

Problem Solving

Dear Facilitator: For several weeks we have been discussing how families successfully communicate, support one another, and organize their lives. This week we will be learning about problem-solving skills which can give us the power to shape our lives. You are working to build strong families, and it's important to help everyone understand that strong families are not free of conflict, but that they do work together to address problems.

We are encouraged in Matthew 11:28-30 to come to God when we are tired and burdened, and He will give us rest. These words can give our families peace to get through the difficulties of life as we understand that God is beside us and for us. He is there to help us through our circumstances. As you share today, you will be focusing on helping families practice the skills of identifying and addressing problems.

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:

1. Commit to a plan that will help solve conflict.
2. Commit to solving conflicts with grace and humility.

During the past few lessons, we have made commitment statements.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God's love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings

Notes

Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we discussed financial health and how to budget, save, and give.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Let's stake a few minutes to read our Family Commitment Statements. (Read together out loud the previous statements.)

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Commit to a plan that will help solve conflict.
2. Commit to solving conflicts with grace and humility.

This week's commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



Say: Tonight, at your tables, we are going to talk about what stresses you and your family!

Before you get too overwhelmed, remember that we are going to talk about some skills tonight that will help us through these stressful times.

- What are some problems that cause stress to you and your family?

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.

Notes

<i>40 minutes</i>	
<h1>Parent Training</h1>	
<i>Behavior</i>	PROBLEM SOLVING

How many of you had a lot to discuss at dinner? We all have circumstances that are stressful or hard to handle in our families. Often, these stresses are problems for us. Sometimes it is easy to address problems, and other times it is much more difficult. Wouldn't it be great if there were a way to successfully cooperate as families to solve problems?

Today we are going to discuss how we identify problems and how to address them. It is our hope that each of you will go home with problem-solving tools to help your families.

Our commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

We get stressed when we know we have a problem and we don't know what to do! Most of the time families can handle difficulties that come their way, but every now and then people get stuck. It helps to use a process to solve those problems. I'm going to mention a few examples of problems that might cause us stress as I blow up this balloon.

ACTIVITY

Balloon Illustration

Facilitator takes a balloon and blows a little more air into the balloon each time he mentions a difficulty below.

- Our daughter was suspended from school.
- We received a notice from the bank about some overdrawn checks.
- On the same day, our landlord told us she is raising our rent.
- We noticed that the washing machine is leaking again.
- The car was dented today.
- I found out that I might be getting laid off from my job.

Is this how you feel sometimes? I know I do!

Sometimes we can identify a problem quickly such as having less money because of the unexpected bill from fixing the car. Other times, identifying the problem is more difficult. For example, perhaps my daughter getting suspended is not the actual problem—just the result of another problem.

God understands all our problems and asks us to come to Him. He says in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gently and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Identifying problems start with asking questions about the matter that concerns you. For example, why are there overdrawn checks in my account? Maybe it is because I am not recording what is happening with my money. Once I ask myself enough questions and have decided what the problem is, I can address the problem. This is part of the work it takes to identify your problems.

Talking about problems also helps us identify problems because it helps us think more clearly. If you are the type of person who can't talk right away, try writing down a few thoughts first. As you talk through your problems with family, don't forget to ask God for help and wisdom to understand the problem. It isn't a sign of weakness to ask for help. We are building strong families together, and it's important to remember that strong families are not free of conflict, but there is strength in working together to identify and address problems.

ACTIVITY

Strength in Numbers Illustration

Instructor holds up a small stick.

Any one person, under enough stress, will break (break the stick).

- When you bring together more resources and more people, you can manage a lot more stress without breaking. (Take two sticks

together and try to break them. Illustrate how much harder that is to do.)

- Who are some of the people or resources that you can turn to for help? (After each answer, add another stick to the original two sticks and then illustrate how difficult it is break them as a group).
- A healthy Christian family will join to solve problems. They speak up to ask for and offer help to one another, and then they listen to each other and cooperate to find solutions.

Addressing problems begins with identifying the result or goal that we want to achieve, and the next step involves coming up with solutions and making a plan of action. Determining the goal, or what we want to see happen, is usually easy, but getting to the goal can take some work. That's why it's important to follow a plan to get the results we want. It is also important to pray for wisdom and rely on God's strength. When we address problems, we can follow this simple plan:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Write out the desired goal or end results.
3. List solutions and pick one.
4. Determine a plan of action.

ACTIVITY

Problem Solving Worksheet

Put people together in groups and distribute the worksheet. Instruct each group to work through the worksheet. They should pick a problem that can be worked through in 10-15 minutes.

You may want to give some ideas such as how to save money for a family purchase or how to get chores done or how to improve grades. As the instructor, you may want to come up with some ideas that fit your group.

