

Conflict Resolution

Companion Text: I Lost My Sock, by Lin Jakary & Ryan Olson
Subject Area & Grade Level: Social Studies, 1st Grade

Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify conflicts experienced in the story
- Suggest alternative resolutions to conflicts in story
- Model communication used in positive conflict resolution

Introduction

Read the story once through without stopping. Then, tell students that you are going to re-read the story, and that you want them to pay close attention to the part of the story that suggest that the sock chose to leave (as opposed to it being an accident, such as that the dryer ate it). After reading the story a second time, see if students can identify three reasons that the sock might have chosen to run away: the boy's feet were stinky; it was afraid of the dog; and it was unhappy and sought more adventure.

Procedure

Pair up students with a partner and have them come up with alternative ways that the sock could have dealt with these conflicts instead of running away. Point out that conflict is a part of life and that everyone will experience it at some point. Conflicts themselves are not problems; it is how people deal with conflict that can be problematic. After students have reworked each of the three possible conflicts in the book, have them share their suggestions. It is likely that many of students' suggestions will involve the sock approaching the boy and initiating some sort of discussion about its concerns. Let these suggestions lead naturally into the discussion below.

Discussion

Explain that good communication is a key tool in resolving conflict. For instance, the manner in which the sock approaches the boy with his concerns will likely have a big effect on the boy's willingness to help resolve them. Explain that most people do not want to cause conflicts most of the time, and that sometimes conflicts happen simply because people are unaware that their actions are causing problems for others. Clear communication can usually resolve these types of conflicts.

Offer the following model to students for resolving conflicts. Suggest that when they approach someone to share a concern to begin with "I feel..." and then fill in with a word or two how they are feeling. Then, continue with "when you..." and state clearly the person's behavior that is causing them concern. Finish with "and I want..." and offer a clear suggestion for improved behavior. An example could be, "I feel angry when you take my pencil without asking, and I want you to ask before you borrow my things." Post the sentence starters "I feel... when you...and I want..." in poster form (below), and point them out often for student use.



*Having a
conflict? Try:*

“I Feel...

When you...

And I want...”

