



Simple, with Tsh Oxenreider

Episode 199

thesimpleshow.com

Segment One

Tsh: [00:00](#) In this episode I'm chatting with my friend and co-host Crystal Ellefsen. She and I are talking about what we wrote about this week. Crystal wrote about the value of family road trips and why she and her family with young children make it happen even when it's challenging. It's been a lot of time camping and hitting up national parks so she has a lot of experience dealing with the little crowd both in the car and outdoors. In fact, Crystal is nursing her youngest baby Violet as we record this, so you'll hear a bit of baby noise as we chat, which is completely fine with us on this show. We are very pro-baby around these parts. Also, this week I published a piece about a girlfriend getaway I went on last week with friends I hadn't seen in almost two decades.

In this chat I talk about the value of getting together with other adult friends beyond just a dinner out as well as the practicals of putting together an overnighter with friends when the ultimate goal is to reconnect, reminisce, and make new memories. In the third segment, I'm talking with my friend, Haley Stewart about what's on doc as well as what's already happened for the liturgical calendar in June and into July. Let's get right into it. Here's Crystal starting us off with sharing her thoughts on road trips and camping with little kids.

Crystal, you travel quite a bit with your family of smaller kids and you guys do a lot of road tripping so you have things to say and share both mindset and practical wise in this department. Why don't you start us off with a little bit of what you're thinking.

Crystal: It's interesting because I know you of course everyone knows you've done so much international travel and you've written about it in your books, but we've never done international travel with our family, but we have done a lot of domestic travel. We're actually on a quest to go to every national park. In general, yes, we are pretty experienced. I also realized that I grew up going on lots of family road trips. That was pretty much all we did. There were some years we were in homeschool and so we would go wherever my dad had a business trip and we would just go really slowly and hit up like every museum on the way there.

It's funny because I was asking my mom, I have such fond memories of those. I'm sure we complained but I don't remember complaining. I just have such great memories. She was like, oh, that's so great to know because yes, you definitely complained which just made me feel of course better about my own children that they will have happy memories even though there's lots of complaining. I've mentioned before, right now I have an adult step son, a 10 year old, just turned four year old and now Violet is almost eight months. Very widespread and my adult stepson doesn't come with us on every trip, but we have a very wide range, which I'm sure lots of people can relate to, obviously it can be so much less expensive to do a road trip.

One thing that I have really found, especially with all of the different ages, this is my most important tip that I suggest to anyone. Last summer we went on about a 12 day road trip. We went to Colorado and Utah and a bunch of different places from California. The thing I think is the most helpful is before you go on a long road trip, try out a short one very near when you're going so that it's the ages that you're kids currently are. Because obviously every kid, I mean especially if you have kids that still need naps or if you have someone that's potty training or whatever it is, I think it's so helpful to just do that practice run. It also can really help because even just on a practical level of, oh, you know what, we need to make sure we remember this or we didn't get this, or we should actually do this differently next time. Or we didn't need that thing that we brought or something like that. I think even just one night can even work. You're not driving too far and you just go. I think you have a different attitude because you're not necessarily looking like we're going to have these great memories. It's really like this is practice, what are we missing? For me, even though that's obviously a time investment, but it makes the longer trip so much less stressful for me.

Tsh: [04:48](#) Longterm podcasts listeners know that I have always said, the more your kids travel, the better travelers they become. I think that's really true because just like we do, we get the hang of how to wait in line, how to sit in a car for a long time, etc. But that's great advice to make sure you do it in your kid's life stage because little kids especially change so frequently. I personally have found for sure that the age three and under is the most at least physically challenging to travel with. If you are maybe with a five or six year old and you're thinking, oh we did that several years ago and it was so hard, I never want to do it again to maybe give it a try, like you said overnight because you might be surprised at how different it is.

Crystal: Absolutely. I think it's also just helpful to remember every kid really does respond to it differently. Even obviously, some kids nap better in the car, some kids don't and at different stages they might respond to it differently as well. On

a practical level, for example, this year in March we did a one night camping trip, which was our first camping trip with the baby. It went pretty well. But we approached it as this is a test run because we had another trip, a longer trip scheduled at the end of April. We were wondering, do we really want to do that or not? The camping trip, these are all pretty much only do camping trips or we either visit family or we camp, that's basically it. We went on that one night trip and it helped us and it was pretty good. It would be helpful to have a pack and play, just all the little detailed things. Because it was camping, there's a lot of gear involved. Are we missing anything? Are we good? And that was great. It was really fun. We basically had to stagger the year. We had this one night trip in March. We had this five day trip in end of April, and then we were planning potentially, if the five day trip went well to actually drive up to Oregon from California, and see my sister and a much longer one.

Tsh: What's much longer?

Crystal: More like 10 days plus.

Tsh: Okay. For camping especially that's definitely long.

Crystal: That one we would be, we might stay in a hotel on the way to a national park. But we would be camping for probably at least a good four days part of that..

