



# Home Improvement

Families Working Together for a  
Happier Home



**Families Working Together for a Happier Home**

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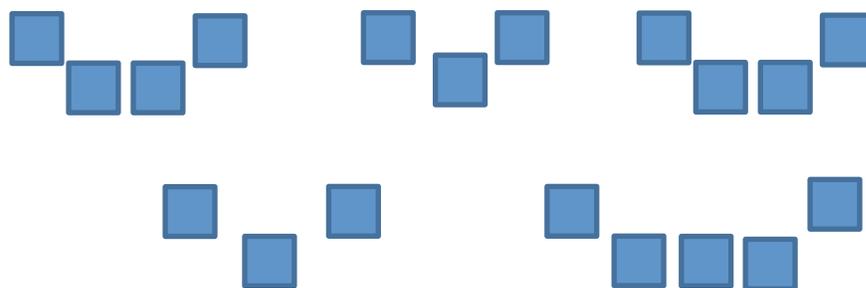
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## Setting the Stage for an IMPACT Small Group

IMPACT small groups are unique! Usually churches are really good about separating parents and children into age-appropriate environments and communicating with these two audiences separately. In an IMPACT group, parents and kids have the opportunity to learn together. This ensures that both groups hear the same message at the same time, and have a chance to put new knowledge and techniques into action before they get home. By allowing families the chance to interact at church, you're building bridges to communication at home where the rubber meets the road.

Because this is a very relationally-rich experience for parents and kids, you'll want to provide a learning environment where family members communicate and interact with each other. As you prepare to choose a location for your small group, keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. **Open Space**- Many of these lessons include games in which parents and kids will participate together. Make sure you hold your class in an open environment- preferably without any tables. Pull in chairs that can be easily moved during games if necessary.
2. **Chair Arrangement**- Make sure family members are sitting together and talking to each other during discussion times. Arrange the chairs in small groups of chairs based on the number of parents and kids in each family group. An example seating arrangement for five families is below.



3. **Technology**- It's extremely helpful to have a visual prompt of what you're discussing- both to keep you on track as the leader and to help keep families engaged. Try to choose a room with a projection system and a screen.

4. **Timing-** Choose a time of the year that seems to be less busy for your families. If you have lots of kids in your church who play football, don't offer this small group in the fall during football season. Make sure to schedule it at a time that best meets the needs of the families in your church. Does it work best to meet before or after dinner? Try to keep your groups to no more than one hour.
5. **Organization-** You'll need to be as organized and prepared as possible. You will only have one hour to teach each lesson and these lessons are jam-packed with great activities! It's also important that families have enough time for discussion as well. Fill up a bucket or plastic caddy for each family group with all the supplies they'll need throughout the lesson. That way you won't waste time passing out and collecting supplies.
6. **Target Age-** These classes are intended for parents and their elementary aged children. Consider offering childcare options for siblings preschool age and under. Because the topics and strategies presented are targeted toward the development level of an elementary school child, younger children end up becoming more of a distraction and prevent learning and growth from taking place.

## Lesson 1- Problems and Conflicts

**Materials:** paper strips, tape, permanent markers, magnet paper with printed words, hula hoops- two per family, dry erase boards and markers for each family, Bibles, plastic plates and dry erase markers for each family

**Welcome!** Over the next five weeks we're going to learn how to handle some uncomfortable family situations. You will work together as a family and learn that things work much better if we deal with problems in a peaceful way.

As we move through the classes, I'll be talking to both kids and parents and giving you some strategies for changing the way you relate to one another. Let's get started!

**Talk It Over-** Today we're going to talk about the difference between to-dos and problems and how that often causes conflict in our homes. What is the last conflict you had in your home? Is there anything in particular that usually sparks conflict? Talk about it in your family group.

**To-Dos-** In a family it's important that everyone shares in the responsibility to get things done. Let's spend some time writing some of your responsibilities on paper strips. You'll make a paper chain of responsibilities for each person in your family.

**Problems-** Problems are things that get in the way of accomplishing your to-dos. For example, it's your turn to take out the trash and the trash bag breaks. Yucky trash juice leaks out all over the floor and that makes you angry. What is the problem? The to-do is taking out the trash, but there are some problems in the way- a broken trash bag and yucky trash juice!

Find a to-do from your paper chain that sometimes leads to a problem then talk about it with your family.

**Turning Problems into Tasks-** When a problem occurs, we have a choice. We can either turn the problem into a to-do or let it escalate into conflict. When we turn the problem into a to-do, we make a plan to solve it. For instance, in the example of the trash bag, I can take the problem of a broken trash bag and turn it into to-dos. The first to-do is to put the broken trash bag inside a new trash bag. Then the next step would be to clean up the trash juice from the floor.

