

Situation III

CREATING A LOVING BROTHERHOOD - PRIMARY

A. Introduce Matthew 18:15 - 17

B. Procedure

1. Ask students whether they like when somebody tattles on them?
2. Could there be a better way?
3. Give a classroom example.
4. Explain that God has given us an excellent way.
5. Be available to talk to pupils.
6. Have pupils share their feelings about Matthew 18.
7. Have pupils settle disputes based on Matthew 18.

Additional Activities:

See Page 10, d.

CREATING A LOVING BROTHERHOOD - INTERMEDIATE

I. Procedure -

1. Ask question for an oral response. "If you do something wrong to a fellow student, what response do you think you will get?"
2. List on board all the human responses the students have thought of.
3. Read, paraphrase & memorize Matthew 18:15-17
4. Note - Our response will either be a sin or a blessing.
Does God ever use the devil's methods (lying, bitterness, jealousy, gossip, pride) to correct problems?
5. Write agreed upon paraphrase of Matthew 18:15 in notebook.
6. Ask students the questions:
 - a. How many are willing to try this commandment?
 - b. Would you appreciate others helping you in this way?
7. Set up plan so pupils can carry out this commandment.
 - a. Have a special place for students to talk
 - b. Help students realize that some time the offended person needs to ask forgiveness for misreading the other's actions.
 - c. Let students know you are available if they need advice or help

Situation III -- Intermediate -- continued

8. Encourage students to compliment each other on good things to build a good relationship (activity b & d)
9. Share the blessings of using this commandment (Interview method)
10. If student doesn't respond positively all involved should take problem to teacher or the principal

Activities:

ROLE PLAYING -- Plot

Mary -- tells Sally nasty things about Matthew's queer way of singing

Matthew -- keeps up queer singing

Sally -- tell Jane

Girls -- snicker

Eileen -- ask Sally what is so funny

Sally -- point out Matthew's singing

Eileen -- find chance to talk to Matthew about singing

Matthew -- try to improve

Write Conclusion. . .

INTERVIEW -- Valuation of Situation III

1. Sample questions (Student may pass if he chooses)
 - a. Are you convinced that Matthew 18 works?
 - b. Were you helped personally?
 - c. Do you feel like you helped anyone?
 - d. Do you feel you will practice this outside of school?

Situation III

CREATING A LOVING BROTHERHOOD ~ JUNIOR HIGH

Matthew 18:15-17

Procedure:

1. Ask question for a written response, "If you do something wrong to a fellow student, what response do you think you will get?"
2. List on board all the human responses the students have thought of.
3. Read, memorize, write paraphrase for Matthew 18:15.
4. Have students read their paraphrases. Note discuss: our response will be either sin or blessing.
5. Write on chalkboard agreed-upon paraphrase: Matthew 18:15
Note prevention---gossip
Note benefits---prevents gossip, hard feelings, bitterness, and a torn body of Christ
6. Challenge to practice
Note: Satan tricks misuse of Scripture
 - A. Matthew 7:1 (judge not)
 - B. Ephesians 4:32 and Galatians 5:22,23 (be tolerant) test?
 - C. Matthew 18:15 trespass against thee
7. Provide a place, help understanding
8. Discuss:
 - A. Why not to offer help?
 - B. Why they may resent help?
9. Share good results

Situation III - Junior High

10. Failure: Brother does not hear Matthew 18:16.
Teachers need to help students one to one see
"three main tasks"

11. Person failed to hear the group

- A. to the teacher
- B. to the principal

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

Write skit on

Judging Falsely page 259

Browns see new neighbors moving exotic furniture into the new bungalow next door. Browns immediately start to make uncharitable remarks about new neighbors. For several days as Mrs. Brown is feeding her canary she notices new neighbor standing at window looking over into her house. After Mrs. Brown makes nosy busy-body accusations, Mr. Brown advises his wife to visit the always watching new neighbor. Mrs. Brown is greeted warmly by housekeeper. She learns that Mrs. Harris, the new neighbor, is blind, but enjoys standing at window to hear the Brown's canary sing.

From Our Heritage

Other stories that could be used as skits are:

African Fables by Keidel - Herald Press

Frog's Strange Rules About Dinner page 33

Crocodile Who Needed a True Friend page 84

SITUATION III CREATING A LOVING BROTHERHOOD THAT CAN DEAL WITH
OFFENSES IN A BIBLICAL WAY

Basic to the teaching and practice of this value is the realization that problems between brothers and sisters are sometimes impossible to avoid. They will occur because of the human condition.