However, the trip in April was terrible.

Tsh: Oh no.

Crystal: It was pretty rough. It was beautiful. We were in the Sequoias, but it was definitely very challenging and we left and decided, you know what? Let's not do the long trip this summer. Normally I would say we just power through and we're just gonna do it anyways. Changing that and just deciding, okay, actually this is not the best of year for that, but it'll happen again in the future.

Tsh: [07:42](#) I think that mindset alone is probably helpful for some listeners who might be wishing they could do something a little more epic, or a little more travel oriented this summer or this year and just can't because of whatever reason, be it babies like you or like last year my family and I, we barely traveled because of house renovation stuff and we still have house renovations but we're farther along now where we feel like we could leave for a little bit of time, which is why we're going up to the Pacific northwest this summer. I think a lot of us might have a mindset of I want to have a travel oriented family and maybe even have a specific goal, like you with your national parks and whenever you just can't make much progress on that value in your life, it feels a little bit restrictive or claustrophobic or especially if it's travel specific, like cabin fever. I think what

you've said there is really good encouragement that it's just not your season, but that's okay. That doesn't mean you've sworn off travel forever.

Crystal: [08:39](#) Exactly. One of the most important mindset things in general, if you are doing this more active, it's not really a vacation, right? It's a trip. It's an adventure. It's not totally restful, you know? I think the most important thing is that we're all learning to be flexible. That is one of the things I think about of the value of a road trip and traveling with your family is we're learning to be flexible. Even in the planning of that, it was hard for me to let go of, oh, I want to do this big epic trip. Then I realized, you know what? It's okay. We can do it another year. This is a high value in our family, but it's just one summer and so it'll be okay. In general, that is a lesson that I want to impart to my children when we're traveling is we have a plan. I think having the plan is important but we also have to be flexible.

Tsh: Sure. Now you guys, you have little kids right now, so you're in the thick of that stage that feels like at least on paper that it's harder to do a road trip. Tell me a little bit of the practicals that you deal with. Are your kids good in the car? Do you have to make a lot of stops? How do you handle snacks, all that stuff.

Crystal: Sure. I try to think of the car time in 30 minute increments. How can they be entertained by one thing for 30 minutes and then shift it, right? Because we're not really in the stage where we can all listen to a family audio book for an hour or two. When Jane was a baby and it was pretty much just Gray was the only real child then we would listen to longer audio books together and that was great. But right now that doesn't work. I bring tons of snacks and I have art supplies and I have one of those, I'll have to find the link, but it's a little thing that you can put on your lap so you can color and they can have all their stuff with them.

Tsh: Oh, is it like a little tray with legs on either side?

Crystal: Yes. That works great for our three, she's four now, but when she was three last year, that was great for her. She could color for a long time. I try to think of it in 30 minute chunks and basically think of how often do we all need to stop and making sure that those stops really involve running around. I will even Google and find a playground. Not just a Mcdonald's fast food restaurant with a play structure, but like an actual playground. I think when they're older you can stop at a museum or a scenic something and they can get a little activity. But for the toddler age, if she can run around for just 20 minutes and then we're good.

Tsh: It actually is similar for us in the slightly older kid stage. My kids are 14, 11 and nine and we do the same thing. We always look up local parks or playgrounds even at our kids' age. They might not swing or play on the structure as much, but they still just need that wide open space to run and maybe climb trees and

toss a ball around or whatever. Food wise, usually stop at those places to have lunch instead of the drive thru type of fast food places. Both for health reasons, our kids function better. Also we enjoy a picnic a little bit more than just a quick, pop ins to fast food places. Not saying, those don't have their times in places for sure. But we find that we like to swing by a grocery store, just get super easy, you don't even really need to make anything foods, like finger foods and then swing by that park and eat lunch and let everyone run around as well.

Crystal: [12:26](#) Another thing that we do is we do allow screen time in the car with limits, but we do not allow screen time when we arrive. Once we're camping, there's no screen time. Even usually once we are arriving, if we're going to a city, even if we're staying with my sister or something. Of course, we might watch like a movie together maybe if we're in a city, but if we're camping, there's no more screen time. Having clear expectations like that ahead of time also really help. I have no problem with them having screen time on a long car trip, I don't want them to have it for like five hours in a row. It really helps that again because we've done this so often there's no pushback and I think that's one of the obvious things. The more you do it, they get used to the routines. They know, oh we don't do screen time when we're camping. We don't do screen time once we arrive.

Tsh: You have a baby, obviously you have a baby. We can hear Violet right now. How is she in the car? I know we have a lot of listeners with babies who are hesitant to do road trips because of the baby thing. Do you have to stop and nurse a lot? Is she just okay in a car seat and that's how you make it work?

