

Goals

- Introduce children to our need to express our feelings
- Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy ways of expressing our feelings
- Practice healthy ways of expressing our feelings
- Introduce a new verse (Philippians 4:6, 7)

Needed

- Group rules poster
- Props for opening skit
- A pillow, a telephone, a notebook, stationery and pen, drawing paper and crayons or markers, a pair of running shoes, a box of tissues, and a large red heart (one set per facilitator)
- “Feelings Defense Situation Cards” from last session
- “Feelings Logs” or a purchased blank journal (one per child)
- Prayer journal
- Items for regathering, if any
- Props for Bible story
- “Confident Kids Psalm 1” enlarged onto poster board or copied on an overhead transparency
- Philippians 4:6, 7 poster

Express Those Feelings!

Elementary Session 4 Outline

Opening (30 Minutes)

- Knots
- Group Rules
- “Meet My Friends”

Small Groups (35 Minutes)

- Discussion of Session Theme
- Feelings Logs
- Prayer Time

Bible Time (20 Minutes)

- Regathering
- “David Talks to God”
- Memory Verse
- Closing Prayer Huddle

Snack (5 Minutes)

The snack can be served during the Bible Time regathering.

Express Those Feelings!

Elementary Session 4



Opening (30 Minutes)

Knots

As soon as five or more children arrive, begin this activity. Ask kids to bunch up, standing as close together as possible. Have them put their arms straight up over their heads, reach across the "bunch," and take hands. The idea is to take hands randomly, so as to form a human knot. When all hands have connected, tell the group that their task is to untangle themselves. The only rule is that they may not let go of the hands they are holding. Allow the group to accomplish the task without your help. When the kids are done, or after the rest of the kids arrive, start again with everyone participating.

Group Rules

Review the group rules again, if necessary.

"Meet My Friends"

Use the script on pages 130 and 131 to introduce the importance of expressing our feelings.

Small Groups (35 Minutes)

Discussion of Session Theme

Use the following questions to discuss the session theme, "I can express my feelings in healthy ways."

What was the main character in the skit doing with her feelings? (*Stuffing them inside*)

What upset her so much that she didn't want to feel her feelings? (*Her dad came*)

home drunk and she was hurt and embarrassed in front of her friends)

Did stuffing (avoiding) her feelings work? (No) What happened? *(She began to feel sick and her feelings exploded anyway)*

Have you ever stuffed your feelings inside, like you saw in the skit today? *(Let kids respond)*

Ignoring our feelings does not make them go away. Instead, it just stuffs them down inside of us where they will struggle to get out. The harder we try to ignore them, the harder they will struggle. Eventually they will come out, but it will probably be in hurtful ways.

What can happen when we try to ignore or hold our feelings inside? *(They can give us headaches and stomachaches, or they can work like a volcano and explode causing us to do or say things we don't really mean)*

But, we can avoid all that by remembering that "All Our Feelings Are OK," and by learning healthy ways to express them.

Have the kids sit in a circle on the floor and place the following objects in the middle: a pillow, a telephone, a notebook, stationery and pen, a pair of running shoes, drawing paper and crayons or markers, a box of tissues, and a large red heart.

Everyone has the same feelings but we don't express our feelings in the same way. For instance, when I feel happy, I

(Finish this by telling the group what you do when you feel happy. Then ask kids to share different ways they express happiness. Repeat, using different feelings,

like sad, angry, etc.) There are many ways to express our feelings, and all of us need to find the ways that work best for us.

But first, we have to know the rule about expressing our feelings: *I must never express my feelings by hurting another person, hurting myself, or breaking things. I can find a better way to handle my feelings!*

This rule must never be broken! Let's say it again together. *(Repeat rule several times)*

It is unhealthy to express our feelings by hurting another person or property. Throwing or breaking things, and hitting or saying hurtful things to someone else are never OK!

It is also unhealthy to express our feelings by hurting ourselves. Using alcohol or drugs, getting physically sick, and thinking about harming ourselves are never good ways to handle feelings!

Let's use these things I've brought today to find some healthy ways to express our feelings! *(Ask the kids to look at each object and decide how each one can help them express their feelings in positive ways)*

Pillow—Hit a pillow when you are angry, or cry into it when you are sad.

Telephone—Call someone you trust and talk about your feelings.

Notebook—Keep a diary or write a poem about your feelings.

Stationery and pen—Write a letter about your feelings and give it to someone you trust.

I can express my feelings in healthy ways

Drawing paper and crayons—Draw how you feel.

Box of tissues—Just cry about it!

Pair of running shoes—Do something physical.

Large red heart—Talk to someone you love, or ask for a hug.

Have kids take turns drawing a “Feelings Defense Situation Card” (page 124, from last session) and then choosing one of the objects that depicts how they would most want to express their feelings in that situation. Ask others to say what they would do in the same situation. Point out the differences in the ways group members choose to express their feelings. End by reminding the kids that everyone feels the same things, but we must each find the way that is best for us to express our feelings.

