

Solve Problems Step by Step

Quarter 4 • Lesson 10

Focus on Life Skills

- 1. Connecting:** Do a problem-solving activity to line up from shortest to tallest.
- 2. Teaching:** Learn 4 steps to solve problems (Mark 8:1–13).
- 3. Responding:** Use problem-solving steps to go through a maze.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- 16 rocks or desks
- Crayons
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

*I will guide you and teach you the way you should go.
I will give you good advice and watch over you with love.*
Psalm 32:8

In this verse, we are promised that God will guide us and teach us. He will give us good advice because He loves us. We are not alone when we face problems and difficulties! God will give us good advice and direction when we ask Him!

Think of a problem or difficulty you have faced. Perhaps you have a broken relationship with someone. Perhaps you see something wrong and do not know how to report it. When you are faced with a difficult problem, start by praying for guidance and wisdom. Pray for God to direct you to the right perspective of the problem and possible solutions. Once you ask for guidance, work through the problem-solving process. When you see the problem clearly, you can figure out what information you need to solve it. God is so loving and so good that He helps you through your problems!

Family Connection: Encourage children to share the problem-solving steps they learned with their families.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do a problem-solving activity to line up from shortest to tallest.

As the children enter, welcome them and ask them to form groups of about 10 people. Try to divide the children into mostly equal groups.

I have a problem for each group to solve. Each group needs to form a line in order from shortest to tallest. This means the shortest child will be the first in line and the tallest child will be last in line. You do not have much time to solve this problem. When I count to 3, you will begin. Work together, and please do not push one another. When I say, "Stop!" you will stand still. Are you ready? 1, 2, 3, begin!

When you see a group getting close to solving the problem, say, "Stop!" Then, talk to the children about how they solved the problem. How did they think about the problem? How did they work together? Did they solve the problem?

Everyone started this activity with a clear idea of what the problem was. Then you took several different steps to help you solve the problem. Today, we will talk more about problem-solving steps.

2. Teaching: Learn 4 steps to solve problems (Mark 8:1–13).

Let's all sit in a big circle. Today we are learning about solving problems. To solve problems, you need more than just your own understanding to figure it out. You need to pray every step of the way. Today you will learn steps to help you solve problems. You learned the first 3 steps in last lesson.

Step 1: Pray for understanding.

- **Why might you ask God to help you understand a problem?**

Answers may include: Because He knows everything. He can give me understanding.

When you ask God to help you understand a problem, He can help you to look at things from a different perspective. As you pray and talk to God, you might realize that what you thought was a problem really is not one. Or, it might become clear how big or small your problem is. No matter how big or small your problem is, you can ask the Holy Spirit to help guide you.

Call on 1 child to stand and hold up 1 finger. Have that child stand outside of the circle.

Teacher Tip: Instead of calling on children who raise their hands, you may also choose volunteers who show that they are listening. This helps the children to focus on the lesson and be more attentive.

Step 2: Identify the problem.

After you pray and ask God for help, identify what the problem is. You may also find that you have more than 1 problem. For example, you identify the problem that you need to get water, but you have a second problem because you broke the cup you use to drink water.

Call on 1 child to stand and hold up 2 fingers. Have that child stand outside of the circle.

Teacher Tip: If you have both girls and boys in your class, make sure to call on at least 1 boy and 1 girl to stand and hold up fingers for the steps. This will make both the boys and the girls in the class feel valued and will encourage them to listen.

Step 3: Gather information.

Once you know what the problem is, you need to gather information to help you solve the problem. As you gather information about the problem, be sure to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you. Remember to trust in the Lord with all your heart. Gather information about different pieces of the problem. For example, you may find out the cause of the problem. Or perhaps you find that the person causing the problem has problems of his own. Then you can think about the information and look for possible solutions. Next, it is time to take action.

Call on 1 child to stand and hold up 3 fingers. Have that child stand outside of the circle.