Crystal: I feel like she needs about the same breaks that the toddler needs. In that way, it's not that different because I think Jane can't go three hours without using the bathroom. We end up just trying to plan when I had when we went before, okay, it takes 20 to 30 minutes to nurse and change a diaper. We plan that for the exercise break. We do have to stop a lot, but we just plan that in. That's just part of it. It's just going to take us awhile but we can usually get at least three hours.

Tsh: That's good. Final question regarding national parks, I'm curious if there's anything that is particularly interesting or helpful to know with little kids at national parks. Do you make a point to go to particular ones or do particular things with kids of your age?

Crystal: One thing is they almost all have a junior ranger program so you can pick up a little book at one of the visitors centers, often for free and then it gives them tasks to do while you're there. They're all a little different. That definitely makes them feel a little bit more involved. Because we're trying to go to all of them were not necessarily picking ones that are better or not. It's probably just

general camping tips that like the way that we can, we're just really prepared for anything.

Tsh: Sure. I'll say, I don't know if your kids have this because we go to a lot of national parks when we travel too, they have those passports, those little national park passports and get stamps at each ones. Our kids have all of those and they like to collect the stamp. Those are fun and we actually just keep them in the car at all times in the glove compartment because the way we travel, we might be like, hey we're 50 miles from a national park and we're going to make the extra effort and detour and go that route so that we can get this, not so much to get the stamp in the passport. We want to actually go, but it's nice that we have the passports in the glove compartment because then they get the stamp even if we weren't planning on it.

Crystal: It's definitely not easy to do road trips or camping with young children. But I have noticed both, I know for myself and with Grey as 10, just like you say, starting them young can be hard, but it makes it so much easier later. In some ways we just think of it as, in general, having young children is hard no matter what. It's just exhausting. I don't know that there's that many types of trips that are not exhausting unless you bring an au pair or something. We've just accepted that we're really investing in the future of our camping as well so that our road trips and our camping, it'll be better later because of what we're investing now because they'll be so used to it.

Segment Two

Tsh: What's fun is that I'm talking about travel as well, slightly different travel because not really getting into the kids side of things. This week I wrote about a weekend and I say "weekend" getaway I just had last week with some old girlfriends of mine and we got together. It was really fun. I'm going to get into that a little bit, but I thought in this chat I could get into a little bit of the practicals along with why it's good to reconnect with old friends and with your spouse and just with other adults in more than just to having people over for dinner or go out on a double date to actually maybe get away for an overnighter or for a weekend.

I wrote about this, my girlfriends and I who Crystal, you know from our shared history in Austin, these are friends of mine that I have known for decades. Honestly, most of us met in high school. One of them I even met in kindergarten. I've known these friends for a really long time and to add a twist to this, all five of us have lived overseas within the past 10 to 15 years. None of us lived overseas either in the same country or at the same time. Our paths just never would cross. We were actually thinking when we first got together this weekend, okay, when was the last time? Someone would say, oh, is it for this

thing? And then it's like, no, Tsh was an Oregon or was it this thing, oh no, we were in China or you were in Morocco or Turkey or all these things.

We finally realized it was for one of our weddings. That was the last time we were all in the same room together. But of course at a wedding reception, it's not like we're going to hang out a lot. That's just not how it goes. It really had been forever since we all just had the time to sit around and reminisce and catch up and just be people. I am so glad we made the effort to do this. It was one of our friends who currently lives out of the country and saw that, okay, she's going to be in the country. This other girlfriend of ours is going to be in the country. She lives in a different part of the world now as well. Let's make this happen. We're gonna make every effort. One of them even flew in from another part of the United States into Austin and then we all just road tripped.

The thing is we didn't have much time. Somebody had to get somewhere just within a few days. This was just this little sliver of time where we all could make it and we made the effort to do it. It was not "perfect". We originally tossed out ideas of what we could go do. Maybe like we go to New York City and that way we can go see a play together and then we can do some fun things. We thought about maybe some fun walkable town like Charleston where we could just have a foodie experience and take in some history. When we got to think of it, we realized, oh my goodness, it has been so long. All we're going to want to do is sit around and talk. I mean, really and truly, maybe even not even get out of our pajamas all day.

We are going to want to just sit around and talk, why spend the money on an extra flight or some really cool location or some great hotel or whatever. Instead, let's just rent an airbnb that's comfortable but just a house and make it in a pretty location. But that's all we need. It was a fantastic experience. I wanted to talk a little bit about, I guess just how, and not so much how to do this well as though there's only one right way to do this, but how it worked well for us and to encourage you guys listening in to make the effort to get together, even if it's overnight, even if it's only two nights, just to squeeze in that time because these friendships really are important.

Crystal: So where did you go?

Tsh: [20:24](#) We went pretty much the middle of nowhere as in, I've lived in Texas for a long time. I'd never even heard of this small town. It was one of our friends, Lisa, who knew of another friend's guest house and it was going to be available. It was just west of Waco in nowhere of interest really. You would drive right through it and not thinking anything of it. But they happen to have a house that overlooked a creek for fishing. It's their little fishing getaway and it was actually nice. This isn't like fishing in a camping sort of sense. This is a really nice, we all

had queen sized beds, we all had showers. It was a beautiful kitchen, living room, great wraparound porch that overlooked just acres and acres of green space and it really was so secluded.

