



**Educate
+ Engage**



FAMILY
MATTERS



You Made Me Mad,
Now what?

OVERVIEW

Have you ever been so mad that smoke started coming out of your ears? Maybe it made your heart race or you wanted to go outside and scream at the top of your lungs. Everyone, no matter how nice or sweet they seem to be, gets mad! Experiencing the human emotion of anger or getting mad happens every day. Controlling our emotions is not the goal but rather choosing the best way to respond to them, especially when it comes to conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution is the process in which two or more parties identify a problem and work together in order to come to a solution. Unfortunately, healthy conflict resolution does not always happen in the church. For example, people gossip, get offended and move churches, or end up leaving the church altogether because of a conflict that arose. Conflict can be really hard because of the emotions that it surfaces. God has called us to be more than people who take on the nature of the world in how it handles conflict. Thankfully, the Bible has laid out some practical things that we can do to resolve problems in a productive way with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

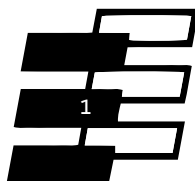
As a way to open our lesson for today, when I say go, I want everyone to get up and rush towards the door exiting the room. The first person to leave the room wins. Make sure you come back! On your mark, get set, go! (After students rush and scramble to get out, have them come back and settle down. If there are not enough people to cause a traffic jam at the door, you could have everyone stand up and put one chair in the middle. The first person to sit down in the chair wins when you say go.)

Someone please tell me what just happened. Why do you all think this was a problem? (Hopefully the answer is obvious in that everyone cannot fit through a narrow doorway at one time nor can one seat hold more than one person comfortably.) Working through conflict resolution can be much like this, but if we take time to slow down and work through the actual problem, we can work together to come to a solution.

Scripture Passage

Ephesians 4:15 (NIV)

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.



EDUCATE

Our goal for today's lesson is to learn how to speak the truth in love when it comes to conflict resolution. When you are dealing with a problem involving other people and relationships, resolving conflict with them is an opportunity to apply our key Scripture.

Before we begin, let's take a moment to reflect and think about an issue, problem, or conflict that you have had in life. What's one thing that you would have done differently in trying to resolve it? If you feel comfortable, go ahead and share. No need to get into too much detail but you can share something as simple as, "I would have listened more" or "I would have asked more questions."

Point 1: Respond to your thoughts and emotions.

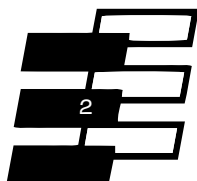
In our opening today, we discussed how conflict can stir up negative thoughts and emotions. Before diving into figuring out the problem or why there is conflict, sometimes we need to step away and get ourselves in check. This includes responding to the thoughts and emotions that arise. News flash: getting angry is okay! Acting out in a way that could cause harm to yourself or someone else with either words or actions is not. Attempting to control racing thoughts and rising emotions that surface when conflict occurs is not the healthiest way to manage ourselves. Instead, becoming self aware when those things happen is a better, more fruitful path.

What are some practical things you can do to help yourself become more aware of negative emotions?

When we become aware of ourselves and that thoughts are racing or negative emotions are being felt, you can do many things to get yourself in a better position to resolve conflict. This can take on many different forms. It could include going for a walk, journaling, or doing something that relaxes you. Training yourself to do this takes time, but you can do it!

Take a few moments to think about something that you could do when you feel a negative response to conflict. The simpler the better! When you feel like you have an idea, give me a thumbs up. (Feel free to modify how students indicate that they have an answer. You could ask them to stand up, cross their legs, put their hands on their head, or so forth. Anything to switch it up will work).

In our key Scripture, the Bible tells us to speak the truth in love. We cannot begin to uncover the truth when conflict arises if we cannot speak from a place of love. Getting our thoughts and emotions to a place where we can respond in love is the best foundation to set when approaching conflict.



Point 2: Identify the problem

It is always a good thing to make sure that your mind, emotions, and spirit are where they need to be when it comes to resolving conflict. Remember, conflict is not always bad. In fact, conflict can be a good thing, but we have to handle it carefully.

Conflict resolution is completely done in vain if the problem is not understood correctly. It is also worth noting that sometimes the problem is not the problem. For example, if you woke up late and got into an argument with your mom because you did not have enough time to do your chores, maybe the problem is not waking up late, it is actually not going to bed in time. Pretty simple.

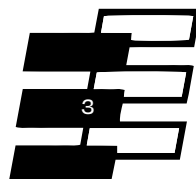
Identifying the problem correctly is the best way to start working through a conflict with others. Try using statements like, "To me, it feels like the heart of the problem is..." or "It seems like what we are really dealing with is..."

When I say go, I want you to turn to a friend next to you and come up with three different ways you could begin a conversation with someone about identifying the problem that you are dealing with. It's okay if there are groups of three. Go! (As always, have a few answers prepared in case students are not engaging at first in order to help get the ball rolling).

You all did a great job with that. Let's share some. I need four people to share with us what you all came up with. Remember, we are working towards learning ways that we can resolve conflict by speaking the truth in love so that we can grow in our identity as the body of Christ.

Point 3: Propose solutions.

Once you have correctly identified the problem in a situation, you are more likely to figure out the best way to resolve it. Proposing solutions can take on a couple of approaches. One of the best ways is working out a compromise. Coming to a compromise should emphasize preferring the other person you are in conflict with. Asking questions like, "How can I help you make sure this does not become a problem again?" indicates that you prefer the other person. Compromise is all about coming to an agreement on what each person needs to do in order to resolve the issue. Preferring the other person is important but also expressing your needs in an honest and humble attitude is helpful in coming to a compromise. Why do you all think that it is important to prefer others but also to express your needs?



Closing

In closing today, we have discussed being mindful of negative emotions and how they can interfere with speaking the truth in love. We also discussed that resolving conflict happens in two steps, the first being identifying the problem and the second being proposing solutions. It's important to remember that sometimes there is a deeper problem going on below the surface and correctly identifying that is key. It's also an important takeaway to recognize that proposing solutions happens when we make a compromise by preferring others and humbly asking for what we need.

ENGAGE

My final challenge to you today is not to run away or avoid challenging situations when it comes to conflict resolution. When we embrace conflict in a healthy way with love as the intention and motivator and embrace it because it will give us an opportunity to speak the truth in love, we become a stronger member in the body of Christ.

