you can a square donut at the top of the stairs. There are clear walls along the inside perimeter of the donut, so from the bottom of the stairs, you can see all around the upstairs floor. Well, I managed to settle Ben down enough to stand with me in line to check out our books. I turned for a moment and when I turned back, Ben was no longer at my side. I instantly looked at the people around me and in unison, they pointed toward the top of the stairs.

I left my place in line and sprinted up the staircase toward my son. Did he stand there and wait for me? Of course not! He proceeded to run around the donut hole for all to see, squealing with delight at mommy chasing him! I knew every eye in the library was on me and my son, but that didn't stop me from calling out to one of the clerks, "Stop him, please!" A good Samaritan finally intercepted my heathen and I was able to get to him. Out of breath and mad as a hornet, once again I picked him up and carried him down the stairs. I'm sure I mumbled some things to him about how what he did was wrong, etc., probably more for the benefit of the onlookers than for Ben's sake.

We didn't check out any books that day. I wanted to hang Ben up by his little toes. I was so mad I was afraid to spank him, but boy, did I want to spank him! I put him in his car seat. I was still fuming when I got into the driver's seat. I looked in the rear view mirror and saw my little Ben dreamily looking out the window. He had hold of a corner of his favorite blankey and was tickling the inside of his ear with it...a sure sign that he was ready for his nap. At that moment, my anger dissipated and I was moved to tears. Ahhhh. Motherhood.