My cell phone did not work at all. There's no Wifi at this house on purpose and there's not even a road that goes up to the house. We went on a gravel road for a while and then Lisa just said turn here to the girl driving and it was through the grass and she just went through the grass over this meadowy hill and then we just come up upon this house. It really was so in the middle of nowhere, but it was fantastic for that reason, for our purposes because we didn't want to do anything other than talk.

I thought I would just share a few tips on how to make a weakened group get away work for you specifically when the focus is on reconnecting. Your focus here isn't necessarily on seeing the sights or going out and doing things. It's to reconnect with old friends and family.

The first tip I have is basically don't over plan. You'll most likely just want to hang out. It doesn't mean you shouldn't do anything but don't come with some itinerary of at 0800 we're going to do this and then at 1600 we're going to do that. Just come with this idea of we're just going to be together and maybe consider we might go do one or two things. On the way out we all got pedicures. We stopped at one of those hole in the wall nail salons and got pedicures and we also stopped in a few shops and we had dinner before heading out. That's all we did. Don't over plan because it's going to go by really fast.

The second tip is to keep it casual. I know there's some friend groups who do like to dress up and go out and there are times and places for that. Like if you do want to go take in a show or you go somewhere particularly interesting, but if you are here to reconnect, keep it really casual because there's a good chance you might not even want to get out of your pajamas, like I said. In general when it comes to reconnecting and reminiscing, people generally like unfancy. We don't need anything substantial beyond just something comfortable. Keep it casual so that your packing is easy and so you don't really have to think about what to bring or what to do when you're there.

Then to wrap up those two thoughts. The third one sounds antithetical to the purpose of travel, but since this isn't really about travel, it's about reconnecting, maybe even consider going somewhere not wildly interesting. Like I said, we thought about New York City, we thought about Charleston and ultimately we went to middle of nowhere, Texas. We weren't even tempted to do anything. We didn't have that feeling of like, oh well we're here, we should check out this one restaurant or museum or place of...

Crystal: You weren't missing out.

Tsh: Yeah. There's nothing to miss out on because there was super nothing to do. Actually consider going somewhere uninteresting on purpose.

Crystal: I imagine that would also make it more affordable because you're not renting a house in a really popular area and you could get a bigger house or a nicer house or whatever.

Tsh: That's right. It's so true. Actually with that, my next point is I think for this kind of purpose guesthouses trump hotels. Hotels are fine if that's what works, that's not saying you can't make it work. The great thing about a guest house is you've got a kitchen so that you can cook meals and you've got a shared living space so you can just hang out in the living room areas. You don't need to go to the lobby or go to a restaurant in order to connect or crowd into somebody who's hotel room. You can all just share the shared space and hang out there. We spent almost the whole time either in the living room or out on the back porch and just sat around talking and so that was a great, easy space to reconnect.

To get practical, one of us found, the one of us that's better with money, she found this app called Crowd Money and it turned out to be a godsend. We didn't even know we needed this thing. She was just like, hey guys, I'm going to try out this app and see if I like it. I'll put a link in the show notes. It's this app that keeps track of who all is spending what and then at the end it tells you who owes money whenever all the spending is settled.

Crystal: That's brilliant.

Tsh: It's so brilliant. We all just decided we're going to take turns buying things. We went out to lunch and one person bought it instead of trying to split the bill. When we got pedicures, somebody else bought it and we actually got a 20% discount because we had multiple pedicures. I bought the groceries because we're not going to split a grocery bill at the grocery store. She just kept track of who all spent what and then on the drive home it turned out like, okay, you owe this person \$60 and there's no way we would've been able to figure that out in our minds. That would have been so confusing. That app turned out to be weirdly useful in a way we didn't even know we needed.

Crystal: It takes out one of the things that I think often it seems like it should be a small thing, but sometimes it ends up feeling heavy on your mind when people are like, oh we got to figure that out. Did you keep your receipt? It's just nice. Anything that you can just remove that could be stressful or distracting or even awkward if people remember it differently or whatever.

Tsh:

[26:27](#) It was even nice because you could include things you normally would feel a little like, nah, I don't want to do that. For example, the one who drove, she just hopped off her car with gas and we told her, add it to the thing. She did her bucks of gas and then we also added, there was only one of us who needed to fly into Austin. We added her flight to divide among us so that she's not the only one that spent the money on flying in. It really was a fantastic way to do things and you're right. It totally eliminated the awkwardness. It also syncs with your, I think either Venmo and PayPal. We just used Venmo and so it was nice so that whenever the bill was done, you can just click a button and say Venmo to this person and it did it. It was really cool.