Ask:

1. What was your favorite part of the problem-solving process?
2. What did you do that helped your family/group work toward a solution?

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.
Our objectives were to:

1. Commit to a plan that will help solve conflict.
2. Commit to solving conflicts with grace and humility.

As we close this lesson, let's remember that strong families solve problems by working together to identify and address problems. You are a strong family, and tonight our family commitment statement is: I commit to incorporating problem-solving skills to help my family handle conflict with grace and humility.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?



Scripture SUPPORT

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Psalms 91:15

He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Behavior

PROBLEM SOLVING

Objectives

- **Help children to be aware that all families deal with problems.**
- **Help children to be aware that God wants them to pray to Him when they face problems.**
- **Help children to be aware of steps to take when problem solving.**
- **Help children to be aware that solving problems within their family is teaching them how to solve problems they will face in the future.**

Did you know there is no perfect family? Every family will face problem situations. No matter how hard we try to avoid these situations, problems will still show up from time to time. Problems can be stressful for both parents and children in the family. When God created family, He knew that they would face problems that lead to stress, so God gave us a way to solve our problems. He tells us to turn to Him, to pray, and to not worry.

In Matthew 11:28, God says, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” When the stress of problems becomes too difficult to handle, it gives us peace to know that God told us to

not worry but to stay calm. When we make God an important part of our family, He has promised that He will never leave us or turn His back on us (Deuteronomy 31:6). God’s promise should give us confidence that He is there to help us, and with Him helping us, we can solve our problems!

As a family, and when a problem arises, the first step is to identify the problem. It is impossible to solve a problem if you don’t know what the problem is. Some problems are easy to figure out and solve, and others take more time. Sometimes a problem is the kind that only your parents can solve such as the car needing repairs. Other times there will be a problem that children can

solve like getting a behavior report at school for not completing a homework assignment. Sometimes a problem may require the entire family to figure out a solution such as learning to turn off lights to lower the electric bill. In this situation, everyone works on solving the problem as a team.

Once the family members who are involved with the problem are ready, they need to talk about what they believe is causing the problem, write down the goal or result they want, and discuss possible solutions and pick one. They can then make a plan of action, which is the second step to solving the problem.

When a problem confronts us, God wants us to not worry about it; instead, He wants us to pray and ask for His help in understanding the problem and figuring out a solution. He tells us if we do this, we can have peace while He is helping us fix our problem situation. Whatever difficulty we are facing, God promises that He will be with us when we are in trouble, so we should have no fear. Philippians 4:6-7 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

You will experience problems and challenges in your life. The first place you will learn to deal with problems that happen in your life is at home with your family. Remember your family is your training camp! And you are being trained to figure out what to do in tough situations, which is very important.

As you grow and learn to solve problems within your family, you are being prepared to solve problems you may face as an adult in the future. Because God loves us so much, He put families together so that when family members do experience problems, they have a support team to pray for them, encourage them, and cheer for them as they find solutions (Galatians 6:2). When families love God and one another and peacefully solve their difficulties, He has promised that everything—even problems—will work together for good (Romans

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8:28). And as family members work together to solve problems, it will strengthen their family bond and cause them to grow even closer.

DISCUSS

- Lead children in a discussion about how no family is perfect.
- Lead children in a discussion about problems that cause stress in families.
- Lead children in a discussion about how God tells us not to worry when we face problems.
- Lead children in a discussion about God's promises to us when we are facing problems.
- Lead children in a discussion about some of the types of problems families may face.
- Lead children in a discussion about how learning to solve problems now is preparing them for the future.
- Lead children in a discussion about what families can do to support members going through problem situations.



Activities

AGES 4-11 & 12-16

Materials

Camera or iPad with camera

Box or Basket

Index cards (10-15 with problem scenarios written on them)

Place children in small groups.

From a box or basket, allow each group to draw an index card with a problem scenario written on it. Instruct children to use the strategies written in the lesson to solve the problem on the card. Allow three to five minutes.

(See list of problem scenarios.)

DISCUSS

Problem Solving Strategies

1. Talk about what they think is causing the problem.
2. Write down the desired goal or result.
3. Discuss possible solutions to the problem.
4. Pick a solution and plan of action.

Once groups have solved the problem, ask each group to come in front and explain what their problem was and how they used the strategies to solve it. Film their presentation. Then replay for them to view.

(If time permits, the group can pick another card and film another problem scenario being solved.)

Notes



CHALLENGE QUESTION

WHEN I HAVE A PROBLEM
DO I ASK FOR GOD'S HELP?

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO TO WORK ON THE
CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	AFFIRMATION <i>Have children repeat;</i>
	<i>Because I love God, all things are working together for my good!</i>