

PRIMARY LESSON: TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN HOW TO USE "I MESSAGES"

PURPOSE:

- To introduce "I messages"
- To give children practice using "I messages."

MATERIALS:

- Two puppets
- A pencil
- Chart paper, markers

PROCEDURE:

- Gather children in a circle. Introduce the puppets. Tell children that the puppets are going to act out a conflict (a disagreement that made them angry) that probably will sound familiar to them.
- Have one puppet grab a pencil from the. Have the puppet who owns the pencil say, "You better give that pencil back right now!!" Then have the other puppet say, "You're mean! You never share!" Have them argue with each other.
- Ask students what made this conflict get worse instead of better.
- Explain that when we're mad and we start a sentence with "you," we usually make the conflict get worse.
- Say, "It's easier to solve a problem when we start with "I", not "you". Demonstrate by having the first puppet say, "I don't want you to grab my pencil without asking. Please give it back." Have the other puppet say, "I'm sorry. I just need to borrow it for a minute. Will you share with me?"
- Ask how the puppets can work out the conflict.
- Now have the puppets briefly act out another. Have one puppet say, "Your picture is yukky." Have the other puppet say, "Yours is yukky too." Have them argue.
- Stop the conflict and ask children to come up with an "I message" the second puppet could have given instead of saying "Yours is yukky too." (Example: "I didn't like it when you said that.") NOTE: An easy way to help young children form "I messages" is to have them start with, "I didn't like it when _____," as in this example.
- Ask your kids to come up with "I messages" and solutions for the following scenarios.
 - Someone cut in line in front of you.
 - Someone said something mean when they looked at your new haircut.
 - Someone called you a name.
 - Someone said, "You can't play."

On chart paper write down "I messages" they came up with.

- Ask your children to practice using "I messages" next time someone does something that bothers them, including at home. Let them know that using "I messages" will help them be peacemakers and get along better with others.