

Topic: Anger

Name: 'When you are angry, do not sin.'

Purpose of the meeting: to help kids understand that anger itself is not a sin, and to understand some ways God says we should deal with our anger.



INTRO

'Role Play'

In groups of three, act out a situation two times. The first time someone gets angry and reacts in a bad way. The second time in the same situation the person reacts in a good way.

The leader can come up with situations for each group to act out, or let the students make them up. Possible situations:

1. You weren't invited to a friend's birthday party.
2. Someone cut in front of you in line.
3. You were insulted for something you are wearing.
4. Someone stepped on your foot and did not apologize.

QUESTIONS

To assist the leader, *possible answers* are provided in italics after each question. Remember: the purpose of the discussion is for kids to express *their* thoughts. Discussion leaders should only share their ideas at the end.

1. What are some things that make us mad (write down their answers)?

When parents and teachers are unfair; when someone doesn't understand us; when we are laughed at or put down; injustice, when our rights have been violated; when someone breaks a promise or tells a secret

2. How would you define anger?

An emotional reaction to having our feelings hurt; a negative emotion; a feeling that makes you feel like you need to do something or prove someone wrong, or to make something right; a defense mechanism when you feel threatened

3. What purpose does anger serve? Why does it exist?

It provides adrenaline, or a burst of energy to respond to something that's unfair; because we're made in God's image, we have a sense of right and wrong; anger is a way to express that something is not right.

4. How should we NOT respond when angry?

Swear; belittle another person; take revenge; make quick decisions; respond physically; automatically blame ourselves (i.e. 'anger is bad so I must be sinning to feel this angry)

5. How SHOULD we respond when angry? (Write down the kid's answers.)

Recognize we are angry; be patient; pray; hold our tongues, count to 10 before responding; try to get away from the situation to cool off; bring it to God; find a helpful outlet for physical energy (e.g. punch a pillow, go for a run, etc.).

6. What works the best for **you** in handling your anger?

The answers may be the same as for question No. 5, or there may be additional ideas.

7. Is it okay to be angry sometimes, or is it always a sin? When is it okay to be angry?

When there's an injustice, when someone has been legitimately wronged; if someone is doing something illegal, hurting or threatening someone (even if it's you).

8. True or false: 'When angry it's best to try and hide it.' Why or why not?

Sometimes it's good to hide it and other times not; don't hide it from yourself or God because hidden anger can turn into bitterness or misplaced anger; sometimes we have to hide it, because the anger may ruin a relationship, or because we might see it differently if we take time to cool off.

9. Is there ever a time when we shouldn't forgive a person who has made us angry?

Why or why not?

God wants us to forgive; The Bible says to trust God's vengeance; God has forgiven us and we should forgive others; not forgiving ends up hurting us as much or more than it hurts the person we don't forgive; forgiving doesn't mean you say what the person did was okay, and it doesn't mean you put yourself at risk again.

WRAP-UP

1. There are several misconceptions about anger (according to Daniel Bagby):

Wrong view: All anger is sin, and God is against it.

Right view: Anger is an emotion that is not sin. Even Jesus got angry. The way we respond to this emotion, however, is really important.

Wrong view: It's best to hide or ignore anger.

Right view: It is very unhealthy to deny your anger. If you don't deal with it, you can develop physical and emotional problems.

Wrong view: If anger is left alone, it will disappear.

Right view: Suppressed anger can lead to depression or angry outbursts in other, unrelated situations.

It is very important to have a healthy respect for this powerful emotion.

2. Some things the Bible says related to anger:

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
(Romans 12:18 NIV)

In other words, do what you can when anger disrupts a relationship, but when someone else is involved, it will not all depend on you.

“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”
(Ephesians 4:26 NIV)

It may be hard to get over serious anger by bedtime, but the verse urges us to deal with anger sooner rather than later, and to do things that will calm down our emotions, and not stir them up.

3. How to handle anger:

- Admit you are angry (at least to yourself and to God).
- Identify the source of your anger: what caused it?
Anger is sometimes rightly caused by injustice or cruelty.

But sometimes, it is a symptom of a deeper personal emotion, such as fear, pride, hurt feelings, disappointment, jealousy. Try to be honest with yourself. Is there a deeper feeling behind your anger?

- Release your energy.

Anger causes a surge of energy that should not be directed at yourself or another person. Physical activity such as running, punching a pillow, getting on your bike can help. But don't do something that makes you madder!

- Forgive the person.

Sometimes it takes a while. Ask God to help you forgive, and be ready to forgive the same offense more than once. Forgiving does not mean acting like it didn't matter, or letting a person continue to treat you badly. Forgiving means not seeking revenge.

Anger is not a sin, but a symptom that something's wrong. It is very important to learn how to consider what is making you angry, and to be able to handle it in a way that allows you to not be controlled by it.