

Extra Grace Required—When You Feel Like a Referee

When I was young, I remember my mother telling my brother and me, “I just wish you two would get along.” We were constantly picking at each other and argued about everything. Now that I’m the parent of three strong-willed, opinionated children, I would like to offer my mother a formal apology. I am sorry. I would like to get you a Diet Coke, some chocolate and a foot rub for putting up with me.

There are days I feel the need to wear a black and white striped top because all I do is referee. One of those days, I was cooking dinner when the youngest, Grace, stomped up and waited for me to notice her and the scowl across her face.

I took a deep breath and jumped in. “What’s wrong, Grace?”

“Faith won’t give me any hugs,” she said about her sister, who was probably in the middle of doing homework. Then she took her finger and dragged it across her heart. “See this? There is a line in my heart and Faith better not cross it.” Her dramatic flair made it so hard to take her seriously. I worked to keep my giggle in and my face as sympathetic as possible. But before I could respond, Grace marched back up the stairs.

Shaking my head, I returned to the ground beef I was browning. And as I was putting the finishing touches on dinner, I heard Grace coming down the stairs. I looked up to see both girls in front of me smiling.

“My line filled back up, Mama. I’m OK now,” Grace told me. Her description of not being mad anymore had me laughing.

Maybe your kids have gotten on your ever-loving last nerve. Maybe they’ve been arguing nonstop like mine sometimes do. Perhaps it was your spouse who caused you frustration. If

you've drawn a line in your heart, I'm praying it gets filled back up today.

God, being a parent is never easy. Please grant me patience to deal with whatever comes in front of us today. Give me wisdom to help my children to become the men and women you created them to be. Help me show grace and mercy when things don't go according to plan. Amen.

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