The Angry Child

Seeing Anger Face-to-Face

• **Definition**: Anger is a temporary feeling that comes from some type of frustration and results in an action.

  Aggression is the action and is a deliberate attempt to hurt someone or something.

• **The many faces of anger**

  ➢ **Physical aggression**—hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, pinching, spitting, biting, throwing/breaking things

  ➢ **Verbal aggression**—name calling, yelling, talking about other kids or their parents, talking behind someone’s back, cursing, threatening, talking back

  ➢ **Passive-aggression**—being silent, ignoring others, pulling away from others, dawdling, won’t negotiate, selective hearing, “I want my way”

  “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it.”  
  James 4:1-2 (NIV)

Looking Beneath the Facade

• **Underlying feelings**—hurt, fear, helplessness or guilt

  ➢ **Hurt**—When they are devalued, put down or rejected

  ➢ **Fear**—When they lose something special (e.g., not being allowed to go outside and play; not being allowed to have or do something they want)

  ➢ **Helplessness**—When they feel they have no control over things (e.g., parents getting a divorce)

  ➢ **Guilt**—When they get caught and know they will get into trouble; when they feel they can’t live up to a certain expectation
The angry child is a hurting child!

• Situations that cause anger
  ➢ Not knowing how to express what they are feeling (frustration)
  ➢ Fatigue
  ➢ Physical illness or injury
  ➢ Medications
  ➢ Stress
  ➢ Family violence and abuse
  ➢ Things that don’t seem fair

What a Teacher Can Do

• Create a nurturing atmosphere
  1. Make the child feel loved and cared about.
  2. Use calm tones with him.
  3. Move closer to the child. Some children respond well to having an adult close by.
  4. Give physical touch if permissible and if the child will receive it.
  5. Be lavish with compliments and praise. Sincere praise goes a long way. Remember it takes seven positive statements to overcome a negative one.
  6. Help him see his strengths.
  8. Keep a chart of good behavior and give a small reward for success.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”
Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)
• Teach kids the facts

Anger is an emotion. God gave us emotions to help us know what’s going on inside us.  

Anger is neither good nor bad. It is a feeling. It is a signal that you, someone you love or someone you care about is threatened.

Anger can hurt you or help you.  

Hurt—You could lose friendships. You could get into much trouble.  
Help—Help you solve a problem by working through it.

Everyone can learn to control his anger.

Anger builds to a point of no return. The reasoning part of the brain controls to a certain point. Then the reactive part kicks in and reasoning will not help. The child then loses it.

Ignoring your feelings won’t make them go away.

It’s good to express how you feel, but do it without hurting people or property.

• Teach kids “Power Talk”

1. “I” messages

“I feel ____________ when _______________ because ____________.

Please ______________.”

2. Positive messages

“I like the way you ______________.” “It was nice of you to ____________.”

• Teach kids other ways to handle anger

➢ Calm self-talk

➢ Ignore the situation
➢ Talk to an adult
➢ Try to talk it out with the person involved
➢ Physical exercise—active songs, outdoor games, jumping jacks, running in place, do a cheer
➢ Tense-release muscle exercise

• Teach kids social skills
  1. To share
  2. To include others in activities
  3. To help others
  4. To keep promises
  5. To talk politely but honestly
  6. To return what you borrow
  7. To not take what isn’t yours
  8. To ask for what you want
  9. To be honest

• Teach kids God’s Word
  1. Take a look at heroes in the Bible story or missionary lesson
     Ask:  “What kind of person was he?”
        “What do you admire about him?”
        “What words describe him?” (Kind, honest, trustworthy, fun, gentle, giving, helpful, strong,
        smart, caring, brave, thoughtful, friendly, athletic, responsible, etc.)
        “Which of these qualities have you demonstrated this week?”
        “Which one will you work on for the rest of the week?”
  2. Teach verses to help kids deal with anger
     James 4:1-3; Ephesians 4:15, 26-27, 29, 32; Philippians 4:13

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”
Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)
“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

• **Establish clear rules and consequences and be consistent**
  ✓ Remove an out-of-control child from the group until he has calmed down
  ✓ Help the child understand his feelings
  ✓ If the child has an outburst, “I hate you. I don’t want to be here”—acknowledge his feelings by saying something like, “I see that you are angry because ______________.” Then remind him of the rules for expressing anger.
  ✓ Use appropriate correction. Do not use humiliation or shaming techniques (e.g., “God doesn’t love you when you act like that.”)

• **Teach kids to forgive**
  1. Admit that you were hurt by what happened (Ephesians 4:15).
  2. Choose to forgive the one who hurt you (Ephesians 4:32).
  3. Ask God to help you let go of your desire to get back at the other person (Romans 12:17-21).
  4. Make things right with the other person when possible (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15).
  5. Remember your choice to forgive every time you start to feel angry again over this situation.
  6. Get busy doing or thinking something else. This is a good time to read your Bible (Philippians 4:8).

  **A helpful activity:** Cut out six large footprints and write one of the above on each footprint. They can be placed on the floor so children can step on them and learn what each step is. They also can be mixed up and the children need to put them in the right order.

  **Forgiveness is an act of the will and not a feeling.**
  **It may take a long time to get over the hurt even though the child has chosen to forgive the offender.**
• **Be a good model to follow!**

  ✓ Don’t react in anger yourself.
  
  ✓ Remember “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD).
  
  ✓ Pray for the children, especially one who seems to have an anger problem.
  
  ✓ Pay attention if a child is already upset or angry when he comes to club. Show him extra compassion. He may need special attention that day.

### Resources

**Web site**

- Bible lesson outline “Moses Acts in Anger” (page 71)
- Bible lesson outline “Jealous Saul Attempts to Slay David” (page 363)
- Full-page article “How To Be a Person of Great Value” (page 792)

**Web site**

www.ccesonline.com