

CAPTAIN PEACEMAKER

It's like open season on siblings. Behind the house, Josh is pelting little brother Joe with tennis balls. Joe is pelting Josh back. With each volley, the velocity increases. Dad, on a ladder washing windows, is about to climb down, storm over, and threaten mass destruction if Josh and Joe don't "Cut it out!"

Inside the house, little sister Jessie is sobbing because big sister Jonelle pulled on Jessie's hair. Meanwhile, Mom is trying to change baby Jackson's diaper, not noticing that dinner is about to boil over on the stove.

Enter you. We'll call you Jasmine, if you're a young woman. If you're a young man, we'll call you Jeremy. Actually, it doesn't matter what first name we give you, because what we're really going to call you is Captain Peacemaker, the superhero of harmony at home, always ready to help family members get along. Confronted with the chaos just described, here's what the Captain might do:

BE A SUPER SOOTHER. It's one of Captain Peacemaker's most potent superpowers. "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). A quiet, "Hey, guys," may be just enough to get everyone to shift gears and quiet down.

FIRE MANIPULATION. In the case of food boiling over, remove it from the heat. In the case of people boiling over, do the same thing. Cool the combustion by separating those whose tempers are flaring. (For example, take one outside for a walk while the other goes downstairs.)

REQUEST BACKUP. You probably don't have a special signal light in the sky, but you do have ways to summon assistance. Siblings may become allies if enlisted. Parents can step in. So can Church leaders if needed. You can pray. Study in your scriptures about the Prince of Peace and follow His example.



By Richard M. Romney
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*What's your superpower?
How about the ability to
help siblings calm down?*

GET SOME GO-AHEAD GUIDANCE. If someone's in danger of being physically hurt, rush to their aid. Otherwise, ask Mom or Dad if it's all right to intervene. Except in emergencies, no family superhero worthy of the title operates outside parental permission.

MIND CHANGER. Use Captain Peacemaker's magic motto: "Let's do this instead." Switching to a new activity may help others to stop fanning the flames of contention by focusing their attention elsewhere.

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSH BLACK; BACKGROUNDS AND TITLE FONT FROM GETTY IMAGES

Here's some counsel from Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles: "We earnestly hope and pray for universal peace, but it is as individuals and families that we achieve the kind of peace that is the promised reward of righteousness."¹ And remember what President Russell M. Nelson has said: "Peace is a prime priority that pleads for our pursuit."² That applies at home too.

Of course, Captain Peacemaker can also provide assistance outside the home, particularly when interacting with friends and acquaintances. Just use the same tactics outlined above—offer help, speak calmly when others are alarmed, encourage the enflamed to back away from confrontation, offer alternatives, and seek reinforcements as needed.

So, no matter what your true identity is, remember what the Savior said: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). And who wouldn't want to be what the Savior called blessed?

Let's take a look at the scenario now. Thanks to Captain Peacemaker, Josh and Joe are playing catch with Dad, focusing on the accuracy of their throws rather than on how to inflict pain with a projectile. Both boys have promised that after dinner they will help Dad finish washing windows. Jonelle is helping Jessie to braid her hair, and they're talking about what dresses they'll wear to church on Sunday. Dinner is simmering on the stove. And Mom is gently rocking little Jackson to sleep. Incredible.

Peacemaker. That's a superpower worth seeking. **NE**

NOTES

1. Quentin L. Cook, Apr. 2013 general conference.
2. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 2002 general conference.