

GRADE 4, LESSON 8

Exploring Anger



CASEL SEL COMPETENCIES

- SA** Self-Awareness
- SM** Self-Management
- RS** Relationship Skills

Gathering: A Time When I Was Angry

Ask students to think about a time when they got angry. Ask: **Who was involved? What did they do? How did it turn out?** Have students share this experience with a partner. Allow at least a minute for each student to talk, and give a half-time signal so that both students have time to speak.

Agenda Check

Today, as our Agenda shows, we're going to look at one particular emotion, or feeling, anger. Of all of the emotions we experience, it's often the one that gives us the most trouble. Because of anger, conflicts sometimes get out of hand, and people do things that hurt others, or things they are sorry for later. In our activity today, you will work with a group to create a mural about anger. We'll share our ideas about anger with each other, and then, in our Closing, we will discuss our ideas about some ways to manage angry feelings.

Activity: Anger Murals

1. Review the definition of a mural. Explain: **The anger murals will explain, in words or pictures, our ideas about anger. They will depict the following things for the members of the group: anger cues, anger triggers, and things we do when we're angry.**
2. Explain the mural vocabulary: **Anger cues are the way we "read" our bodies to know we're getting angry. Some people clench their teeth. Can you think of another example? Anger triggers are the things that make us angry. I sometimes get angry when** (provide an example). **What's something that makes you angry?** (Guide students to be specific, so that instead of saying "sisters," they describe what their sister does that makes them angry.) **What do people sometimes do when they're angry? Have you ever seen a little child stamp his feet?**
3. Write the following directions on the board or on chart paper. Organize students into groups. Have them work on an anger mural. Give them at least five or ten minutes to complete it.

Workshop Agenda

- Gathering: A Time When I Was Angry
- Agenda Check
- Activity: Anger Murals
- Debriefing
- Closing: What Cools You Down?

Materials

- Workshop agenda, written on the board or on chart paper
- Directions written on the board or on chart paper for the Anger Mural Chart
- Paper and markers for each group
- Materials to get students into groups, such as postcards or puzzle pieces

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to identify ways people communicate and physically react when they're angry.
- Students will begin to identify personal techniques for managing anger.

Connections to Standards

Health

- Knows common sources of stress for children and how to manage the stress
- Knows how mood changes and strong feelings affect thoughts and behaviors and how to manage mood changes and strong feelings successfully
- Understands how one responds to the behavior of others and how one's behavior may provoke responses in others
- Knows behaviors that are a safety risk or harmful to self and others

Anger Mural

Using words and/or pictures, show the following three things about your group:

- Anger Cues – How do you know you're getting angry? What does your body do?
 - Anger Triggers – What makes you angry?
 - What We Do When We're Angry–Describe the things that you do when you get mad.
4. Ask the groups to present their murals to the class.
 5. Then ask them to go back to the murals with two colors of markers, and look again at the part that reflects what people do when they're angry.
 6. Using one color marker, ask students to circle the constructive things that are listed. Explain that a constructive response is one that helps the people in the conflict to calm down or to work it out so both feel okay in the end (taking a walk, counting to ten, or talking things out with someone). With the other color, ask students to circle the destructive things that people do. These are things that make the conflict worse, hurt oneself, or lead to someone getting hurt.
 7. It can be helpful to write the constructive items on a separate piece of chart paper as they're shared, so that they can be posted in the classroom later.

Debriefing

Remind students that anger is a normal emotion. Say: **It's usually a signal to us that something is wrong, and needs attention. It's helpful to have some tools to deal with angry feelings so they don't take over and make us do things that are harmful to ourselves and to others. Did anyone learn something helpful about dealing with anger while we made the mural? Are there any ideas here that you can use to manage angry feelings that you hadn't thought of before?**

Closing: What Cools You Down?

In a go-round, ask students to share something that helps them cool down when they feel angry. Cooling down doesn't help work out the conflict itself, but it can allow us to calm down so that we can act constructively.

Extensions and Infusion Ideas

Cooling-Down Strategies

Develop a more extensive list of cooling-down strategies that students may not have been exposed to. Use examples from books and experiences students may bring in to share.

Anger Cards

Create a set of situation cards with eight to ten common situations students encounter that may make them angry: for example, “A friend borrows things from you and doesn’t return them.” Divide the class into groups of four or five. Give each group a set of cards. Have students take turns drawing a card, reading it, and saying how angry they would be in that situation, what they would do to calm down, and what they would say to the person.

Social Studies

There are many people who have used anger constructively. Have students research one of the following people and report on what injustice angered them and what type of social action they were inspired to take: Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jane Addams, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Rachel Carson, Mother Jones, Mohandas K. Gandhi. Other interesting questions concern what conflicts they encountered and how they responded.

Connecting to Literature

(Note: Some of the levels listed for the books may seem to be intended for lower grades or reading levels. Remind students that readers of all ages appreciate picture books and that the book is related to the lesson.)

The Good Little Girl, by Lawrence David

(New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1998) Gr. 1-4

Summary: After covering her feelings, Miranda shrinks until she fits behind the eyes of a green girl, Lucretia, who demands and gets her way. After Lucretia takes things too far, Miranda takes over, and she and her parents find a way to satisfy everyone’s needs.

1. Although Miranda started showing her anger when she looked at her breakfast eggs, she had started becoming angry before that. Name some incidents in which she held in her anger. When did Miranda begin to show her anger?
2. What kinds of things were happening to Miranda as she turned into the little girl inside of Lucretia’s head? Did these things feel familiar to you? How?
3. What do you think was really happening when Miranda grew and returned to being herself again?
4. We have five kinds of basic needs: security (safety), belonging (love), freedom (to make choices), power (respect, the ability to achieve), and fun. When a basic need is threatened or lacking we feel angry. Which of her basic needs do you think Miranda felt were threatened?
5. How did Miranda and her parents respect each other’s basic needs at the end?

Bernard the Angry Rooster, by Mary Wormell
(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001) Gr. P-2

Summary: Bernard is jealous of the weathervane rooster until he finds a way to be just as high.

1. At first, no one knew why Bernard was angry.
 - a. Can you think of a time when someone else was angry and you didn't know why until later?
 - b. Can you think of a time when it took you a while to figure out why you were angry?
 2. We have five kinds of basic needs: security (safety), belonging (love), freedom (to make choices), power (respect, the ability to achieve), and fun. What are some of the ways you like to satisfy your basic needs?
 3. When a basic need is threatened or lacking we feel angry. Which of these basic needs do you think Bernard felt were threatened?
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