

Managing Anger: Change What You Can

Quarter 10 • Lesson 12

Focus on Life Skills

1. *Connecting*: Do an activity to learn about changing things.
2. *Teaching*: Hear the story of how David was angry but changed what he could (1 Samuel 25).
3. *Responding*: Practice changing what can be changed.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The Action Bible*, image of Abigail stopping David
- Pencils
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,
making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.
Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.*

Ephesians 5:15–17

When facing situations or people that make you angry, there are often many things you cannot change. For example, you cannot change other people—only God can! And you usually cannot change a circumstance. Instead of trying to change what cannot be changed, look for what can be changed—your attitude, words, actions, or thoughts. Ask God to help you trust Him with the things in life that cannot be changed. And ask Him to help you to recognize and change what can be changed!

Family Connection: Let your children’s families know that this week their children will learn that part of managing anger is to change what they can. Encourage families to list things about themselves that they (and no one else) have control over, such as their attitudes and words.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do an activity to learn about changing things.

As the children arrive, ask them if they practiced any of the steps to managing anger.

Have the children get into groups of 4–5. Tell them that each group will come up with ideas about how to change you, the teacher.

Each group will think of 3 things about me that cannot change. These are things such as what country I was born in.

Give the groups 1 minute to decide on their 3 things. Then ask each group to share them. It is okay to laugh together. Choose 1 thing shared by a group and ask the whole class to think about how to change that 1 thing. Give the class 2 minutes to figure out how to change this unchangeable thing about you. Then ask the following questions and allow 2–3 children to share their thoughts.

- **Were you able to find a way to change the unchangeable thing about me? Why not?**
- **How hard did you try?**

Some things about me will never change, no matter how hard I try. These things are part of the way God made me, and I cannot change them. But there are other things about me that can be changed.

Each group will now think of 3 things about me that can change. These are things such as the colour of my shirt.

Give the groups 1 minute to decide on their 3 things. Then ask each group to share them. Ask the whole class to think about ways to change the things about you that can be changed. After 2 minutes, ask the following questions and allow 2–3 different children to share.

- **What were some of the ways to change these things about me?**
- **Was it easy to think of ways to change them? Why or why not?**

It made no sense to spend so much time trying to change the things about me that cannot be changed! It is so much easier to change what can be changed. This is true about managing our anger also. The last step in managing anger is to change what you can.

2. Teaching: Hear the story of how David was angry but changed what he could (1 Samuel 25).

Today you will learn the final step in anger management, which is to change what you can.

Teacher Tip: Children often feel helpless as there is so little they can control in life. They often cannot protect themselves from harm or change the conditions they face. They may feel powerless to change any negative situations. This step teaches them that they do have control over their own reactions and thoughts.

When a person or situation makes you angry, you may not be able to change that person or situation, but you can choose to change what you can!

Teach your children the motions for Step 4. Children will do the motions each time you say, “Change what you can.”

Change what you can: have the children make an angry face and then smile.

Pause for the children to do the motions for this step.

Listen to this story from the Bible about a time when David became very angry but God sent someone to remind him to manage his anger. As you listen, think about how David managed his anger. Did he follow any of the steps that we have been learning? How could David have behaved differently in this situation?

Optional: If possible, share the image from The Action Bible.

This story happened before David became king. He was living in the wilderness with some of his followers. There were some shepherds in the same area who guarded the sheep of a rich man named Nabal. David and his men did not mistreat the shepherds. Instead they protected them.

Every year, the wool from the sheep would be cut off. Nabal celebrated this time with feasting. David sent some men to Nabal. They told him how they had protected his shepherds and sheep while they were in the wilderness. Then they asked Nabal if he would share some of his food with them.

Nabal said, "I do not know who this David is. He is probably a bad person! Why should I give my food to him?"

When David heard what Nabal had said, he became very angry.

- **What should David have done?**

Be sure the children mention all 4 of the steps to managing anger: stop and calm down, say what he felt, think of Nabal, and change what he could.

