

# VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

for use with  
Program 10

## RESOLVING CONFLICTS

In the Youth Guidance Video Series



### EDUCATIONAL GOAL:

🍏 Children learn ways to work out interpersonal conflicts without fighting.

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## HOW TO USE THIS VIDEO

*Use in classrooms, libraries, youth service agencies, youth groups, or show it to your kids at home. Ideal for parents, too.*

***YOU CAN CHOOSE!***<sup>®</sup> is an entertaining and thought provoking video series designed to help children develop a range of important life skills and a healthy self-esteem. Each episode presents an imaginative skit in which one character makes a tough choice with the help of a group of real elementary school children. In this program, ***Resolving Conflicts***, Tuggy Turtle and Rhonda Bird have to decide whether to settle their differences peacefully or ruin a class project.

In addition to learning to resolve conflicts, viewers will see that everything they do involves choices and that they have the power within themselves to make the best choices.

You can greatly enhance the impact and usefulness of this video by following it up with discussions, writing assignments, learning activities, and by enlisting parental support. We have prepared this guide to help you in your efforts.

Before you show the tape, we recommend that you ask a few questions to start the kids thinking about the issues treated in the program. You'll find some appropriate questions in the "Discussion Questions" section of this guide.

Since the program is divided into three segments, you have the option of stopping the tape after any segment to talk about it. Here is how the program breaks down:

1. **Skit, Act I:** Tuggy and Rhonda fall into a dilemma and face a difficult decision.
2. **Group Discussion:** School children explore the issues and decide what Tuggy and Rhonda should do.
3. **Skit, Act II:** Tuggy and Rhonda follow the kids' advice and discover the personal rewards that come from making a good choice.

While this discussion guide may appear to be written for classroom teachers, any group leader or parent will find it a useful tool for getting the most out of this ***You Can Choose!*** video program.

## THE STORY

Tuggy, Rhonda, and Missie have been chosen to paint the official school mural, which will be displayed at the parents' open house. Unfortunately, Tuggy and Rhonda have very different ideas about what the mural should look like. Despite Missie's attempts to work things out, the conflict turns ugly, and the two of them start sabotaging each other's work. Eventually, Tuggy and Rhonda can't even talk to each other, and the entire project is in jeopardy. Is this really the end? Are they actually going to abandon the whole thing just because they can't get along? After taking some time to cool down, Tuggy and Rhonda agree to let Missie mediate the conflict. As Missie takes them through each step of the conflict resolution method, Tuggy and Rhonda begin to see how their communication broke, how their dispute got out of hand, and how they can find a solution that makes them both happy. They complete the project in an atmosphere of harmony.

## HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS Without Fighting

### STEPS:

1. **STOP.** Don't let the conflict get worse. The less angry you are the easier it will be to solve the problem.
2. **SAY** what the conflict is about. What is causing the disagreement? What does each of you want or not want?
3. **THINK** of positive options. How could you meet each other's needs and be fair?
4. **CHOOSE** a positive option each of you can agree on.

If you still can't agree, ask someone else (an outsider) to help resolve the conflict.

### RULES:

- ★ Agree to resolve the conflict.
- ★ No name calling.
- ★ Take turns talking. Don't interrupt.
- ★ Be clear and truthful about what is bothering you and what you really need.
- ★ Listen to the other person. Be sure you understand how he or she sees the problem.
- ★ Use your brains, not your hands.
- ★ Be willing to compromise (if that is appropriate).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### *Questions to ask before showing the tape.*

1. Have you ever seen a small disagreement turn into a big fight. What do you think made that happen?
2. Have you ever found yourself caught in the middle when other people couldn't agree? How did you feel? What did you say or do?

### *Questions to ask after showing the tape.*

3. Why did Rhonda and Tuggy get so angry? How could it have been prevented?
4. How did the argument get out of control? What could Rhonda and Tuggy have done to keep the argument from getting out of control?
5. Who do you think was to blame? Why?
6. What happens when people who are disagreeing don't listen to each other? What can they do about it?
7. How do you think Missie was feeling?
8. What would you like to say to Rhonda and Tuggy?
9. At the end of the video, Tuggy says that when people are fighting, it's like they're in two different worlds. What did he mean by that?
10. What does the word "compromise" mean? How does it work? What has to happen before people can compromise?
11. Why is it important to settle disputes peacefully? What can happen if you don't?
12. Are there some conflicts that can't be resolved?

