

Parenting Tip of the Month

November



Lower Elementary Teachers

Non-Violent Communication

How You Can Use the NVC Process



Clearly expressing
how **I am**
without **blaming**
or criticizing

Empathically receiving
how **you are**
without hearing
blame or criticism

OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:

"When I (*see, hear*) . . . "

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:

"When you *see/hear* . . . "

(Sometimes surpoken when offering empathy)

FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:

"I feel . . . "

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:

"You feel . . . "

NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:

". . . because I need/value . . . "

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:

". . . because you need/value . . . "

Clearly requesting that
which would enrich my
life without demanding

Empathically receiving that
which would enrich your life
without hearing any demand

REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:

"Would you be willing to . . . ?"

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:

"Would you like . . . ?"

(Sometimes surpoken when offering empathy)



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Material of the Month

November



Lower Elementary Teachers

How Peace on Earth Begins in the Montessori Classroom



Promoting peace was a large part of Dr. Maria Montessori's work. She once said that "[a]verting war was the work of politicians, establishing peace is the work of education." At Montessori Private Academy, we practice a "peace curriculum." Particularly for the younger students - children who are kindergarteners and lower elementary pupils - this curriculum falls within our *Grace and Courtesy* lessons, part of the Practical Life area of the Montessori classroom.

Grace and Courtesy lessons include the things one might expect in daily life, such as table etiquette, covering one's mouth, passing behind or in-between someone, and saying please and thank you. But the children practice, with everything they do, how to move and interact appropriately with others in a community environment. In this way, they learn the tools they need to feel comfortable and secure; and to interact responsibly and appropriately in our classroom, at home, and everywhere their everyday lives may take them.

The Peace Table is a part of the *Grace and Courtesy* lessons. The Peace Table is a safe place for two children to resolve conflict peacefully or for one child to go and find peace and solitude.

In one Early Childhood classroom, the Peace Table is set up with a candle, flowers and a beautiful picture on it. The items might change throughout the year. In a Lower Elementary classroom, the Peace Table might include a miniature sand box and rake. If a child would like to find peace, he or she may sit and draw designs in the sand. Or the child might turn on a tabletop fountain and watch the water flowing. The Peace Table is a very popular work, and the children are proud when they have completed this work and often times will repeat again and again as they feel the need.

The Peace Table is also an area in which disputes can be resolved among the children themselves, rather than by an intervening adult. This helps the children discover how capable they are of resolving differences on their own, and fosters independence, another tenet of the Montessori Method.

In one classroom, the students use The Peace Rose, or some other object, to help resolve conflict. One of the feuding parties offers the rose to the other. The person receiving the rose is then obligated to go to the table to discuss the situation. The parties take turns holding the rose and saying what is on their mind. Sometimes a card outlining the peace process is available to help the

children along. The card contains helpful guidance, such as "Take a deep breath" and "Listen to the other side of the story."

In Montessori classrooms, promoting peace is not exclusively associated with the Peace Table, but is integrated into the curriculum. Kindergarteners learn conflict resolution daily as needed through role-playing, stories, and music. They define and discuss compromise, take turns, and show respect for the materials, plants, and each other. Students take time for gratitude and self-regulation which helps develop empathy and understanding with personal space.

Older students focus all year on "Humanity in History." In this curriculum there are many topics that emphasize the relevance of peace and conflict resolution. For example, as they study Ancient Civilizations or American history, the subjects of war, prejudice, and slavery come up. This semester, while studying Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, students discovered that the people who made up the largest social class were slaves.

In American history, they learned the issues surrounding many wars and conflicts with other nations and cultures. For instance, they looked at the Civil War and discussed how it affected everyone and what they might learn from it. They discussed the need for more communication and problem solving to prevent war. They tried to understand the perspective of each person and to refrain from making hasty judgments. They then compared that with their conflict resolution practices in class to prevent further problems between friends.

At all levels, then, Montessori students are trained to make conscious decisions toward fostering peace and community every day; whether they use the Peace Table, volunteer to help in the office, or simply go about their daily actions. Dr. Montessori also famously said, "Within the child lies the fate of the future." As students learn and grow in their quest for peace, that future will be both bright and replete with possibility.

Montessori Elementary Lesson: Conflict Resolution

Elementary children who have been nurtured in the Primary classroom have an obvious and similar background with the other **children in the elementary classroom** of being treated with respect and honor, and have developed into confident and competent learners from the aid and support of the Primary Program.

Observers will notice in the [Primary classroom](#), a child seems to work mostly parallel to his peers, each on their own individual activity in order to concentrate best. Elementary children, however, are entering a new period in their life and have a strong drive to be social and collaborate.

Elementary Children Work Collaboratively and Cooperatively

For this reason, most lessons and research projects in the elementary classroom are done in pairs or groups of children.

Each day, the community setting of the elementary classroom allows the children to practice social skills necessary to carry out their task by: delegating work, sharing resources and materials, making group decisions, taking responsibility for actions, and celebrating the success of peers. On the other hand, conflict is not uncommon, but the motivation to resolve it comes from the children. The teacher, however, models and guides constructive and respectful problem solving options.

