

When the Dust Settles

Teacher's guide and student worksheets

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS: UNDERSTANDING ANGER

Anger is a universal emotion that has a powerful and often negative effect on our lives. The things that we do out of anger we tend to regret as they often harm our relationships, our well-being and may lead to violence. Anger is a secondary response to a primary emotion such as fear, betrayal or pain. It is difficult to rid ourselves of anger if we don't examine the source. Angry children and youth can learn to manage their anger, but it's important for teachers to recognize that some underlying problems may need to be addressed before angry children can cope with everyday frustrations. It's also important to remember that fear, betrayal, pain and frustration don't cause anger—anger is a choice.

TEACHING IDEAS FOR GRADES 4-10

Integration into curriculum

This lesson can be integrated into any school curriculum that encourages the development of interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution, communication, listening and reflective thinking. Examples include Guidance and Career Education, Religious Education, Health Education and Family Studies.

Focus

Being angry is usually destructive to ourselves and others and we can learn better ways to manage our anger.

Preparing the classroom for cooperative learning

These activities work best if the classroom climate respects and supports different opinions. Cooperative warm-up activities are recommended to encourage this type of climate. Teachers may need to move desks or rearrange the room to create space for warm-up activities and small or large group discussions. Ground rules may need to be established, such as:

- no putdowns
- no interruptions
- everyone participates in all activities in some way



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Lesson

Duration: 45 minutes

Teacher preparation

- View the film **When the Dust Settles** with the discussion questions and/or Worksheets 1 and 2 (pages 5 and 6) in hand. Write down your own observations and add any questions/comments not included in discussion or worksheet.
- Photocopy Worksheets 1 and 2 for students.
- Order a DVD projector for the classroom.

Learning objectives

Students will:

1. Distinguish between frustration and anger.
2. Identify anger in themselves and others by recognizing anger cues and triggers.
3. Explore negative consequences of acting out in anger.
4. Learn steps to problem solving as a strategy for managing anger.

Activities

A. Previewing Activities

1. Gather students in a large group and begin a discussion about ANGER. Suggest that FRUSTRATION (something getting in the way of what we want) is part of everyday life, and we often choose to get angry when we are frustrated. On the board write down a typical day for most students and ask them to raise their hands to indicate when they experience frustration. For example:
 - Someone waking you up in the morning
 - Sharing bathroom space
 - Driving, walking or taking the bus to school
 - Being assigned homework
 - Watching television with someone else who has the remote control

You may elicit other typical examples of everyday frustration from students. Then ask: *What happens when frustration turns to anger? What is the difference between frustration and anger?* Explain that anger affects us physically and usually happens when we fear something, are hurt or betrayed by someone, or are in pain. Our bodies respond dramatically to anger and often this is the cue that we are in danger of losing our temper or doing something we will regret.

2. Students can complete Worksheet 1 to understand more about anger and their reactions. After students have completed the worksheets, they can share their ideas in pairs or hand them in to the teacher. Explain that **When the Dust Settles** will demonstrate what happens when anger gets carried away.

B. View *When the Dust Settles*

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C. Post-viewing activities

1. IDENTIFYING ANGER

Have younger viewers retell the story to determine which elements they caught and which ones they may have missed. Ask students to recall points in the film when the gophers were very angry. Discuss how the gophers responded to their anger. What were the consequences?

Watch the film again and have the group identify (by raising their hands) each point in the conflict where one or the other gopher could have chosen a different response. Ask: *How would the situation have been different if the gophers had been able to see each other all along? How did fear contribute to the situation? What other factors contributed to the situation?*

2. PROBLEM SOLVING—A STRATEGY TO MANAGE ANGER

Introduce PROBLEM SOLVING as a strategy to manage anger by handing out Worksheet 2 and reviewing the STEPS TO PROBLEM SOLVING. Ask students to give examples of how these steps might work in angry situations. Students can finish the rest of Worksheet 2 individually or in groups.

D. Closing reflections

Ask students to hand in worksheets and to re-group for a closing discussion. Invite students to each share one thing they learned from the film and/or have them write a reflective paragraph that addresses the following questions:

At the end of the film, the gophers are confronted by another dirt-slinger. What can they do to prevent another angry episode? What can be done to prevent anger in our school?

Students can finish the paragraph at the end of class or for homework.

Suggested assessment and evaluation

- Completion of worksheets.
- Participation in large group discussion.
- Evaluation of worksheets and reflective discussion/paragraph to determine if learning objectives (page 2) were successfully met.

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Extension

Divide the class into pairs and ask students to think of a typical conflict over territory. Then ask students to:

- Act out a scene of conflict, over noise or a mess, between friends, siblings or neighbours.
- Role-play this in two ways: first as neighbours who don't communicate or problem-solve and are driven to angry revenge (such as deliberate sabotage of property, or rumour-mongering), then as neighbours who are better at communicating and problem solving

Closing reflections

After the role-play, ask the class to discuss the importance of respect for one another's space. You may note that neither a messy nor a neat work or living space is right or wrong. Either may be right if one is comfortable. Respect involves not imposing conditions on anyone or encroaching on anyone's area without being asked.



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Worksheet

1

What are your anger cues?

Anger is often a destructive emotion and some of us don't even know we're getting angry until it's too late! Below are some ways to help you understand when you're angry.

Have you ever been angry? Describe the situation below. Focus on the facts and YOUR response to the situation.

One day, I found myself in a very frustrating situation...

(Continue the story adding details about what happened, when it happened, where it happened and who was there.)

The person I was angry with contributed to the situation by...

I knew I was angry because my body started to give me ANGER CUES. I began to...

(Choose one or more of these options or add your own: shake, become red in the face, raise my voice, get an upset stomach, clench my teeth.)

I responded to this anger by...

I wish I had responded in the following way...

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Worksheet

2

PROBLEM SOLVING—A strategy to help manage your anger:

When You Are Angry, Instead Of Exploding, Try To:

1. IDENTIFY the problem by trying to get at the “root cause” of the anger—is it fear, betrayal or pain?
2. BRAINSTORM at least 3 ways the root cause can be dealt with.
3. CHOOSE ONE response that will not cause further harm but will lesson the fear, the feeling of betrayal, etc.
4. ACT upon your choice.
5. EVALUATE the success of your response by judging whether you are still angry and if the situation can now be resolved.
6. TRY AGAIN. If the initial choice doesn’t make things better, CHOOSE another response and see if it works.

In the film **When the Dust Settles**, the tidy gopher could have responded differently when first provoked by the sloppy gopher and the sloppy gopher could have also made some different choices.

In a paragraph, explain to the gophers what you have learned about anger that might have helped them.

See if you can offer the gophers 3 different choices or responses that they could have made that would have prevented the destruction of their homes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____