Step 4: Try to solve the problem.

Often there is more than 1 possible way to solve the problem. Pray and decide on the best possible solution. Then, try to solve the problem.

Call on 1 child to stand and hold up 4 fingers. Have that child stand outside of the circle.

- **What are the 4 steps to solving a problem?**

Have all of the children hold up the number of fingers that shows each step. The steps are: 1. Ask God for help. 2. Identify the problem. 3. Gather information. 4. Try to solve the problem.

Thank you, volunteers! You can sit down in the circle. Listen to a true story from the Bible about Jesus and His disciples. As I read, listen for the steps you learned about today. When you hear a step, raise your hands high and show which step it is with 1, 2, 3, or 4 fingers.

Teacher Tip: You may need to hold up your fingers with the children to help them remember which step you are talking about.

A large crowd of people had gathered to listen to Jesus teach. In fact, those people had been listening to Jesus for 3 days! They had no food left to eat. Jesus told His disciples that the people could not be sent home without eating first. Listen to what happened next:

Read this verse directly from your Bible.

*His disciples answered him. "There is nothing here," they said.
"Where can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"*

Mark 8:4

- **Tell me what the problem is.** (Children hold up 2 fingers)

The people were hungry and there was not enough food.

- **What information do you need to gather about this problem?**
(Children hold up 3 fingers)

Answers may include: How many people are there? Does anyone have any food? How far would someone have to go to find food? Does anyone have money to buy food?

The disciples talked about this, but they were not gathering information (children hold up 3 fingers). **They also were not thinking of possible solutions** (children hold up 4 fingers). **They only saw the problem and relied on their own understanding.**

Jesus asked them how many loaves they had. They answered that they had 7 loaves and a few fish. The problem still seemed impossible to the disciples! Let's see what Jesus did.

He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves and gave thanks to God. Then he broke them and gave them to his disciples. They passed the pieces of bread around to the people. The disciples also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for them too. He told the disciples to pass them around. The people ate and were satisfied. After that, the disciples picked up seven baskets of leftover pieces. About 4,000 people were there. After Jesus sent them away, he got into a boat with his disciples.

Mark 8:6–10

Jesus asked His disciples questions. This helped Him gather information. When you gather information about a problem, it is important to ask questions. Jesus thanked God. That is an example of how you can turn to God when you have problems too! Finally, Jesus tried the solution of handing out food to the people. Everyone had more than enough food!

In this true story, Jesus fed many people through a miracle. God does not do a miracle for every problem, but He will always be with you to help you with your problems!

The true story from the Bible is a good example of the importance of following the steps to solving problems. It is also a good example of why asking God to help you understand the problem is the first step. Jesus, who is God, understood what the problem was and how to solve it perfectly.

Let's review the 4 problem-solving steps we have learned so far:

- **Pray for understanding** (children hold up 1 finger)
- **Identify the problem** (children hold up 2 fingers)
- **Gather information** (children hold up 3 fingers)
- **Try to solve the problem** (children hold up 4 fingers)

Each of these steps is important, but remember that asking God to help you is the most important step.

3. Responding: Use problem-solving steps to go through a maze.

Let's use what you learned today to solve a problem. In a moment, some of you will create a maze while the other children will find a way through it. In a maze, there are different paths, but only 1 will guide you out of it.

Let's begin by praying for understanding. Heavenly Father, help us to understand our problems. Please lead and guide us by Your Holy Spirit, not only through this maze but through the difficult problems we face in life. In Jesus' name, amen.

As you go through the maze, you may notice that there are places where a path ends and you cannot get through to the other side. Gathering information about where you cannot go will help you to solve the problem and find a way out of the maze.

Teacher Tip: Since you will be separating the children into 2 groups, it is very important that the children know that they will all be able to participate in this activity. When children feel left out of an activity, they may become upset.

Choose 16 children to stand up. This will be Group 1. The seated children will be Group 2. Give the instructions below to Group 2.

