

# CONFLICT

## Week 1: Handling Conflict with Parents

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

### 1. LEADER PREPARATION

#### LESSON OVERVIEW

For most families, conflict between parents and teenagers is unavoidable to some degree. For a few students, it is a defining aspect of their teenage years. As we read the Bible, we encounter God's instructions to obey and love and honor our parents. Conflict may be inevitable, but there is still hope: We can teach our students to handle conflict better. This lesson will give students three specific ideas that can help them respect, honor, and obey their parents. In this process, they will have the opportunity to obey one of God's great commands and show God that they love him and desire to please him.

#### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: God wants our relationship with our parents to be defined by love, honor, respect, and obedience.
2. WHY: God is pleased when we obey and show respect to our parents, and this attitude helps us maintain a healthy perspective on our relationship with God.
3. HOW: Students will be challenged to honor, respect, and obey their parents by listening well, speaking truth, and keeping communication lines open.

#### PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:18-21

#### SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 4:1-3 and Ephesians 6:1-3

#### TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead your lesson.



Read Colossians 3:18-21.



These verses provide insight into God's desire for our families: that our relationships would be rooted in love, honor, respect, and obedience. Husbands and wives ought to love each other. Parents ought to love their children, and children ought to love their parents.

For teenagers, that love ought to lead to respect, honor, and obedience toward their parents—yet we know that this is a struggle. Adolescence is a time of self-discovery and self-definition, and teenagers are searching for greater freedom and independence.

Conflict will happen, but they don't have to be explosive. There can be some good on the other side of conflict. The key is to follow God's way: to be respectful, loving, and considerate. These will lead to quicker resolutions and fewer conflicts.

God desires genuine love and honor from us. Just as he wants a relationship that is built on love, honor, and kindness, he desires that same relationship among family members. Giving honor is contagious. When one person feels respected, it is easy to give respect. This is the domino effect that can help families. If everyone in the family is treating each other with honor, love, and respect, things will be better.

NOTE: This lesson frequently uses the word "parents" or the phrase "mother and father." In this day and age, family arrangements are increasingly complex, so some of your students may live with grandparents, stepparents, other relatives, or even foster parents. Be sensitive to the students in your group. Remind your teenagers that for this lesson, a "parent" could be any adult that God has placed in our lives to take care of us, provide for our needs, and offer guidance.

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **Text Message Questions**

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What are three things you fight with your parents the most? Hope to see you at small group tonight.
- Do you think it's possible to turn a conflict with your mom or dad into a good thing? Hope to see you at small group tonight!





## Parent Email

**We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear parents,

We've started a two-week series in our small groups on the topic of conflict, and our first lesson examined ways teenagers can handle conflicts with their parents.

Using Colossians 3:18-21, we gained insight into God's desire for our families: that our relationships would be rooted in love, honor, respect, and obedience. Husbands and wives ought to love each other. Parents ought to love their children, and children ought to love their parents.

We believe that students can go through the teenage years without having the kind of explosive conflicts that many people say are inevitable. They WILL have some conflicts (as you know better than I do!) but it's possible to act in a way that's respectful, loving, and considerate. We encouraged our students to listen well, speak truth, and keep communication lines open.

Here are some questions you might want to ask your teenager as you discuss this week's lesson:

- Do you think it's possible for us to have conflicts or disagreements without arguing and yelling and screaming?
- How might our relationship improve if you knew more of what was going on in our lives as parents?
- How might your decision to honor or dishonor us as your parents affect the rest of the family?
- How do you think your relationship with God is affected by your relationship with us as your parents?

I pray that you and your teenager have some great, healthy dialogue based on this week's small group session. God bless!

# CONFLICT

Week 1:  
Handling Conflict with Parents

## 2. LESSON GUIDE

### GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead this activity.

Give each student a pen or pencil, and a sheet of paper—or just have them use their handout for this lesson. Explain that you're going to give them just two minutes to list as many conflicts between parents and teenagers as possible.

After two minutes, ask them to stop writing. Go around the group, asking students to share some of the answers on their lists.

