

TICKLING



TROUBLE

By Lori Fuller

Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

“My body is the temple my Father gave to me”
(Children’s Songbook, 153).

“Mom!” Lizzie shouted. “Max keeps tickling me! Even when I told him not to.”

“I do not!” Max shouted back. “I only tickled her a little bit. And *she* was poking *me*!”

“Kids!” Mom called down the hall. “I thought we were going to build a blanket fort. Stop fighting and come help.”

Lizzie darted away and ran to the family room. But Max was still grumpy.

Why is Lizzie such a tattletale? he wondered as he

It's only fun when everyone's having fun!

dragged his feet. *Tickling's fun, isn't it? Besides, Lizzie always pokes me, and I don't like that either.*

When Max got to the family room, Mom had already pulled out a pile of blankets. He reached for his favorite yellow one, but Lizzie grabbed it first.

He yanked it out of her hands. "That's *mine!*"

"Give it back!" Lizzie snatched up a pillow and hit him on the arm.

"Stop!" yelled Max. But Lizzie just whacked him on the other arm.

"Whoa, whoa, kids!" said Mom. "This isn't how we build a fort." She sat down on a couch cushion on the floor and pulled Max and Lizzie down next to her. "Let's all take a deep breath."

Max looked behind Mom and glared at Lizzie. Then he took a sort-of deep breath.

Mom put her arms around Max and Lizzie. "If someone's doing something you don't like and they don't stop, how does that make you feel?"

"Not good," said Lizzie quietly.

"Yeah," said Mom. "Poking and tickling and pillow fights are only fun when everyone's having fun. We respect each other by stopping when we're asked to stop."

"But it's just tickling," said Max.

"Well, it might just be tickling to you. But it might really bother Lizzie," said Mom. "Heavenly Father gave us each amazing bodies to take care of and protect. And that means it's OK to say 'stop!'"

"So no more poking?" Lizzie asked.

"I hate being poked!" Max said to Mom. "What if we made a new family rule? When someone doesn't want to be touched and says 'stop,' we stop right away."

"That's an excellent idea," Mom said. "What do you think, Lizzie?"

Lizzie smiled. "I like it, especially if that means no tickling too."

"Good," said Mom. "If someone's touching you, and you don't like it, you can tell them no."

"Even if *you* are the one bothering us?" Max grinned.

"Yup. Even if it's me or Dad or Lizzie or a friend—stop means stop. And if they don't listen and touch you anyway, you can tell me or Dad right away."

"But isn't that tattling?" Lizzie asked.

"It's not tattling," Mom said. "And you should tell even if the other person says not to."

"Does this mean I don't have to hug Aunt Mindy when she comes?" Lizzie asked. "She hugs too tight, and I don't like it."

Mom smiled. "Yeah, Mindy's hugs are pretty strong. You can just wave goodbye instead and say 'no thank you' if she wants to hug. It's OK. There are people *I* don't like to hug either."

Max made his eyes look big and sad. "Does that mean you don't like hugging *us*?"

Mom just laughed and pulled Lizzie and Max into a big hug. "No, silly, you are my very favorite people to hug. Now let's finish our fort!"

They stood the couch cushions up to make walls. Then they pulled over the kitchen chairs and draped blankets across them. Lizzie and Max crawled inside and pushed another cushion into the entrance to make a door.

Lizzie smiled and reached out to poke Max.

"Stop," Max said, and Lizzie's finger stopped right in front of him. He grinned and stuck his finger out, ready to poke her back. "OK. Now go." ◆

