



School Counseling Corner K-4 October

We Are God's Family of Peacemakers!

During the month of October, I will be teaching a conflict-resolution program in grades 1-4. The program teaches children the difference between small problems and BIG problems, and encourages students to handle small problems on their own. The program is based on the curriculum *Kelso's choices*, but I tailored it a bit to reflect St. Cyril values and beliefs.

BIG problems are situations that are dangerous, scary and unsafe (where someone could get hurt), and need to be reported to an adult right away. Anything that is not dangerous or unsafe is considered a small problem. For small problems, students are encouraged to first ask God for guidance, and then to choose two "peacemaker choices" to solve the problem. The peacemaker choices are:



Apologize
Tell them to stop
Ignore it
Walk away
Talk it out
Share and take turns
Go to another game
Wait and cool off
Make a deal



After trying two choices, if the problem is not resolved, then the student should speak with an adult about the issue.

With the kindergarten classes, I will discuss what it means to be a good friend and focus on only three of the peacemaker choices: sharing and taking turns, asking others to stop (if we don't like what they are doing) and apologizing.

If your child tells you about a friendship problem or conflict they are having at school, please ask which peacemaker choices they have tried and/or discuss which choices might work best. You could role-play the problem situation with your child and have them practice the peaceful choice they plan to try. This could also be an opportunity to pray with your child about the situation, and for teaching your child what it means to "love your enemies," by saying a special prayer or blessing for the person that he/she is having a problem with.

Friendship problems can be great opportunities for children to practice empathy, kindness, assertiveness, patience and forgiveness. When adults view conflict situations as opportunities for learning and growth, children are more likely to resolve problems in positive and beneficial ways.

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