

Speak Up, Speak Clearly!

Skits and Discussion

Materials:

Copies of Communication Scenarios (one copy per group). A copy of the Experience Sheet, "Can you Say It Better?" for each child.

Directions:

Begin by talking with the children in a general way about how much people depend on their ability to communicate with each other. Mention how communication is one of those things that can be very good or very bad. Bad communication causes misunderstandings and other problems. Bad communication can result from unclear communication, or no communication at all. Give examples of unclear or noncommunication, and ask the children how each could create misunderstandings. Ask for examples from the children as well. As a way to help the children to start thinking, distribute the Experience Sheets, and tell the children that you'd like them to fill in the speech bubbles of the cartoon characters on their own. Read the descriptions of the two situations, and allow some time for the children to fill in the blanks on their sheets.

After they have filled in their Experience Sheets, have the children form small groups. Tell them that they are now going to act out some situations involving communication.

Explain: I'd like each group to plan and rehearse two short skits. In the first skit, act out the situation the way it is written, showing how poor communication caused problems. In the second skit, using the same basic scenarios, have the characters communicate better, so that no problems occur. Each skit should be 1 - 3 minutes long. Depending

on the total number of children, different groups may act out the same skit. Give the children time to plan and rehearse their skits. Then ask them to perform for the total group.

Discussion Questions:

At the end of each small group's second skit, ask the children:

- Do any of these situations remind you of times when you were involved in a misunderstanding? What happened?
- Why is it important to communicate clearly and completely?
- What can you do to better understand someone who doesn't communicate completely or clearly?
- What can you do to make sure you communicate well?

Communication Scenarios

Unclear Communication:

- Your friend has an argument with his big sister and comes to school in a bad mood. When you see him, he doesn't want to talk and says he wants to eat lunch alone when you invite him to join you. You wonder if you did something to make him upset with you.
- Your parent calls you "an exceptional child" in front of company. You don't know just what your parent means or whether to be pleased or embarrassed by the comment.

No Communication:

- You and your friends plan a party. Everyone says that he or she will bring something either to eat or to drink. You all show up with things to eat, but nobody brings anything to drink. You each blame the others for not planning better.
- You have an argument with a friend and decide to write a note saying you are sorry. Your friend gets the note but doesn't respond. You don't know if your friend is still upset or accepts your apology.

Can You Say It Better

Experience Sheet

Here are two situations in which kids are not communicating well. Read each one. Then follow the directions—and help them communicate better!

Situation 1: Randy and Sue like each other, but both are a little shy. Sue just got a new haircut, and Randy thinks it's cute. When she looks at him, he says, "Hey, your hair is short and it's too neat!" He sticks his fingers in her hair and messes it up. The other kids laugh. Sue moves away quickly. She thinks to herself, "I guess Randy doesn't like my new haircut, and he doesn't seem to like me anymore either."

What could Randy say instead? What could Sue say to him? Fill in the bubbles.

Situation 2: Bill and Bud are pals. They decide to go on a five mile hike to the top of a big hill. They agree to meet at the one mile point. Bill says, "It's going to be great! I'll bring some stuff." Bud says, "Yeah, that's good. So will I." They meet at the right place at the right time, but each boy has a blanket and a snake bite kit. Neither has food or water, and they are already hungry and thirsty.

What could Bill and Bud say to each other to make a better plan? Fill in the bubbles.