But David did not do any of this. In his anger, he decided to kill Nabal and all the men in his household. David let his anger manage him instead of choosing to manage his anger.

One of Nabal's servants had heard how Nabal responded to David's request. This servant ran to Nabal's wife, Abigail, and told her what happened. He said that David and his men were very good to the shepherds, and Nabal should have thanked them and given them food. The servant asked Abigail to do something.

Abigail acted quickly. She gathered a lot of food and sent it to David. Then she rode out to meet David and his men. When she saw David, she told him that Nabal had acted foolishly. She asked David not to harm anyone. She reminded David of who God was and how God had cared for David. Let's hear how David responded.

*David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your
good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day
and from avenging myself with my own hands."*

1 Samuel 25:32–33

When David heard what Abigail said, he realized that his anger was out of control. He realized that God had sent Abigail to remind him not to harm anyone. He thanked her for reminding him that God was taking care of the situation.

- **What was David unable to change in this situation?**

He could not change Nabal's attitude. He could not change Nabal's words.

- **What could David have changed about what happened?**

He could have chosen to not react in anger but to trust God. He could have changed his own attitude, words, and actions.

Now let's think of all of the anger management steps we have learned.

- **What could David have done to stop and calm down?**

Allow 2–3 children to share their ideas.

- **What other emotion do you think David was feeling besides anger?**

Allow 2–3 different children to share their ideas. Remind the children that the Bible does not tell us what David felt, so these are only ideas.

- **Imagine how thinking about Nabal could have helped David.**

Allow 2–3 different children to share their ideas. Remind the children that these are only their ideas.

David made a mistake when he heard what Nabal had said. His anger was out of control, and he planned to hurt Nabal. At the end of the story David did the right thing. He chose to listen to the person whom God sent to help him.

You and I must also remember to listen to other people when we are angry. God might send someone to remind us not to harm anyone. God created us to be in relationship with others. Sometimes other people can remind us to manage our anger.

- **How did Abigail help David manage his anger?**

She helped him calm down. She reminded him that God could help. Her kindness helped David calm down.

- **If David had not chosen to listen to Abigail, what might have happened?**

He may have killed a lot of men.

When we react in anger, it often leads us to say or do harmful things. This is not how God wants us to act. That is why He tells us that our anger cannot make things right.

3. Responding: Practice changing what can be changed.

Explain to the children that you will read a situation. They will think about what they could change in that situation.

A teen pushes you to the ground, kicks and punches you, and takes everything you have. You are angry!

Step 1: stop and calm down.

Step 2: say what you are feeling.

Step 3: think about the other person.

Now it is time to do Step 4: change what you can.

- **What can you not change?**

You cannot change what happened. You cannot change the teen.

- **What can you change?**

You can choose to ask God to help your heart and body heal. You can choose to not try to hit that teen in anger.

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,
making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

Ephesians 5:15–16

You have learned a lot about managing anger over the past 4 weeks. Managing anger is hard. Let's practice using these steps now.

Think of a time when you were very angry. If you did not manage your anger well in that situation, that is okay. You are learning and will practice so you manage your anger better next time.

Pause for a moment after each question for the children to think.

- **What made you feel angry?**
- **What other emotions did you feel? For example, sad, scared, frustrated, betrayed, or jealous.**

Turn to a partner and talk briefly together about your answers to these next few questions.

- **How did you respond in your anger?**
- **What could you have changed?**
- **What could you not change? Think about your anger management plan. What will you do differently next time you are in a similar situation? Be specific!**

Allow a few children to share their answers aloud with everyone. Be sure children mention steps 1–4.

1: stop and calm down.

2: say what you are feeling.

3: think about the other person.

4: change what you can.

Encourage them to share specific ideas for each step.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, there is space for children to create their own anger management plans.

Close class by speaking the following blessing over the children based on Ephesians 5:15–17.

Blessing: God created you in His likeness. Like Him, you feel emotions. May He give you the wisdom to know what you can change and the strength to change it!

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "A Thousand Hallelujahs" by Brooke Ligertwood: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeS49pSXDts>