

Look, mama, look—do you see?

In a world of whittled attention spans, perhaps the greatest gift I can offer my children is also the simplest.

By [Laura Kelly Fanucci](#)

April 3, 2019



Getty Images

Look, mama, look, do you see? A thousand times a day, tugging at my sleeve, calling out in the rearview mirror, yelling from upstairs, downstairs, around the corner, from the other room: *look! Come quick! You have to see this! You have to see!*

Witness is part of parenthood. We watch a child becoming before our eyes. Awakening to the world at first. Alert for longer stretches each week, searching around the room with brand-new, blinking eyes.

We watch and wonder: how did we help create this creation? We watch for the baby to smile, to laugh, to coo. Then to move, to roll, to crawl, to creep, to stand, to cruise, to totter, then triumphantly to walk. We clap and coax, we capture on camera: the marvel of witness.

But swiftly the tide turns. When words meet movement, we must change, too. Now we are not simply the passive witness of milestone after milestone. Now we must become the attentive audience. Now we are beckoned, called, commanded to pay attention.

Look, mommy, look what I made! Look! You have to come see this.

The years are short and fast, small and fleeting, when they want me to see. When they stand before me beaming with the glow of delight, the satisfaction of creation. When they offer me their first-fruits: Play-Doh, Legos, coloring page, cardboard box-turned-rocket-ship, basement fort, stuffed animal zoo, leaf collection, sand castle, soapy sink, spontaneous dance party.

They are uninhibited and unabashed. Their joy demands to be multiplied by a watchful, waiting eye. *Look! Mom, look! Come here. Come! Look at this!*

A hundred times a day. The call, the summons. Stop. Turn. See. Let the light of your love and the gift of your attention shine on them. (I must remind myself in the exasperated moment, torn from something serious, from an otherwise urgent task, from whatever I deem important instead.) Again and again, movement of conversion, sacrifice of love, surrender to another.

If only I could see Your way, I pray and muse throughout the day, flitting between a thousand distractions. If only You would give more clarity, more direction, more confirmation of where and what You want from me, a sign of where I should go, and then—*Mom! Mommy! Mama! Look, look, come and see.*

Perhaps their cry is the clearest answer. The only thing I seek.

In a world of whittled attention spans, in a culture of [continuous partial attention](#), in an era of distraction and addiction and depression and isolation—is the greatest gift I can offer them the simplest? Is the single, precious, focused, free offer of my attention the only everything they want right now? (Is it all that I want, too?)

Set down the phone. Set aside whatever small, thin rectangle distracts me from the living, breathing, growing humans that call forth my time, attention, and love (which might all be the same). Creation comes to fullness of life only when it is seen and shared by another.

Am I like this, too? I wonder. Needing to be seen by God, wanting to be heard by God, always seeking God, always losing God, longing to find and to know—do You see me? Can You hear me? Does my day, my creation, my self, my life have meaning if You do not notice? If You do not see?

What I want is what they seek: to be the apple of another's eye. The tiny person in the pupil that we carry with us. Me upside down in you. You upside down in me. Seen, connected, centered.

But we are this to God, too. Beloved and beheld. Never anywhere but the loving center.

Look! Look, Mom, look. Urgent, imperative, shouting small prophets urging to wake me up all day long. Faith is one and the same story: blindness, then sight; cloud, then clearing; night, then day; darkness, then light.

Come and see, he beckoned to strangers-turned-friends, fishers-to-disciples. Come and see.

Because, of course, to see is to be changed. To come is to be converted.

They call to me even now as I write, call to me with laughter and cries and shouts and often all at once—*come and see! You have to see this!*

I do. I come and I see. Because I am, because they are, because I am theirs, because they are mine. Because seeing starts with the turn from the self to the other, from inspiration to creation, from isolation to encounter.

Because the only reason we are here is to love, which starts with seeing.

Come, they will call me a million times before they leave this house for good. Look, they will ask me to love what they love. See, they will open me, heart and eyes. This is why we are here. Come and see.

Originally posted at [Mothering Spirit](#)