Learning to collaboratively and cooperatively work within a classroom community adds countless value to the child's education. Montessori is providing the child significant life lessons with practical application for the home and in the "real world" of high school, college, future career and marriage. *The Montessori environment is an aid to life.*



Build a Conflict Cube

Put peacemaking skills at your students' fingertips with Conflict Cubes they can make themselves. Here's how:

1. Give each student a copy of the reproducible on page 34.
2. In each square, have students illustrate each of the ways listed to resolve and avoid conflict: use I-messages, talk things out, take time to cool off, listen carefully, reach a compromise, and treat others with respect.
3. Show students how to assemble a cube by cutting, folding, and taping the edges together.



Build a Conflict Cube—Follow-Up Activities

✧ What Will I Do?

Divide the class into small groups. Invite group members to invent conflict scenarios, such as "Jessica spilled milk on your desk and won't clean it up. What will you do?" One at a time, group members roll their story boxes and respond by using the strategy that is shown on top. (A child who rolls "Use I-messages" might say, "I don't like having milk spilled on my desk because my papers will get wet. Please help me clean it up.")

✧ Roll a Story.

Have students roll their cubes and write, draw, or act out stories based on what lands on top. For example, their stories might be about someone listening carefully or treating someone else with respect.

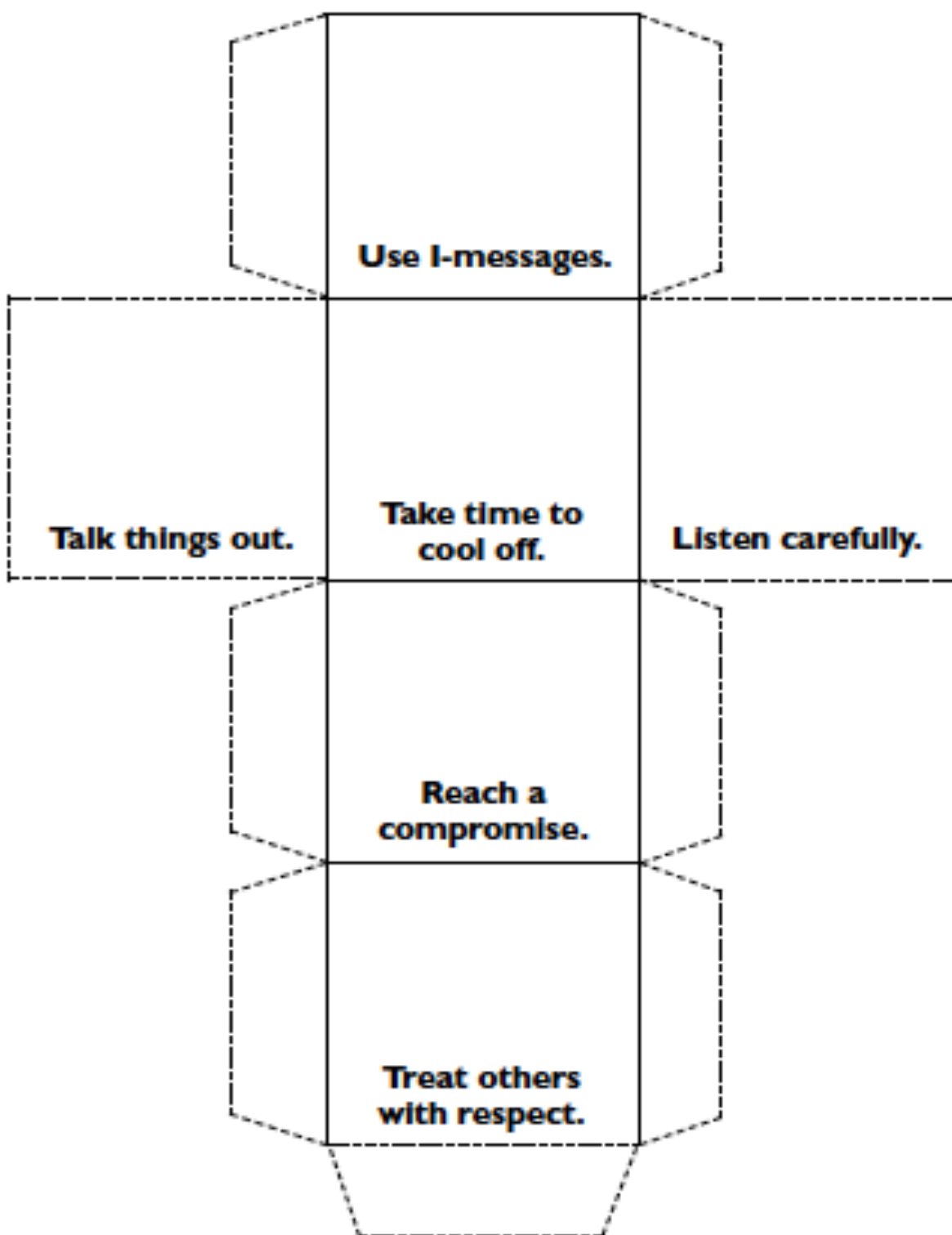
✧ Use Cubes to Resolve Conflicts.

Encourage students to solve mild conflicts by rolling a Conflict Cube and using the strategy that appears on top.

Name _____

Date _____

Build a Conflict Cube



Conflict Resolution Activities That Work! © Kathleen M. Hollenbeck, Scholastic Teaching Resources