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Hand out copies of page 3 to the children or write the steps and rules of conflict resolution on the board. Discuss each step and rule.
2. Ask the children to describe a variety of conflicts that commonly occur at school. List these on the board. For two or three of them, discuss how the steps and rules of conflict resolution could be used. Then have pairs or small groups apply the steps and rules to the other situations listed on the board. Afterward, have a class discussion to compare results.
3. Introduce the concept of "why" messages and "blaming" messages. Tell the students a "why" message is a statement about your own feelings. It says what's bothering you and why.

*Example:* "It really bothers me that you aren't willing to compromise. We could do a better job if we worked together instead of arguing all the time."

A "blaming" message says what's wrong with the other person.

*Example:* "You're ruining our project. You're a jerk. You never do anything right."

A "why" message is constructive and points to a solution. A "blaming" message puts the other person on the defensive and leads to more conflict. "Why" messages usually work better.

Referring to the conflicts already listed on the board, ask students to role play using "why" messages in these situations instead of "blaming" messages. You might want to demonstrate the "blaming" messages yourself to avoid asking students to practice a negative behavior.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write about a time when you or someone you know got into a conflict that wasn't resolved. Describe how the steps and rules of conflict resolution could have been used to resolve it.
2. Write a short story about a conflict. Make up two endings. In one ending the conflict is resolved, and in the other it isn't.
3. Make a list of things you could say or do to keep cool during a conflict.
4. *Note to the teacher: You can spark students' thinking for this assignment by giving examples of several typical conflicts between people their age. Divide a sheet of paper in half lengthwise. Think of a conflict or disagreement. On one side write "blaming" messages for that situation. On the other side write "why" messages that could be used instead.*

## HOME ASSIGNMENTS

To enlist the involvement of parents, make copies of the Parents' Page (see next page) and send them home with the children. Tell the children to discuss the video with their parents, and to perform the following activities.

1. List the steps and rules of conflict resolution on a sheet of paper and post them at home so family members can learn and practice them.
2. Ask family members or neighbors to describe conflicts they've experienced. Discuss how the steps and rules of conflict resolution could have helped.
3. When someone uses a "blaming" message in a conflict with you, ask that person to use a "why" message instead. Explain the benefits of using "why" messages instead of "blaming" messages. Also, try not to use "blaming" messages yourself.

*Note to the teacher or group leader: It might be a good idea to think of some way for the children to share the outcomes of these activities with each other. Perhaps they could give written or oral reports or discuss their experiences in small groups.*

(Copy this page and send it home to the parents.)

## **PARENTS' PAGE**

Dear Parent,

Your child is involved in learning-activities designed to enhance self-esteem, develop positive life skills, and empower young people to make good choices for themselves.

He or she may be asked to complete several tasks at home. Your cooperation with these activities will support our overall program.

The current lesson is about conflict resolution. We have shown a video entitled ***Resolving Conflicts***, which presents a skit and discussion about two kids who learn how to settle their differences peacefully. We urge you to ask your child to tell you about this video program and what he or she learned from it.

**Here are some things you can do to help your child learn how to settle disputes peacefully and constructively.**

- Ask your child to explain the steps and rules of conflict resolution he or she has learned at school. Post them in a place where everyone can refer to them. Use the steps in resolving family conflicts.
- If your child has a conflict with a sibling or friend, call "time out" so they can cool off. Then go through the steps of conflict resolution with them and remind them of the rules.
- Ask your child to explain the difference between "why" messages and "blaming" messages. Try to use "why" messages as often as possible and avoid "blaming" messages.

## ABOUT MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Michael Pritchard is a juvenile probation officer turned comedian / youth counselor / public speaker. After his college graduation in 1973, Mike went to work for the St. Louis Police Department and then moved to San Francisco's juvenile hall. In his years of working with young offenders, Mike discovered that his penchant for humor served as a powerful counseling tool, enabling him to break down communication barriers and help a lot of troubled kids turn their lives around. As Mike is fond of saying, "the shortest distance between any two people is a good laugh." Mike's unusual combination of talents gained him recognition as California's "Probation Officer of the Year" the same year that he won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition.

Whether he's being funny or serious, Mike's big love is talking with kids about the choices they make in their lives. He teaches young people that they have the power of choice, that they are responsible for the choices they make, and that they owe it to themselves to choose the best.



"The shortest distance between two people is a good laugh."

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