Feelings Logs

Give each child a “Confident Kids Feelings Log” (pages 133 and 134) consisting of the cover and three copies of the inside page assembled into a booklet. If you prefer, purchased blank journals can be used instead. Tell them:

This is your Confident Kids Feelings Log. You can use it all week long as a way to express your feelings. Write anything you want in it, and you don’t have to share what you write with anyone else, unless you want to. If you bring your book back each week with at least one entry, you will receive a small prize. We won’t read the entries unless you want us to.

Prayer Time

Conduct your prayer time as in weeks past. Focus your prayers on asking God for courage to honestly face all

our feelings, and not keep any stuffed inside. Thank Him for accepting all our feelings.

Bible Time (20 Minutes)

Regathering

Have one facilitator lead the kids in a favorite game, song, or activity.

“David Talks to God”

David helps the kids write a psalm to the Lord (script is on page 132). You will need to enlarge “Confident Kids Psalm 1” (pages 135 and 136) onto poster board or copy it onto an overhead transparency (in which case you will also need an overhead projector).

Memory Verse

This week’s memory verse is Philippians 4:6, 7:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, present your requests to God. And the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (NIV, condensed)

Introduce this verse by saying:

It is natural to feel worried and anxious about many things in our lives; all of us do. God knows that, and teaches us to come to Him with those feelings. Knowing that God will be with us and asking Him to help brings peace.

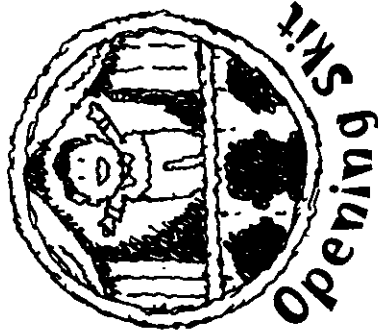
Display a poster of the verse and have the kids repeat it several times.

Closing Prayer Huddle

Close the meeting as in weeks past.

Snack (5 Minutes)

Distribute the snack the child brought. Before the kids leave, choose another child to take the snack tin home for next week.



Characters:

- A female facilitator, Joy, and Anger

Needed

- A screen or blanket stretched across the front of the room, or some other means of hiding Joy and Anger

Meet My Friends

The facilitator enters with Anger and Joy on each side.

Facilitator Hi! I want you to meet my friends. This is Anger (*Puts arm around one*) and this is Joy. (*Puts arm around the other*) Say “hello” to the kids!

Anger (*Growsl*) Hi.

Joy (*Brightly*) Hello! I’m so happy to be here! I’ve been looking forward to this all week! I feel so happy when I get to do stuff like this—

Facilitator OK, OK! (*To kids*) Joy would bubble on forever, if I let her! Anger, on the other hand, doesn’t say much at first. But when he lets go, he really blows up!

Anger (*Looks at facilitator*) What are you talking about? I don’t blow up! (*Increasingly agitated*) Are you trying to make me look bad in front of all these kids? I could get really upset if I thought you were trying to make me look bad—

Facilitator See what I mean? Well, as you can see, my two friends are very different. But they are both important to me! They help me know what I am feeling, and how to express my feelings to others. For instance, when something happens that makes me happy, Joy comes out and helps me share my good feelings with my friends.

Joy (*Bubbly*) Yeah, like the time that really cute boy sat next to you at lunch and you got all fluttery inside and you weren’t going to tell anyone. But I came out and made you tell your mom and your brother and call Sally. (*To kids*) That’s her best friend. Later on, you told me that sharing with all those people made you feel good!

Facilitator (*Glaring at Joy*) You’re right. It’s more fun to be happy with the people I love most than to keep it all to myself. But then there are other times, when things happen that make me mad and Anger comes out to help me get those feelings out—

Anger (*To kids*) If it weren’t for me, she would never get mad about anything! Everyone needs to get good and angry once in a while!

Facilitator

That's true! But sometimes things happen and I don't want anyone else to know how I'm feeling. In fact, sometimes I don't want to feel my own feelings! (*Takes Anger and Joy by the shoulders and pushes them behind the curtain*) So, I stuff them way down inside of me so I won't have to feel them! Once they are out of sight, I figure I'll stop feeling anything at all!

Anger and Joy begin yelling from behind the curtain. "Hey, let me out of here." "Why are you sticking me in this dark place?" "You can't do this to me." "Are you crazy?" "Let me out!" etc. Start out softly and as facilitator continues talking, build in intensity.

Facilitator

(*Ignoring the voices*) Like the time my dad came home drunk when I had some friends over. I felt so scared and disappointed and embarrassed. I wanted to die! But instead, I pretended nothing happened and tried to go on playing as if I wasn't feeling anything!