#### ASK:

- *How often do you seem to have conflicts with your parents? Has it gotten better or worse over the past year?*
- *Do you think conflict with parents is inevitable and unavoidable? Why or why not?*
- *Do you think it's possible to have conflicts or disagreements without arguing and yelling and screaming? Explain.*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *I believe that you can go through the teenage years without having the kind of explosive conflicts that many people say are inevitable. You WILL have some conflicts and disagreements with your parents because you are becoming an independent person, your own self. But you can do this in a respectful, loving, considerate way—and you also can take some steps to reduce the likelihood of conflict and disagreement.*



LEADER  
TIP

If you came up with an opening activity, movie clip, or game that worked well with your group, and you'd like to share it with other youth workers, please email us at [ideas@simplyyouthministry.com](mailto:ideas@simplyyouthministry.com).







LEADER  
TIP



LEADER  
TIP

## TEACHING POINTS

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen here are (1) Listen to what your parents say, (2) Tell the truth, and (3) Keep communication lines open.

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Colossians 3:18-21 together as a group. Consider allowing one or more of the teenagers to read the text.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *These verses talk about the importance of having healthy, solid relationships within a family. Let's spend a few minutes talking about what it means to obey and honor our parents.*

### 1. Listen to what your parents say

#### **ASK:**

- *What do you like most about your parents? What are some specific things you are thankful for?*
- *Verse 20 says God is pleased when we obey our parents. Why does this please God? How do you feel knowing that this simple act of obedience matters to God, who created the entire universe?*
- *How is listening a way to respect or honor your parents?*
- *For you personally, what makes it difficult to listen well?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *God loves you so much and desires great things for you. When he created you, he created a plan for you better than you could ever imagine. That plan included the family you were born into. When you honor your parents, you are showing them that you love them. To obey means that one will do what another person says. To honor someone means to give that person respect. Although you can have obedience without respect and love, it is impossible to have respect and love without obedience.*





## 2. Tell the truth

### ASK:

- *You don't have to tell us the specific details, but think about the last time you lied to your parents. Why did you lie, and what were the consequences of your lie?*
- *How do you feel when other people lie to you?*
- *Why do we feel like it's OK to lie as long as we don't get caught?*
- *How important is it to tell the truth all the time to your parents?*
- *Are there any circumstances when it is OK to lie to your parents? Explain why you feel the way you do.*
- *Is it possible to obey your parents AND lie to your parents? Why or why not?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *God doesn't like lying because it destroys relationships. Honesty builds trust, and trust is the foundation for a relationship. Consider it from this angle as well: The more your parents trust you, the greater freedom you'll have. Telling the truth makes sense, even if it's difficult.*

## 3. Keep communication lines open

### ASK:

- *What are the hardest things to talk to your parents about, and why?*
- *What are the easiest things to talk about to your parents, and why?*
- *What might make it easier to talk to them about the hard things?*
- *If you told your parents more about the stuff going on in your life, how might that reduce the number or intensity of your conflicts and disagreements with them?*
- *How might your relationship with your parents improve if you knew more of what was going on in their lives?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Sometimes it feels like your parents don't understand and that it would be too hard to explain what you're experiencing. I'd encourage you to give them the chance to try to understand. There will be moments when you have emotions that you won't understand; during those times, simply ask for a moment alone to gather your thoughts. Do it respectfully. Remember, parents are also people with lives and friends—and as tough as it is to believe, they were teenagers once, too! Just as knowing what is going on in your life will help them understand you, taking an interest in their lives will help you understand them and love them.*



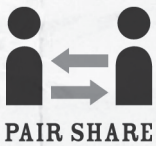


## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask your students to find a partner for these questions.

### ASK:

- *Read Ephesians 6:1-3. What did Paul mean when he wrote, "If you honor your mother and father, 'things will go well for you'"?*
- *How can your decision to honor or dishonor your parents affect the rest of the family?*
- *How do you think your relationship with God is affected by the way you treat your parents?*
- *Why do you think God is concerned about your relationship with your parents?*
- *Read Proverbs 4:1-3. If you decided to sit down and get some wisdom and life advice from your parents, what topics would you want to discuss? How can you gain from their experiences in specific areas of life?*
- *Did anyone give you any advice before you entered junior high? If so, was it helpful?*



## APPLICATION

### ASK:

- *What is something you appreciate your parents, and how can you share that with them this week? BONUS: What are some creative ways you can tell your parents what you appreciate most about them?*
- *Have you ever surprised your parents by asking them if they wanted to hang out with you? What is an activity that you could personally ask your parents to share with you this week as a way to talk and spend time together?*
- *What are some ways you can open communication with your parents? What is a way you can consistently tell them what is going on at school or other areas of your life?*



## SUMMARY



End your small group lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.



## FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

*Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord (Colossians 3:20).*