With that, I would say also put people in charge of what they're good at. Our friend that kept track of the money, she literally has an accounting degree. I mean that's not why we did this, but it was just funny that she's the one that thought of it. You know? One of us is more into cooking and food and so she decided what we were going to eat. I chose the wine because I didn't know I was the one who knew things about wine out of all of us. But I did. And Lisa, our other friends, she's the one that has the connection with the guest house. Just because you have the idea or you're the one that spearheads the thing with your group of friends, hey we should do this, don't let that make you feel like you have to be in charge of it all because it's actually more fun when you potluck the responsibilities anyway so that it doesn't feel like it's a one person show. Don't also let that deter you from even doing it because you're afraid now you are in charge of this huge hole weekend and making it go off beautifully or something. Everyone's adults, everyone can take on a role and it's all fine.

Some final wrap up ideas on where to go or what to do, a few thoughts. We already talked about go somewhere not interesting on purpose, so consider a small town near you. If you live in a mid to larger city, there are tons of those little bitty towns all over the place. Some of them might even be cute and historic or of interest for people who want to get away from the weekend. Look into small towns or like I said, doesn't even have to be interesting, but just consider that sometimes it's even cheaper because it's not a hot tour spot or if you live in a smaller town or midsize town, consider the big city near you. Perhaps it's a couple of hours away to go into a town that you like to go to but you don't have much of an excuse to and you can stay in the city and then maybe go to some city things you don't always get to do like different type of restaurant or just whatever common interest you guys might have that has that there that wouldn't in your town otherwise.

Another way to decide is just look at cheap flight spots. I've talked about this whenever we do Q & A travel questions with Stephanie. A lot of times when you go on the onto Google flights or some airline and they'll show flight deals and

you click and it's not interesting. Houston or Atlanta, I don't really want to go to those places but consider going to those or a small town outside of those, especially if it's a central location, like if you guys all live in different parts of the country, but that one's relatively central. You might be surprised just for a few days. It could be fun. These towns that you would otherwise skip for maybe a week long vacation, that could be nice for a two night weekend spot or there's a small town outside of that city and that way you still can take advantage of a cheap flight without worrying about too much whether it's vacation worthy or something.

Crystal: That's a really great tip. It makes it more realistic if everyone is flying a smaller distance instead of, oh well we're all going to this cool city. But then that person has to fly across the whole country.

Tsh: In fact, a few years ago, I went on a weekend getaway to, there's a house called Whatever Craft House. I don't know if you've ever seen it, but Meg Duerksen runs it and it's on the Internet and it's a really cute house. She turned her childhood home into a guesthouse basically. It is another small town in Kansas. Kansas is definitely not one of those places that I would make a big effort for going away for a weekend or for a week long vacation. But it was perfect for a girlfriend gathering where we were all over the country because Kansas is literally in the middle. Everybody basically had more or less the same amount of flight time to go up to Kansas.

Another thing is perhaps you are wanting to reminisce and reconnect, but you also might want to go do something. Consider what common interests you might have or could have with just a little bit of experience. If you guys are into plays or musicals, consider New York City or maybe if only some of you are and you want to introduce that world to your other friends, you could do that. If you're into food and you just want to try a bunch of interesting restaurants that you don't normally get to go to, you guys could go to Austin or New Orleans or these other foodie kind of places that are well known for a particular type of food.

If you're into nature and you want to either go camping or spend time outside, go to the West Coast, it really can't be beat, especially in the summer when it comes to weather and just gorgeousness really. Also consider the season. If you are going in the fall or winter, look into a mountain cabin to where you can be up in the hills or the the snowy mountains even in the winter or if it's during the spring or summer, consider a lake house to where you've got swimming or even just the view overlooking a lake. That way you can enjoy nature on both ends. That said, if your goal is to save money, do the total flip. Maybe consider the off season of a place, go to the lake house in the dead of winter where the price is going to be really low and you might not swim, but that's okay. It doesn't really

matter. It's cheap and you still have a gorgeous view and vice versa for the mountain cabin in the spring or summer. All this to say these are just really practical. Sometimes in a way they're even a little duh, but it's good to remember that these little efforts are worth getting together with old friends. Honestly, I didn't even think of this idea. It was one of my other friends and at the time I thought, oh my gosh, this is going to be a lot of work or this is a bad time of year for me with everything I have going on. I'm so glad we made the effort to do this because a little bit when a long way, especially with how long it had been since we had gotten together and we left making a pact that we would not let 16 years go by again before doing this because it was ridiculously easy to just get together and so in a couple of years it looks like everyone's going to be in the country again and so we'll just do another reunion of sorts with our a little getaway, I guess tradition. I don't know if you can call it a tradition if you've done it once, but we're going to try and make it a tradition.

Crystal: [33:17](#) This reminds me of your conversation on friendships in episode 195 where you talked about the women that you and Tate saw and how they were clearly old friends who've got together.

