

## Classroom Guidance Newsletter

### Lesson Ten: Problem Solving Steps and Responses to Conflict

Dear Parents,

In Lesson Ten, our final lesson of the school year, the students learned problem solving steps and appropriate responses to conflict. Matthew 5:9 says, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*" You cannot avoid conflict. You will face it. As Job 5:7 shares, "*People are born for trouble as readily as sparks fly up from a fire.*" However, conflict is an opportunity. By handling it well, we have a chance to glorify God, serve others, and become better people. Conflict is not necessarily bad or destructive. Even when conflict is caused by wrong-doing and causes a great deal of stress, it can lead to good. You can use conflict to:

- Glorify God (by trusting, obeying, and imitating him);
- Serve other people (by helping to bear their burdens or by confronting them in love);
- Grow to be like Christ (by confessing wrong and turning from attitudes that promote conflict).

*"If it is possible, as much as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."* Romans 12:18

Problem solving steps and appropriate responses to conflict were reinforced with activities that focused on using a peace table, the ABCDE approach to conflict resolution, peer mediation, recognizing the positive aspects of conflict, accepting responsibility for your choices, and role play.

#### Conflict Resolution During the Elementary School Years

Children can be taught to solve many of their own conflicts without the assistance of an adult. As children mature during these years, they become more able to grasp abstract concepts about conflict resolution when they are presented in a concrete way. Children are able to apply conflict resolution skills presented by an adult when they are in the midst of a situation. Children are becoming more capable of understanding the importance of "using their words" to discuss the problem. However, they may need an adult negotiator to help them through the situation. Children can clearly understand the principles of cause and effect, but they may need to have these principles pointed out in each situation. After children have worked through a conflict, talking about the effects of their resolution provides concrete understanding about the value of working things out.

#### How Parents Can Help Children to Resolve Conflicts

Reinforce with your children that it is always important to:

- Respect everyone's ideas and needs;
- Turn problems into possibilities;
- Listen so people will talk, and talk so people will listen;
- Focus on the problem, not the person;
- Build "power with," not "power over," others;
- Express feelings without blaming others;
- Own your part of the conflict;
- Strategize to reach mutually agreeable solutions;
- Create options – "one way" always creates losers;
- Solve the problem and build the relationship.

#### Resources for Problem Solving Steps and Responses to Conflict

- [http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/building\\_relationships/sibling\\_rivalry/teaching\\_children\\_to\\_be\\_peace\\_makers.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/building_relationships/sibling_rivalry/teaching_children_to_be_peace_makers.aspx)
- [http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/relationship\\_challenges/conflict\\_resolution.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/relationship_challenges/conflict_resolution.aspx)
- <http://www.examiner.com/x-42144-LA-Parenting-Examiner~y2010m5d1-Life-skills-Problem-solving-verses-conflict-resolution>
- [http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip\\_sheets/bullying/#s10](http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip_sheets/bullying/#s10)

Sincerely,  
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