When faced with a problem, there are many ways we can choose to respond. We can pout- everyone give me your best pouting pose. Does that help us solve the problem? We can throw a tantrum- everyone give me your wildest tantrum for 10 seconds. Does that help us solve the problem? We can get angry- show me what happens when you get angry. Does that help us solve the problem? OR we can solve the problem by turning the problem into a series of to-dos.

Talk about a problem that sometimes happens in your home when one of your to-dos doesn't get done. Make a list of steps to solve the problem- turn the problem into more to-dos. For example- if your to-do is getting ready for school and you can't find your homework, think about what you need to accomplish in order to turn the problem into a list of to-dos. Maybe you should put your homework in its place the day before- that becomes a new to-do for you. See if you can work with your family group to come up with some to-dos that will help you solve your problem.

**Conflict-** Conflict happens when problems cause an emotional reaction. Instead of parents and kids getting on the same side and working to turn the problem into to-dos, someone gets emotional and upset. What happens when emotions/feelings happen in the middle of a conflict? (anger, disappointment, annoyance, bad attitude, rolling eyes, yelling, etc.)

Let's do some role-playing with what you've just learned. Choose another to-do and talk about a problem that sometimes occurs. (give families time to talk)

**30 Second Face Off-** Let's act out how that happens in your home. I want two people in your family to stand back-to-back. When I say go, you'll turn around, face each other, and start acting out the conflict. I'll give you 30 seconds to face off in a conflict. You have to keep talking for the whole 30 seconds. Are you ready? GO!

Did you notice that when you were acting out the conflict, you were on opposite sides? When problems occur, we need to work together to come up with a solution that will solve the problem. When we get angry and emotional, the problem isn't solved- it just gets bigger!

**Family Machine-** Let's see what happens if we work together to solve a problem. I want your family to learn to function together as a team- kind of like a machine that needs all its parts to work. I'll lay out some hula hoops on

opposite sides of the room. Your family will be a connected machine and you'll have to work together to move your family machine from one hula hoop to the next. Remember- you can't break the machine- you have to stay connected! Everyone stand with your family inside one hula hoop, then get connected and move everyone to the other hula hoop. That was easy, right? Now I'm going to give you some problems and see if you can turn these problems into a list of to-dos to solve them. Don't let it escalate into conflict!

1. Move your family machine from one hula hoop to the next by allowing only 4 feet to touch the floor (for a two-person family, you might say 2-3 feet or let them work with another family)
2. Move your family machine from one hula hoop to the next by allowing only 3 feet and two hands to touch the floor (adjust as needed depending on the size of your families)
3. Move your family machine from one hula hoop to the next by allowing only 4 feet and one nose to touch the floor.

**Overcoming Conflict-** Was there any conflict during that last game? What happens in your family if a conflict begins? Let's talk about some strategies for handling conflict.

1. Take Responsibility-Everyone needs to take responsibility for their choices. All it takes is for one person to react with emotion

for the conflict to begin. But in order for the conflict to continue, the other person has to engage.

2. Step Away. Parents- if you feel yourself getting frustrated, step away for a while. Kids- if you begin to get upset go to your room and cool down. Families need to make a promise to give each other space to avoid a conflict. Parents- if kids need to walk away from a situation- let them! Don't chase them down and try to get your point across!

**30 Second Face-Off-** Remember the game that we played earlier when we faced off in conflict for 30 seconds? Let's play it again, only this time kids will be the only ones fussing. Kids- remember the problem that you argued about before? Well, we're going to see what happens when you face off against the adults and the adults are silent. Ready? GO! (time for 30 seconds- most kids will give up well before that because their parents are silent)

It was hard to argue with someone who was silent, wasn't it? When conflict happens in the house, you both need to walk away until you're ready to work together to turn the problem into a to-do.

**Look It Up-** Let's take a look at what the Bible says about conflict. "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:2-3. What were some key words in that verse? I'll give you a sheet of magnet paper that has all the words from this verse printed on it. When you get home, you'll cut the words apart and reassemble them on your fridge.

**Take it Home-** I'm going to give each family a plastic plate and a dry erase marker. This will be your "Problem Plate." This week when you have a problem in your house, I want you to work together, sitting side-by-side, to come up with a list of to-dos for solving the problem. Write the to-dos on the plate with your marker, then erase each task you complete. When you're done you should have a clean plate and the problem should be solved!

Print on magnet paper- one set per family

Be	Completely	Humble	And	Gentle;
Be	Patient,	Bearing	With	One
Another	In	Love.	Make	Every
Effort	To	Keep	The	Unity
Of	The	Spirit	Through	The
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