

Lesson 7.14 - A Lifestyle of Peace: Anger Escalation

Topic: Becoming Peacemakers

Subtopic: Anger Escalation

4D. Conflict Management

4E. Leadership and Power

Class: Standard VII (Grade 7)

Objectives:

Knowledge: Students will understand how anger escalates and how to control it.

Attitude: Students will want to promote peace and be called a child of God.

Materials Needed:

Blackboard and Chalk

Exercise book

Anger Escalation Chart

Optional: salt, candle with matches or a flashlight

References: Matthew 5:38-48

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:44

Teacher Activities

Introduction: *Optional: Worship with singing and prayer time led by students.* Review by asking questions. Important points from last week's lesson:

- Peacemakers are salt and light
- Jesus taught about peace in the Sermon on the Mount.

Bible Story: Have a student read Matthew 5:38-48. We must manage our own anger before we can be peacemakers. This passage talks about how to treat your enemies. Ask students questions about this passage (see Teacher's Notes)

Application: Use a chart to discuss how conflict escalates.
Small Group Discussion and Journal.

Evaluation: Do you model how to be a "non-anxious presence" by not letting your own feelings escalate? Try not to react to student behaviors in anger. Instead, step back reflect on the cause of your anger and possible solutions.

Extension Activities:

Student Activities

Introduction: Student leaders present song(s) and prayer. Students share what they remember from last week.

Bible Story: Listen while student leader reads Scripture and discuss what it means.

Application: *Discuss* each step of Anger Escalation with the class.

Participate in *small group discussion*

- Have you ever seen how anger can escalate to violence?
- How do you calm down when you feel angry?

Journal about a recent conflict.

Evaluation: Do students understand how their words and actions will either escalate anger or help to build peace?

Worship. Have the students sing and have a prayer time *Memory work:* Discuss Matthew 5:44. Start at the front of the room and have each student say one word of the verse. Go around the room until you have said the verse several times.

What makes me angry? Have students name things that sometimes make us angry and write on the chart to show how angry they feel. For example, if someone ignores you, you might feel irritated so the student would write “ignored” next to 3. *Irritated or Aggravated.* Then have students tell how they might handle that situation in a calm manner. (They might tell the person how they feel, “I feel irritated when you ignore me. I want you to listen to me; they might walk away and do something else to forget about it; they might talk to someone else who will listen.)

Notes for Teacher

Today students continue learning what Jesus taught about peace during the Sermon on the Mount. It is important to be aware of the part we may play in developing conflict or peace. William Penn spoke of the early members Friends as “changed men themselves before they went about to change others.” When we allow ourselves to be changed by Christ Jesus, we become peacemakers, the salt and light of the world. If we are angry and unhappy, we will contribute, instead, to conflict.

Key Concept: We must recognize and deal with our own anger before we can be salt and light in the world.

Introduction: Review last week’s story by asking students what they remember from last week. Remind them that we are learning what Jesus taught about peace during His Sermon on the Mount. Last week’s lesson encouraged students to be “salt” and “light” by being peacemakers in the world.

Bible Story: Have a student read Matthew 5:38-48 and discuss it with your students.

- How is this different than what the world teaches?
- How are we told to treat our enemies?
- How does kindness change our enemies?
- Who does God reward?

Everyone faces injustice and unkindness sometime in his or her life. Each person will choose to react in love and peace, as Jesus taught us, or in anger and violence. Jesus demonstrated peaceful living in His own life. We can respond to our enemies with love and kindness because God is kind to us. He forgives us and loves us so we are empowered to forgive and love others. Peacemaking is not always easy but we must remember, “*Happy are those who work for peace: God will call them His children.*” (Matthew 5:9).

Application: Jesus calls his followers to a life of love and peace, rather than a life of violence. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gives specific examples of how we can live at peace. We cannot be salt and light if we are angry ourselves. It is important to identify feelings in our lives. How we react to circumstances around us will either help to build peace or cause more conflict. Just bottling up our feelings and not talking about them can lead to explosive anger.

Draw the Anger Escalation Chart on Chart paper or on the board and use the questions below to guide the discussion. **Can you give examples of how people act at the different steps of anger?**

1. A person may ignore their feelings and just “play the role” or act how he or she thinks people want them to act. He or she will mask his or her feelings.
2. Although the person may not talk about his or her feelings, you can tell he or she feels something by the behavior of their body---rolling eyes, folding arms, eyes looking down, etc. Sometimes anger can become internalized and lead to depression.
3. Now the person is talking, but he or she is not identifying the real problem and taking responsibility to find solutions---he or she gossips to other people, blames people for their problems, stops talking, withdraws. He or she escalates the conflict to others.
4. This person begins to fight by verbal aggression. At this step, he or she may directly attack someone verbally through abusive name calling, yelling, or arguing.
5. Now the person steps beyond a verbal fight to physically fighting. He or she may hit, push, kick, throw something, or in some way express physical aggression at others despite their level of involvement in the situation.
6. At this stage the anger of an individual is out of control. If there is a physical fight, the person may need restraint so no one is hurt. If the person has medicated the pain and anger through alcohol or drugs, he or she needs to go through the process of recovery. Point out that alcohol and drugs can cause people to have poor judgement and become violent more quickly.

BUILDING CONFLICT---STEPS OF ANGER <i>(Draw these steps on the board)</i>						
						7.Enraged
						6. Infuriated
						5. Anger or Maddened
						4. Frustrated or Wound Up
						3. Irritated or Aggravated
						2. Silently Annoyed or Upset
						1. Peaceful and Calm

Can you think of ways to stop the building of anger? *Teacher, take time to talk about the possible solutions to anger.*

- Journal your feelings or talk to God about them in prayer
- Find a physical outlet for stress---listen/sing praise music, go for a walk, play a sport, back away from the stress, etc.

Unit II - Becoming Peacemakers
© 2010 Peace in a Community

- Identify your feelings and the problem, brainstorm solutions, choose a solution, and follow the plan you've created.
- Find a good friend who will listen and then help you talk to the person with whom you are having a problem.
- Find someone in authority who will intercede so you will not be hurt.
- Practice being a *non-anxious presence*. Instead of reacting to things around you, practice staying detached and reflecting and thinking about your choices before reacting. It can be very calming for someone else who is angry or out of control to have someone who is a *non-anxious presence* to listen without reacting.

Small Group Discussion. Have students discuss the Anger Escalation Chart in small groups. Use these questions to guide the discussion.

- **Have you ever seen how anger can escalate to violence?** Teach students to say "Someone" when sharing rather than naming the person who was angry. This protects the confidentiality and privacy of the other person.
- **How do you calm down when you feel angry?**

Journal. To be a peacemaker, it is important to be aware of our feelings and communicate them before they build into violence. Through journaling, we are able to de-brief, reflect, and pray about circumstances in our lives. Write the questions on the board and give students time to think about them. After a time of thinking, have student write a short paragraph summarizing their reflections.

JOURNAL QUERIES

1. Has anything happened recently that caused me to be angry?
2. Is there something I can do to improve my attitude?
3. Is there a conflict or problem which needs my attention?
4. What do I need to do?
5. How can I be a non-anxious presence?