Tsh: Yeah, you're right. That is very true. It was fun to watch them in the hot tub just talking about so and so's grandkids and Tate and I talked later, how long had they been doing this? This could've been a decades long tradition. I love that so much and I want to be that that older woman who still gets together with her lady friends because she prioritizes it and sees value in spending time and reconnecting even if it makes a little bit of an effort.

Segment Three

Tsh: [33:58](#) Haley, we're talking about what's on the liturgical calendar in June already in mid June. We've missed some stuff, but there's plenty more to get into, especially as we go into the summer. Let's start off with talking about maybe what we've already missed and liturgical calendar because it's pretty important.

Haley: Yeah. Pentecost was last week, this past Sunday. I think it's that one big feast that we all forget about.

Tsh: It comes up out of nowhere. For us it was the week of, we realize, oh my gosh, because our church does a big potluck that day. What in the world? I can't believe it's already Pentecost. Eastertide went by really fast this year, I feel like.

Haley: So fast. Oh my goodness, I'm just reeling. This next month is going to be not as crazy, but so fast. It snuck up on me completely. It is a big feast and I think because there's no Easter baskets and there's no snowmen and that sort of

thing, there's no cultural things to tie it to you. I forget about it and I forget that this is actually a big, big day. Pentecost is the celebration of, I guess you could call it the birthday of the church. It's when the Holy Spirit came to be with the disciples and the acts of the apostles. It's the end of Eastertide and the beginning of the mission of the Church of spreading the Gospel. We were reading some of the scriptures about it the other morning and my husband pointed out something that I had never thought about before, but I was like, oh that's so cool that in some ways Pentecost, where people were speaking all of these different languages but could all understand one another is the counterpart to the Tower of Babel in which everyone was unified and then their languages become confused and then no one could understand each other and there was no more communication between peoples. I just never thought about that. The Tower of Babel, people were trying to be God by building this tower.

Tsh: [36:16](#) Way back in the early part of the Old Testament.

Haley: Right. That came to ruin, but the Pentecost is the celebration of Jesus. God came and became a man to then raise us up to be like him. He did the work that we could not do and now there is this communication that mirrors what happened at the Tower of Babel. That is so neat. That blew my mind.

Tsh: [36:47](#) Did Daniel mentioned this on Twitter recently? Because I feel like I just read that on Twitter and I have never thought of it like that before.

Haley: [36:53](#) I don't know, who knows what he mentions on Twitter. He has cool thoughts about the scriptures. I thought that was neat. The color for Pentecost is red, which represents the flames, the fire of the Holy Spirit coming down. It looked like tongues of flame and the joy of the Holy Spirit and then lay people can wear red too, but I don't have my life together and I always forget so we all wore blue or something [inaudible].

Tsh: [37:24](#) For some reason, this is a such a weird rabbit trail, but I don't know why, but almost every dress I own is blue and I don't plan that. It just happens to be that way. But I have one red dress and I think of it as my Pentecost dress, which is ridiculous because I can wear it anytime of year, but I specifically have it in my closet still just for Pentecost.

Haley: So fun. Tell me what your church does to celebrate Pentecost.

Tsh: Our church is only three years old, our parish. The tradition is still what we do, we're figuring that out. But obviously it's a big day and so we do the red as well. People were red. Last year, this sweet older woman in our parish decorated with like crepe paper from the different tables and stuff, so it had this flame-like look. We had a potluck afterwards. The potluck, we've done two years ago, we've

done some chili cook off where there's, for the spiciness, the flame. Last year and I think this is going to be what we do from now on because we did this this past week too is you bring something from your heritage. It's that idea of unifying all places around the world and the worldwide church and the idea of speaking in tongues. We would bring something German because Oxenreider's are German or we talked about like maybe Oregon, but what's Oregon food? Who knows? It's a total hodgepodge of stuff. People bring everything from some obscure Swedish meal to someone brought a bag of Doritos, so whatever that means. It's pretty random but fun.

Haley: That's so fun. Question—they did not do this at mass but I feel like I've been to a Catholic church where they've done this before, and I think I've seen this at Anglican churches, where when they're doing the readings from scripture during this service, they have people stand up to speak their native tongue and then you hear all of the voices and you know what they're saying because you have the English translation in front of you and someone in the lecture is up there speaking English, but then you're also hearing it and all these other languages. Have you ever heard of that?

Tsh: [39:36](#) I have not heard of that but that is a fantastic idea and our church is really pretty international. We've got lots of places represented. I'm going to totally bring that up to our priest for next year. What a fun idea.

Haley: I think that's very cool because you're all in some way speaking the same language but we're also hearing the diversity of all the people here and it's exciting. That's something cool. I don't know if I've ever seen that at a mass, I'm trying to think. But anyhow, neat idea.

