

*Charity suffereth long, and is kind (Moroni 7:45).*

Be quiet!

Stop it!

# The Grump

By Lori Ries

(Based on a true story)

Our apartment building was a great place to live.



It overlooked the playground, my best friends lived next door, and there were always fun things to do.

But one thing wasn't so great—Mrs. McDuffie.

“Stop running up the stairs,” she'd shout. “You're making my pictures rattle!”

“Use quieter voices,” she'd say. “Don't you know my walls are thin?”

“Yes, Mrs. McDuffie. Sorry, Mrs. McDuffie,” we'd always say.

There was only one word to describe Mrs. McDuffie. G-R-U-M-P.

That's right—grump.

“Why is Mrs. McDuffie so grumpy?” I asked my mom.

“Sometimes people don't feel well. Sometimes they feel sad and alone.”

“Sometimes they're just grumpy,” I said.

“Yes,” Mom said. “Sometimes people are just grumpy, but a little bit of kindness can go a long way.”

Mrs. McDuffie continued to scold us daily. One day we were extra loud in the stairwell.



Macy, Tommy,  
... and me!

“HELLO!” Tommy shouted. “Hello, hello, ello, lo . . .”  
 Tommy pretended he was on a mountain testing an echo.  
 “Shh!” I said. “Mrs. McDuffie will get mad if we’re too loud.”  
 “Maybe she’s not home,” Macy said. “I’m going to knock on  
 her door and run!” She did, but nobody answered.  
 “Maybe she’s sleeping,” Tommy said.  
 “Maybe she went to visit someone,” Macy said.  
 Soon Macy and Tommy had to go home. I  
 walked down the hall only to find Mrs. McDuffie  
 just leaving my apartment!



“Hello, Lori,” she said. She flashed a crinkled smile as she brushed past.  
 She smiled at me! That had to be a “you’re in trouble, kid” kind of smile. Mrs.  
 McDuffie *never* smiled, and she was talking to *my* mom. What did she say?  
 I walked into the kitchen. “Mom?”  
 “We need to talk,” she said. “Could you go down and  
 visit with Mrs. McDuffie for a while? Her husband  
 was very sick for a long time, and he recently died.”

Mrs. McDuffie had a husband? I didn’t even know.

I quietly walked down the stairs and knocked on her door.  
 When she answered the door, Mrs. McDuffie had tears in her eyes.

“My mom told me about your husband. I’m sorry.” I didn’t know  
 what else to say.

As I went inside, for the first time I saw the crooked pictures on the  
 wall that rattled as people went up and down the stairs.

“I’ve been too hard on you kids,” she said. “I’m  
 sorry. I haven’t been feeling very well  
 with my husband so sick. Thank  
 you for coming.”

We sat on her floral couch, and  
 Mrs. McDuffie told me stories about  
 when she was young.

She not only smiled; she laughed.  
 I laughed too.

Mom was right: a little bit of  
 kindness did go a long way. Mrs.  
 McDuffie smiled more after that.

Although we tried to be quiet,  
 sometimes we got too loud. That’s  
 when Mrs. McDuffie opened the  
 door and shared a knock-knock joke

or a plate of cookies.

There is only one word to describe Mrs. McDuffie. F-R-I-E-N-D.  
 That’s right—*friend*. ♦



I try to be like Jesus by  
 visiting my neighbor. She is  
 old and has to take medicine.  
 She is always happy to see  
 me. She says my hugs are  
 the best medicine she gets.  
 We like to watch her flowers  
 bloom in her yard and count  
 the fish in her pond.

**Hyrum H., age 6,  
 Utah, USA**