



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to discuss how problems can be solved. Living life to the full involves solving problems and making decisions and choices. Such processes may be encountered as an individual or as a group. Trying to solve children's problems or to resolve their difficulties for them instills in them the attitude that someone else can always "fix it" and that they themselves are not capable of solving even simple problems without adult help.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child.

In the case of each of the following pretend situations, discuss with your child possible ways of finding a solution:

His/her only friend has a cousin coming to stay and says s/he won't be available to play for a couple of weeks;

Homework is not done because it wasn't written down;

S/he kicked a school football into a building site next to the school yard;

S/he is sometimes late for school because s/he stays watching television;

S/he is asked for his/her lunch every day by a child in school?

In the case of each you could ask:

What is the problem here? What do you think about it?

Who is causing the problem? Who is being hurt? Who is losing out?

How do you think this problem could be solved?

Would this be the right thing to do? Why?

What might happen then? Would that be the end of the problem?

Would everyone be happy? Would the problem be solved?

Some strategies for solving problems could be worked out:

Think about the problem;

Think of lots of solutions;

Think what would be the right thing to do;

Think ahead to the consequences and implications of each alternative;

Make a decision on the basis of what you have thought about;

Go ahead and try the best plan.

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Option 1

Board Game: Solve The Problem

Let's Talk: About Ways Of Solving Problems

Board Game: Solve The Problem

For this Board Game the teacher needs the Problem Path (accompanying sheet may be photocopied), the Problem Cards (accompanying problems to be photocopied and cut up) and a dice. There are four players and one referee to every game.

The children throw the dice and proceed as in Snakes and Ladders. If they land on a Problem they must pick a card, listen to the Problem being read by the Referee and choose the A, B or C Solution. They score and move accordingly. The child who reaches **Home** first is the winner. Alternatively, there is a time limit and the child who is farthest ahead at the 'time up' signal is the winner.

1. The Problem

June and Jade are both in Fourth Class. Everywhere June goes Jade follows. June did not mind in the past when they were the best of friends. Now they are always arguing. Jade copies June. She even copies the way June wears her hair. Everything June says, Jade agrees with it. June is getting tired of this. Recently June got a new green top. The very next day Jade had the exact same one. Jade gets jealous if June talks to anyone else.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| A. | June could talk to Jade about how she feels | Score + 2 |
| B. | She could ignore Jade | Score - 1 |
| C. | She could get a gang after Jade | Score - 3 |

2. The Problem

There is a new boy in the class. His name is Joe. He seems shy and is very quiet. The teacher has asked Cathal to show Joe around, to show him where everything is, to help him make new friends and to settle in. Cathal finds this hard. Joe has little to say for himself. The other boys have noticed too. One gang in particular is picking on him and calling him names. Cathal knows the teacher has asked him to look after Joe but he is afraid of this gang.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-----------|
| A. | Cathal could organise a gang | Score - 3 |
| B. | He could tell the teacher | Score + 2 |
| C. | He could drop Joe | Score - 1 |

3. The Problem

Laura's big sister is called Louise. Laura loves her very much. They used be good friends and play a lot together. But Louise is in post-primary school now. She has homework and choir practice and new friends and Laura hardly ever sees her. Laura started to read Louise's diary to find out what she is doing. Laura knows that the diary is Louise's private property but doesn't know how else to find out what Louise is thinking and doing.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| A. | Laura could talk to her mother/father | Score + 2 |
| B. | She could talk to Louise | Score + 2 |
| C. | She could keep reading the diary | Score - 2 |

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4. The Problem

Claire has invited Sharon to her birthday party. Sharon is surprised. Claire often picked on her and called her names. Claire has told Sharon that it is a fancy dress party. It isn't - Claire is just trying to make a fool of Sharon. Imagine how Sharon would feel arriving at the party in fancy dress to find the other girls in their party clothes. The other girls know about the trick. Some of them want to warn Sharon but they are scared of Claire.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----------|
| A. | The girls could talk to Claire | Score +1 |
| B. | They could ignore the problem | Score -2 |
| C. | They could talk to Sharon | Score +2 |

5. The Problem

John's Granny lives with him. She is very kind and gentle but she is very old and forgets things. Sometimes she thinks she is a child again herself and that John's mother is her mother too. John is afraid to invite boys from his class to visit, in case they make fun of his Granny. The other boys wonder why John never invites them to visit. They think he isn't being very friendly.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|--|-----------|
| A. | John could tell the boys to get lost | Score -1 |
| B. | He could tell and invite a few close friends | Score + 2 |
| C. | He could tell his mother or father | Score + 3 |

6. The Problem

Simon is the eldest at home. He has lots of brothers and sisters. Home can be a noisy place. His best friend at school is an only child. His name is Mark. Home is a quiet place for Mark. Both boys are afraid to invite the other to visit because of what they might think of each other's home. Each boy wonders why the other hasn't invited him to visit.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|--|-----------|
| A. | Simon could give out to his young brothers/sisters | Score - 3 |
| B. | He could talk to his mother/father | Score + 3 |
| C. | He could invite Mark and explain the situation | Score + 2 |

7. The Problem

Gemma and Kelly are good friends. Kelly appears to be very upset about something. Gemma doesn't know what the matter is.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|--|-----------|
| A. | Gemma and Kelly could spend more time together | Score + 1 |
| B. | Gemma could talk to Kelly | Score + 2 |
| C. | Gemma could ignore Kelly being upset | Score - 2 |

8. The Problem

Kevin has found out that Larry has been telling untrue stories about him to their friends at school.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| A. | Kevin could tell the teacher | Score + 2 |
| B. | He could ignore Larry and his stories | Score - 2 |
| C. | He could talk to Larry | Score + 2 |

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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

9. The Problem

Frank is standing in a queue in a shop waiting to be served. An adult pushes past and the shop assistant starts serving the adult first.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|---|-----------|
| A. | Frank could say 'excuse me, I was here first' | Score + 3 |
| B. | He could make a face at the adult | Score - 3 |
| C. | He could ignore what is happening | Score 0 |

10. The Problem

Louise is annoyed to find her younger sister Laura has been borrowing her clothes. She borrowed her jacket and it was torn when Louise got it back.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|---|-----------|
| A. | Louise could talk to Laura | Score + 3 |
| B. | She could take something that belonged to Laura | Score - 3 |
| C. | Louise could get a lock for her press | Score + 1 |

11. The Problem

Megan goes shopping with her mother to buy some clothes for herself, but it seems to Megan that her mother wants to make all the decisions about what to buy.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

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|----|--|-----------|
| A. | Megan could agree with her mother's decision | Score 0 |
| B. | She could sulk and refuse to talk | Score - 2 |
| C. | She could look for a compromise | Score + 3 |

Let's Talk: About Ways Of Solving Problems

When the Board Game is finished, the children sit in a circle and talk about the problems they encountered and the solutions that were chosen. Varying answers can be analysed. The teacher points out that most people encounter problems occasionally. The response to a problem, in the effort to solve it, influences the outcome for better or worse. The teacher asks the children, in turn, to say what they learned from the game about ways to solve problems. Some solutions may be listed and put on a chart, e.g.,

To Solve A Problem ...

Talk to the person involved

Listen to the other person

Ask questions for more information

Explain your point of view

Tell someone you trust

Ask someone you trust for help

Solve the problem game