A. Scripture--Matthew 18:15-17

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every work may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

B. Procedure to follow

1. Ask students to write an answer to this question:
If you do something wrong to a fellow student, what responses do you think you will get?

Tell students they may base their answers on responses they have gotten when they did something that hurt another person.

These are typical responses:

- a. She will get angry and tell me off.
- b. He will tell someone else about the mean thing I did.
- c. She will tell the teacher (bus driver).
- d. He will tell his mother, and she will tell Joe's mother, and she will tell. . .

2. List on the board all the human responses the students have thought of.

Usually the students will be quite outspoken and will give examples that reveal hidden anger. The teacher will want to control the situation but must be sensitive enough to realize that both offenders and those offended need to be helped. Letting the children talk about past experiences will help them realize the need for the practice of this teaching.

Remind students that as they share situations, they should

- a. take out names (see special problems #1)
- b. speak of the facts (He said, " . . .")

During this activity some children may give Kingdom responses, good responses from a person who is hurt. List those responses separately.

Emphasize that the natural responses they have given are the world's way of solving problems. You may want to ask the students to comment on their effectiveness.

3. Ask students to read, memorize, and write a paraphrase of Matthew 18:15

They need to verbalize what Jesus tells us to do, which is in sharp contrast to the responses they have listed in Step 2.

4. Ask several students to read their paraphrases.

Invite other students to respond in discussion. Help students realize that in God's eyes our problem is not what the brother or sister did, but rather what we do in response to their action. Their offending us may be sin; our response will be either sin or a blessing.

Emphasize that God wants us to solve the problem in such a way that everyone will continue to walk in love.

5. Write on chalkboard an agreed-upon paraphrase of Matthew 18:15. List also any rules the students agree on. The emphasis should be on the private meeting ("between thee and him alone").

At this point a teacher may lead the class in a discussion of what practicing this principle will mean to the persons involved:

- a. prevents gossip.
- b. prevents hard feelings and bitterness.
- c. prevents the body of Christ from being torn.

6. Challenge students to practice this principle.

They should be led to see some of the tricks Satan uses to keep us from allowing Jesus to heal relationships. Satan loves to use Scripture wrongly to confuse us.

Students should be told about these tricks:

- a. Using Scripture about being non-critical and non-judgmental.

Students are quick to quote verses such as Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," when they have a brother or sister sin or trespass against them.

This response is appealing because on the surface to forgive and forget is the easy way to solve the problem. Sometimes that is the best way; however, often (even usually) it is difficult to forget a wrong another person did to us. We are reminded of unresolved problems when we hear that person's name mentioned or when we meet that person again. The reminder indicates that the problem or sin is still "bound on earth" (Matthew 18:18) and that Jesus' healing is needed.

- b. Using Scripture to remind us that we are to be tolerant and forbearing. Ephesians 4:32 and Galatians 5:22, 23 may come to our minds.

Being tolerant and longsuffering is an excellent way to deal with many troubles in our relationships; however, we (students and teachers) need to test very carefully to decide if we are truly being tolerant or just taking the easy way out.

Note: How to test tolerance

True tolerance will let a person have warm accepting feelings about the erroring person because love makes it possible for us to enjoy the humanness of their failure.

Intolerance (however smothered under a most gracious smile), will still stir hidden feelings of anger. Our thoughts will have plous put downs like "well that's the way he or she is, (thank God that we are not like that).

Summary. . . intolerance will create feelings of hostility, anger, martyrs feelings, self pity or self-righteousness. Tolerance will create empathy.

- c. Putting emphasis on the me.

To avoid involvement we may say that if a wrong was not done specifically to me, I don't need to do anything even if I observed a person in a wrong action.

Because Matthew 18:15 states if thy brother shall trespass against thee, many students will say the wrong happened but not to me so that frees me from responsibility they should note Gal. 6. If you love others as yourself won't you help the other person?

Both students and teachers alike need to see that satan will want to hinder Kingdom work with any trick possible. Usually satan will use the common to deceive us. Satan can bring God's Word to our memory to provide us with a cop-out.

The devil tempted Jesus thus: (Luke 4:9-12)

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

7. Plan ways to help students carry out this principle.

- a. Make available a place for students to talk.

