

“Don’t step on a crack. You’ll break your mother’s back!”

It’s a beautiful evening, and I’m walking with my boys, enjoying the last daylight in the sky and the spring breeze.

Our sons aren’t walking. No, they’re hopping and skipping, avoiding the cracks that are everywhere on the sidewalks and streets.

“Don’t step on a crack. You’ll break Mama’s back!” they tell each other.

They jump higher than they need to and laugh as they land, teasing each other when they aren’t careful enough, chiding me when I don’t play along.

“Mama, you’re breaking Grandma’s back!” a happy voice reminds me. They can see that my feet aren’t small enough to play this game well—and that only adds to the fun.

They turn back to their game, avoiding every tiny crevice in the cement, united in a cause and yet competing with each other at the same time.

Who knows how old this game is or where it came from? It’s a game I played as a child too, but I never taught my children. I didn’t need to. Some things children learn from their friends.

They laugh and laugh, even as I get frustrated sometimes when they nearly leap into walls and land a little close to strangers coming the other way. But they’re children. And part of being a mother is telling your children what might happen and then letting them find out for themselves that you were right.

There are easy and difficult moments to motherhood.

It’s easy to watch them laugh and run and play. It’s easy to pick them up when they fall and hold them when they’re sad. It’s easy to tell them I love them over and over again. It’s easy to marvel at the young men they are becoming—even though they’re still such children in so many ways.

But it's a little hard to realize they are growing so quickly. It's difficult to step back and let them learn some consequences themselves. The questions, the problems, the challenges—those will grow, too. And I can only hope God will give my husband and me the wisdom, the strength, the courage to handle each stage we will encounter as a family.

He's brought us this far. And these are His children He has entrusted to our care. We'll stumble on the cracks and even fall, but I feel certain He'll guide us through.

Tonight He's watching as our sidewalk jumpers come bounding back to hold my hands at the curb. And He knows I will never tire of holding those hands.

But moments later, those hands have slipped out of mine, and the boys are back to their game, jumping away from me as they skip over the cracks.