(*Looks at curtain and yells*) Be quiet in there! I don't want to feel anything right now so go to sleep! (*Voices quiet for a moment, and then continue with increased intensity. Facilitator is now beginning to look irritated and upset and begins to hold her head and stomach. Anger and Joy start beating on the curtain. The more active they get behind the curtain, the more sick the facilitator becomes*)

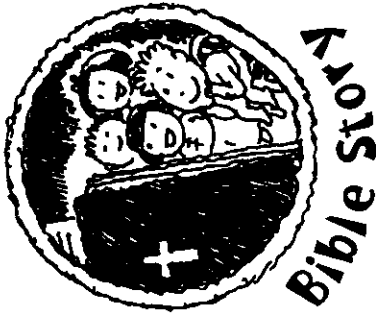
Facilitator

Unfortunately, stuffing my feelings out of sight doesn't get rid of them! It just makes me feel sick because my feelings are trying so hard to get out! The day my friends were over, I felt so sick one of them asked me if everything was OK. I said, "Sure," even though it was a lie! (*At that, Anger grows loudly from behind the curtain*) Well, I finally learned that stuffing my feelings doesn't get rid of them! After awhile—

Anger and Joy explode from behind the curtain, get on each side of the facilitator, and begin chastising him: "Why do you do that?" "You know you get sick when you keep us locked up!" "We're going to get out anyway, so knock it off, OK?"

Facilitator
They exit.

None of you ever do anything like stuffing your feelings, do you?



Characters

- David

Needed

- "Confident Kids Psalm 1" enlarged onto poster board or copied onto an overhead transparency (in which case you will also need an overhead projector)
- "Confident Kids Feelings Log"

David Talks to God

David enters and greets the kids. He is looking through a "Confident Kids Feelings Log."

David

Wow! This is really good stuff! Of course, writing is one of the ways I express my feelings. Whenever I'm feeling strong emotions, I write a new psalm to the Lord! And if that's not enough, I put it to music and sing it to Him! And, if that's still not enough, I dance before the Lord! One time when I came back from a really big battle, I actually led a whole parade through the streets. But enough about me. When I saw this log (*Holds up feelings log*) I had an idea. Today I'd like to help us all express our feelings to God by writing a psalm together. Do you know what a psalm is? (*Let kids respond*)

Display "Confident Kids Psalm 1." Ask the kids to think of words to fill in the blanks. Ask for several ideas for each blank, encouraging them to draw on their own experiences for possibilities. Try to keep the words concrete, avoiding general phrases such as, "You are my Lord and God." When all the blanks have been filled in, use the psalm as a choral reading. Proceed as follows:

1. *Read it through together until all can read it smoothly.*
2. *Read it through following the directions in the left margin.*
3. *Read it through again, adding expression and feeling.*
4. *Bow heads and read it together as a prayer.*

End by telling the kids that they will be sharing their psalm with their family on Family Night. Encourage them to write more psalms to the Lord in their feelings logs this week.

Official Confident Kids FEELINGS LOG

Name _____





Date: _____

A feeling I had today was:



What happened to make me feel that way? _____

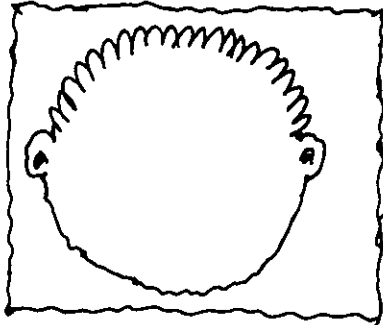


I expressed my feeling by: _____



A new feeling word I learned this week is:

This is how it looks:



Dear God, _____



Confident Kids

Psalm 1

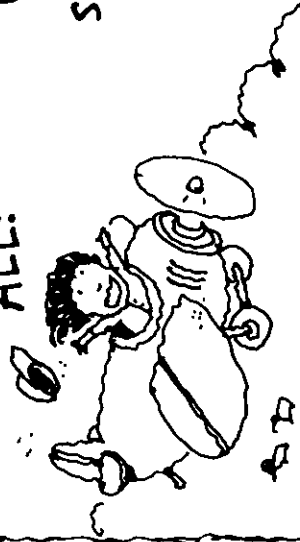
ALL: O Lord, You are my _____ and _____.

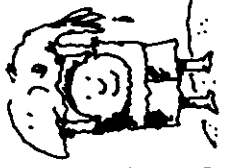
ALL: You understand all my feelings.

BOYS: When I feel _____, You _____.

GIRLS: When I feel _____, You _____.

ALL: There is nothing I can do that will ever stop You from loving me.





SOLO #1: Even when I _____, You still
love me.

SOLO #2: Even when I _____, You still
love me.

ALL: Thank you that You are always with me!

BOYS: When I _____, You are with me.

GIRLS: When I _____, You are with me.

ALL: O Lord, You are my _____ and
_____ (repeat first line)