Older students especially (grades 7-8) will need a place where they can be unhurried and private.

- b. Help students to understand that an offender's "hearing" does not necessarily include admitting he has done wrong.

It means that he will listen to the grievance and be willing to talk about it and that together the two can come to a point where there are no misunderstandings or bad feelings. Sometimes the person who was offended needs to be the one to ask forgiveness for misunderstanding or misreading the other's actions or motives when no offense was intended.

- c. Let students know you are available if they need advice or other help.

Students will often seek advice from the teacher on how to approach an individual.

8. Lead class in a discussion about why a person might not be offered help or might resent an offer of help.

Many students will need help to see that often no one will come to them because they have not allowed or helped a good relationship to develop with all their classmates. Naturally a student will feel closer to some persons than to others. However, if a class has a problem with cliquishness, this principle will not be able to work very well.

Helping the students to understand the need for an open, caring attitude toward all persons in the class may help to correct tendencies toward cliques as well as create a good atmosphere for the carrying out of this principle.

A student may be unhappy about another student's coming to him if that second student has never before shown any special interest in him. At times, relationships need to be built first so that a person can hear what someone else is saying.

One way of building relationships is to give honest praise for the good that the person has done. Encourage students to freely, readily, but honestly commend other students for good actions, fair play, good attitudes, and work well done.

The relationship problem is more acute on the teen-adult level than on the younger level. Wrong relationships have had time to develop and have been well lived in.

Matthew 5:23 may be used here to heal some breaks. See Situation #4.

9. Share good results.

Students who have met and corrected a problem may want to share it with fellow students and/or the teacher. Such sharing should be encouraged because it lets a teacher know what is happening and may convince those students who are hesitant to use the principle that it works and brings good results.

If the teacher has proof that the students are not abusing the trust he has shown in allowing them the special meeting place and time, he can reward them with additional trust and freedom.

Rejoicing and praising God together for healing of troubled relationships will strengthen the brotherhood ties of the whole class.

10. When a brother does not hear, apply Matthew 18:16.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Usually the practice of Matthew 18:15 will clear things up. However, the whole class needs to understand that if a person who has offended or trespassed is not willing to talk about his actions with the person he has hurt, the matter cannot be dropped there. The unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation has probably increased the pain, anger and hurt and has given Satan an opening to deepen scars and breaks in relationships.

Encourage children to come to the teacher for guidance in using this step. Not much time needs to be spent in discussion by the class as a whole if students are aware that this is the next step and if they feel free to ask the teacher for help at a time when they need to use it.

The teacher has three main tasks:

- a. Be sure the student understands the verse:
 1. Take one or two others along.
 2. The witnesses must listen carefully to everything that is said.
 3. The goal is to win back the relationship for Jesus.

- b. Help the student to choose person(s) to accompany him.

The student will usually want to make the choice, but the teacher should give him guidance:

1. Choose persons that both students involved can admire and respect. Be aware of peer influence.
2. Choose consistent, godly persons.
3. Choosing the wrong person may harden the offender's heart and make the first student partly responsible for the offender's failure to respond.

- c. Encourage students to pray (alone and together) and allow time for the Holy Spirit to act.

11. If the person has failed to respond, all of those involved will need to take the problem to the teacher and/or the principal. Matthew 18:17

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

If the situation has been carried this far, the teacher must act. He cannot ignore it. Neither can he deal with only one of the persons involved; he must hear the whole group. Unresolved conflicts give Satan an opportunity to spread evil speaking and bitter feelings.

Teachers and principals need to meet the Matthew 18:17 situation with prayer and then make a clear decision. The offender must be dealt with, and the other students involved need to see the results of their painful experience and be encouraged to forgive. They need to be helped to understand that they have done their best and can give the whole situation over to God.

Every teacher knows that often the offender will in time express real appreciation for persons who cared.

C. Special problems of which to be aware

1. Naming students

Some teachers (probably most of us) will want to use a common escape from naming students which really does not help. We will say or encourage a student to say, "Someone said," or "Someone did," in order to avoid putting public blame on a student. There may be two bad results from this:

- a. If the rest of the students know who the person is that is being referred to, our pretending that they don't know is hypocritical and teaches them to be likewise.
- b. If the offenders are not named, children may begin to guess at the names, and innocent persons may be accused falsely.

It is best to be honest and let the students be honest. The students can be encouraged to state the action and the words of the offender and omit names. Then only the offender and offended are affected. However, at times it will be more honest and kind to say the names.

