Resolving Conflicts
Lesson Content

Conflict is everywhere, and most people are uncomfortable with it. But conflict is neither good nor bad. How we handle conflict determines the quality of our experience. When we develop good conflict management skills, it's not so scary.

What if we could teach our children how to choose the best strategy for resolving the conflicts they encounter? There are five basic approaches to handling a conflict, and there's a right time and a wrong time for each one. Here's a summary.

Avoidance -- When people withdraw to avoid the conflict. They believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflict, and usually step away from a conflict situation. This style leads to a "lose-lose" situation.

Competition -- When one person tries to overpower another person by forcing his or her own solution on the other. It's appropriate when core values are at stake. This style is considered a "win-lose" approach.

Accommodation -- When people feel that relationships are more important than their own goals. They want to be liked and accepted; harmony is the important goal. These people are choosing a "lose-win" approach.

Compromise – When issues are of medium importance. People in the conflict choose to split the difference and find middle ground. They choose to win some, and lose some by giving away some of what they want, but not all.

Cooperation or Collaboration -- When people highly value their own goals AND relationships with others. They consider conflicts as problems to be solved, and want both parties to achieve their goals. They are not satisfied until an acceptable solution is found for both parties. They have chosen a "win-win" approach.

It's important to view conflicts as opportunities, and to see the other person as your conflict "partner," instead of the enemy.

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Discussion Guide

GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE

1 What are some examples of conflicts within your family? Which resolution style is most appropriate for each one?

2 What conflicts does your child encounter in sports or at school? What style would work best in reaching good resolutions?