While I prepare the maze with the other group, discuss this question with your group.

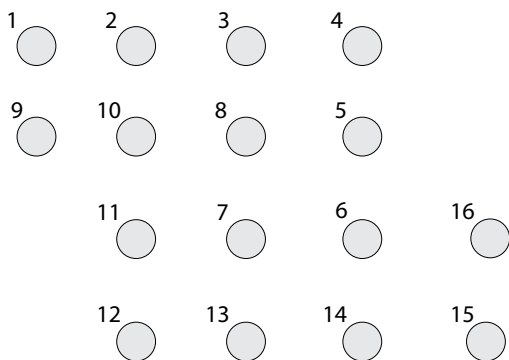
• **What 4 steps did you learn today to help you solve problems?**

Allow this group of children to discuss the question while you set up the other group of children. If they finish their discussion, ask them to continue talking about ways to solve problems until the maze is ready.

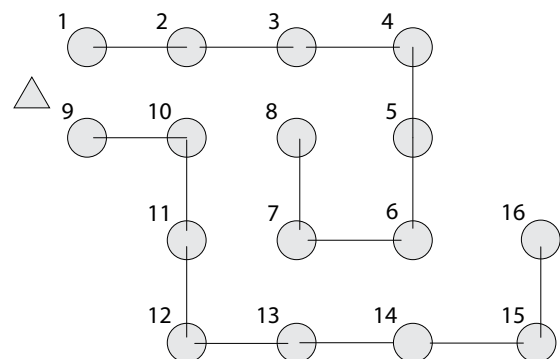
Optional: If you have fewer than 18 children in your class, you may use rocks or desks to make the maze. You need at least 2 children to walk through the maze.

While Group 2 discusses the question, use the instructions below to guide Group 1 to form a maze:

Make 4 rows of 4 children, as shown in the diagram below. The circles represent students.



Now, have the children hold hands as shown in the diagram below. The lines represent the children holding hands. Tell the students in Group 1 that they will stand in this formation until the activity is over.



Look at the triangle in the diagram. This is where the students of Group 2 will begin the maze. Give the following instructions to Group 2.

Those of you who are sitting, please turn around so that you can see the other group. These children who are standing created a maze. You will walk through the maze to the opening on the other side.

You will start at this end by person 1 (refer to the picture). Your goal is to search the maze for a way out that is different than the way you entered it.

Teacher Tip: When you give complex instructions, it is sometimes helpful to ask the children questions to make sure they understand what they are being asked to do.

There are 4 rules while you are in the maze.

1. Do not touch the other children.
2. Do not walk under the arms of the students forming the maze.
3. Walk and do not run.
4. Do help your friends find the way out of the maze. This also means not calling out to them when you find the way out.

Guide the children of Group 2 to the opening in the maze marked with a triangle. Have the children walk through the maze until all of them have found the way out (located between the numbers 16 and 6 on the diagram).

Optional: If you are using Student Pages, give each child a crayon and allow 3 minutes for them to find a way through the maze.

You all did a great job! Come and stand with me in a circle. Today you learned 4 steps to help you solve problems. The memory verse today reminds us to ask God to help us understand a problem before we try to solve it.

Show the Memory Verse poster, if you are using it.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart.
Do not depend on your own understanding.
Proverbs 3:5*

Trust in the Lord—Grasp hands together.

With all your heart—Cross arms with palms over your heart.

Do not depend on your own understanding—Indicate no while touching the sides of your head with your index fingers.

End class by saying this blessing, based on Mark 8:18, over the children.

Blessing: May you have eyes to see that your heavenly Father wants to help you solve your problems. May you have ears to hear what Jesus is speaking to you in the midst of your problems. May the Holy Spirit guide you to the best solutions.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song if possible.

"Reckless Love" by Cory Asbury: <https://youtu.be/Sc6SSHuZvQE>