2. Teacher-caused problems.

A teacher needs to be alert to the possibility of misunderstandings rising between students because of his own failure to make assignments or directions clear. When a teacher becomes aware that a problem may have that source, he needs to listen to the information, explain that the fault is his, and give clear directions that will correct the problem.

For example, the rules of a game may not have been clearly explained, and disagreements may have surfaced that are easily resolved by the teacher. This kind of problem is more typical of grades 4-6 than of grades 7-8 because of the difference in listening skill levels.

3. The non-Christian

The merits of Matthew 18:15 will appeal to the non-Christian as well as the Christian because he will also have felt the pain of the world's way of solving problems. Some students with anti-Christian feelings may be the strongest supporters simply because the practice of Matthew 18 is fair and kind.

The method will work even though a person may not be acting from the highest motive which is love for Jesus and for others. If he finds happiness in obeying this command, he will be more open to listen to other words of Jesus.

4. Cleaning up the Kingdom (acting out of wrong motives)

Sometimes God's people are prone to be self-righteous and practice Matthew 18:15-17 under the guise of cleaning up the Kingdom instead of acting out of love for the brother who has offended.

In discussion with students, help them to see that God does not want us to let Satan move us to act from the wrong motive. Ask questions like this:

Does God ever use the devil's methods (lying, bitterness, jealousy, gossip, pride) to correct problems?

5. Talking to others not involved.

One of the biggest problems is to keep students from talking to friends, ostensibly to get advice but really to seek support for their own position. Procedures need to be clearly spelled out:

- a. Go one to one.
- b. Take one or two.
- c. The group of three or four go to the teacher or principal.

Anything else is as the world solves its problems.

6. A forgotten offense.

A difficult problem that sometimes occurs in a Matthew 18 situation is that the offender may have forgotten his offense or perhaps not even have been aware of committing one, while the other person has internalized the offense. Sooner or later the offended will need to deal with the problem, talking with the other person about it and confessing his hurt.

In most situations like this, the offender will be open to hearing since the incident was not a big thing to him. However, if he is not, Matthew 18:16,17 will need to be followed.

7. Application for younger children.

Children at third grade level can begin practicing this principle. Encourage a child to go directly to another person who has done something he doesn't like. The child should ask the teacher for time to talk with the other person.

If the Matthew 18:16 step needs to be taken, the teacher should be one of those involved. If an additional step needs to be taken, the principal will be the one invited to listen in. The teacher and principal can decide together later on any discipline that is needed. Usually the final step is not necessary.

D. Additional suggestion

1. Classroom games to build relationships.

a. Self-introductions.

At the beginning of the year, some time should be spent in helping students to learn to know each other. This is especially true if there are new students in the class.

Very early a teacher should insist that each student knows the names of all other students. Following short introductions from all students, one student should be asked to name all other students. Give several a chance to do this. If a person gets stuck, let another student help him out.

b. Stop the music.

Write out several questions, one question to a slip of paper. Put papers in box and have students pass the box while music is playing. When music stops, child holding box opens it and takes out a question which he must answer. Other students may ask questions if the person has not given enough information in his answer. Start the music and the box again. Continue game until several or all have had at least one chance to respond.

Sample questions:

Tell us about your family.
What are your hobbies?
How are you involved in your church?
What kind of books do you like to read?
How much of the newspaper do you read?
What kind of work do you do at home?
What are your favorite foods?
Do you have a pet peeve?
What was the last Bible verse you memorized?

c. Interview.

One student agrees to be interviewed. Other students may ask him any questions about himself and his ideas. Questions similar to those listed above may be used. The child being interviewed has the privilege of refusing to answer any question.

An interview can be used to fill up a few minutes in a class period after the regular lesson is finished. The teacher should sometimes allow himself to be interviewed. This exercise helps a class to learn to know each other better.

d. Thanks for friends and their gifts.

The teacher will need to prepare a box of small candies individually wrapped or of peanuts. Students pass the box from one person to another. (Sit in a circle if possible.) Each child takes a piece of candy from the box and gives the candy to another child saying, "I give this candy to _____ because I want him to know that I appreciate his friendship (good sportsmanship, kindness, sense of humor, good ball playing, helping me with my math, clear thinking, etc.). Any student who receives more than two pieces will need to pass the extra ones to other students along with an affirmation.