Something I didn't know until this year is that in the middle ages, this sounds very exciting and dangerous sometimes, throw fiery straw down. It would be small enough pieces that it's not going to burn someone, but it seems like a great way to set the church on fire so you can see why that fell out of fashion. Another thing they would do is throw rose petals down over everyone, like the flames, the tongues of flame. They still do that at the Pantheon, in the oculus. There's tens of thousands of red rose pedals and they fall from the oculus into the Pantheon, which is now a church. I want to see that. I have to see all the rose petals. Sounds very, very cool.

Tsh: That is cool. I've been in the Pantheon when it's raining, so it's fun because it's like right in the middle. A rose petal sounds a lot better. I feel like I've seen that before. There's that one guy on Twitter, The Catholic Traveler. I feel like he's filmed that before or something. I totally forgot about that until you just said that.

Haley: [41:12](#) Yeah, I think so. I love following him. Someday I'm going to make them take me all over Rome.

Pentecost, lots of cool things. We should bring it back because I feel like it's the neglected, forgotten, very cool feast.

Tsh: Yeah. It is. It's like you said, it's the birth of the church, it's a really big deal. It's funny how certain holidays feel bigger than other ones. This one is one to me that should always feel bigger and I think of this during our service, but I forget about it like we already talked about until like a few days before. Oh yeah. That whole thing.

Haley: I think it's a matter of accessories. You know how on Ash Wednesday you get the ashes and it's not like no one has to go on Ash Wednesday, but tons of people want to go because it's really cool and you get the ashes. I feel like we need some Pentecost something.

Tsh: Like a stamp, like a red flaming stamp or something. Branding. We can brand people.

Haley: Everybody gets a headband with the tongues of flame. We'll figure it out. But I think that can bring people in.

Tsh: For me, Pentecost starts off Ordinary Time, which we can get into, but I forget sometimes that there's also feast days that happen in ordinary time. I mean, I don't forget, they just fall by the wayside in my mind. I know you know of something coming up this week, right?

Haley: Yes. This next Sunday, Sunday after Pentecost is Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. The feast celebrating the mystery of the Trinity, which is a huge central Christian tenet of the faith that it's one God, three persons. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is pretty much impossible to wrap your mind around. It's hard to explain. It's always fun to talk about it with the kids because they try to think of things that it would be like and it's, nope, that's a heresy. No, that's a heresy too. There's now way to be like, it's like an apple because you've got no, that's partialism.

Tsh: It's true. I've heard of the ones about the egg, I've heard the ones about the sun and the ice cube and none of it is not quite right. It's because it's one of the most confusing tenants of the Christian faith, I feel like.

Haley: Righ. It isn't like anything else. It's really hard for us to be it's kind of like this thing. We usually will watch with our kids, I don't know if you've ever seen this, but it's a youtube video. I think it's made by like a Lutheran group, but it's called Saint Patrick's bad analogies. It's like Saint Patrick is trying to explain to these

two men who appear at first to be Irish country bumpkins hundreds of years ago and trying to explain the trinity. It turns out they know way more about theology than he anticipated. Every time he tries to describe the trinity, they're like, oh no, that's partialism Patrick. That's arianism Patrick and they're getting really frustrated and he's getting really frustrated. But it's very, very funny and it actually is helpful and understanding all the things that the trinity is not. It's a funny video. We usually watch that one.

Tsh: We'll put it in the show notes.

Haley: Yes. It's really funny. Sometimes we'll cook something with three ingredients. I'm sure that's a heresy of some kind too, but just trying to do three things. One thing you can do is do a mirepoix. I hope I'm pronouncing that right. It's m-i-r-e-p-i-o-x. It's making a base with usually onions, carrots, and celery and it's referred to as the holy trinity of cooking...

Tsh: Specifically French cooking, I've heard.

Haley: Right. Or I think Cajun cooking, but they do bell peppers instead. You can make a soup starting out with a mirepoix. That would be a fun thing to do. A friend of mine, my friend Kendra says they do Neapolitan ice cream.

Tsh: Oh, I like that.

Haley: Something fun like that. That's holy trinity. Then real quick, June 13th is Saint Anthony of Padua's feast day and he's a great saint because he's a patron of finding lost objects, which is something all of us.

Tsh: He's very handy.

Haley: [45:59](#) A very handy saint. He was a priest originally from Lisbon. He moved to Padua in Italy and he became a priest and then he joined the Franciscans when Saint Francis was still alive. He knew Saint Francis of Assisi, which was really cool. I love it when saints were friends with saints.

Tsh: Right, they run into each other.

Haley: There was a really important book of Psalms in his monastic community that was lost and he prayed for its return and it was returned to the community. That's how he got pegged as the patron of lost things. He died pretty young of an illness, but he was known for his preaching and teaching and love for the Scripture and love for the poor. He's a neat guy to know on June 13th.

Tsh: [46:50](#) I will summon his expertise very often now because I'm just sitting here thinking like, oh, I have things I could talk to him about right after this.

Let's talk a little bit about what Ordinary Time even is because some people listening might be thinking, is it what it sounds like? Because when I first became immersed in the liturgical world, I was like, is that just the name for not much is happening.

Haley: Right. In some ways it feels like that, and I don't think it's necessarily wrong. Having these, especially coming out of, Advent is right before Christmastide, is right before Epiphany and then you don't get very much time before Lent is going and then Easter, and it's just thing after thing. It feels really natural to have this time where you're not immersed in this focused season the same way. You're going about your daily life and you're trying to grow in faith and virtue, but Advent and Lent especially feel so focused and I think it's nice to have this time where you're just living life and then you're ready to go back. By the time Advent gets here, I'm always so pumped up about it.

Tsh: Yeah. To explain, for those of you who aren't in the liturgical world of things, Ordinary Time really is a long chunk of time. We're talking now, early summer up to Advent. And of course there's a few, there's All Saints Day and there's Christ the King Sunday. There's things that happen within Ordinary Time, but in terms of the big picture, calendar time, it's this large chunk of time that's not really designated as a specific time like Advent or Lent. In fact the color for Ordinary Time is green, which I think is really cool because to me it symbolizes growth, this idea where you're just growing in your faith or growing in your life. It's a very summery color as things are growing and you're spending a lot of time outside. To me Ordinary Time just really is what it sounds like, but in a good way.

Haley: Yes, I totally agree. I love the green connection that we're just growing, we're living life, and then we'll dive into this more spiritually focused time in Advent. Not that there's not a spiritual dimension to Ordinary Time, but it's just a little bit different. It feels different.

Tsh: It really does. What's funny is the same feels true in our own parish. Our parish attendance goes down in the summer because so many people are traveling and so it just feels like a little bit of a quieter time of just inward growth and less community activity, at least on our end of things. We're going away for the month of July, that kind of thing. I think a lot of people do that as well.

Haley: It weaves well into our American academic calendar I think. I know it wasn't intended that way but I think it works well.

Tsh: It does. Speaking of which, I'm going on a sabbatical for the month of July, so we're not going to have a liturgical calendar focus for July. But it is Ordinary Time as well. I'm totally springing this on you, Haley, but do you have anything that comes to mind that's a focus on the calendar for July at all?

Haley: There are some cool saints days. I'll just hit some high points. There is an American saint, July 14, and she's very, very cool. She's St. Kateri Tekakwitha. She was the daughter of a Mohawk chief. She converted to Christianity. She's called the Lily of the Mohawks. I think that she is the first native American saint to be officially canonized. She is neat in a lot of ways. Every once in a while I meet a Kateri and I'm like, oh, you must be Catholic. It's a bit of an unusual name.

There's also the feast of Saint Mary Magdalen on July 22nd and I love her a lot so we try to celebrate her. Then on the 26th it is Jesus's grandparents feast day. Mary's parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne who were getting on in years could not conceive and then God gave them the gift of a child who was Mary. I just like thinking about Jesus had grandparents. It's weird to think about but he had grandparents just like me. It's a great day to have your parents over or your grandparents over, your children's grandparents or a friend who is older and need somewhere to hang out and have a meal with you. Someone who might be lonely. It's a good time to honor elders in your community. That's a neat day too, on the 26th.

Tsh: [51:52](#) That's very cool. Whenever you first said that, I was like, Jesus had grandparents? Duh. I know he did, what a silly thing to say, but it's not anything I think about. That's a very cool feast day. Actually when we were talking, I was looking up Kateri, I cannot say her last name.

Haley: Don't quote me on the pronunciation.

Tsh: I think you've got it as good as you can get, it says that she's the Patron Saint of Ecology and the Environment. That's very cool too. I bet there's tons of things you could do for that.

Haley: I bet you could just see what's going on in your community that you could get involved in volunteering in her honor. That would be neat.

Tsh: Very cool. Thank you lady for your expertise and wisdom as always in this department. I would say happy a Pentecost, but I guess happy almost Trinity Day, I forget what you called it.

Haley: Happy Ordinary Time.

Tsh: [53:01](#) You can find Haley on her blog at CarrotsforMichelm.com and on Twitter and Instagram @Haleycarrots. You can find Crystal at crystallelfesen.com on Instagram @crystal.ellefsen and to keep up with me, I'm on Twitter @Tsh and Instagram @TshOxenreider, and of course at theartofsimple.net where you can find my writing as well as Crystal's. Head to the show notes of this episode

number 199 at thesimpleshow.com where you can find all sorts of things, links to things we talked about, where you can sign up for my weekly email called Five Quick Things, how you can become a patron and support the work it takes to create the show for just a few dollars a month, as well as how to connect with Crystal and myself. The show is produced by Chad Michael Snavely and thanks also to Caroline TeSelle, Andrea Debbink, and my furry intern, Ginny. Thanks so much for listening, I'm Tsh Oxenreider and I'll catch you back here soon.