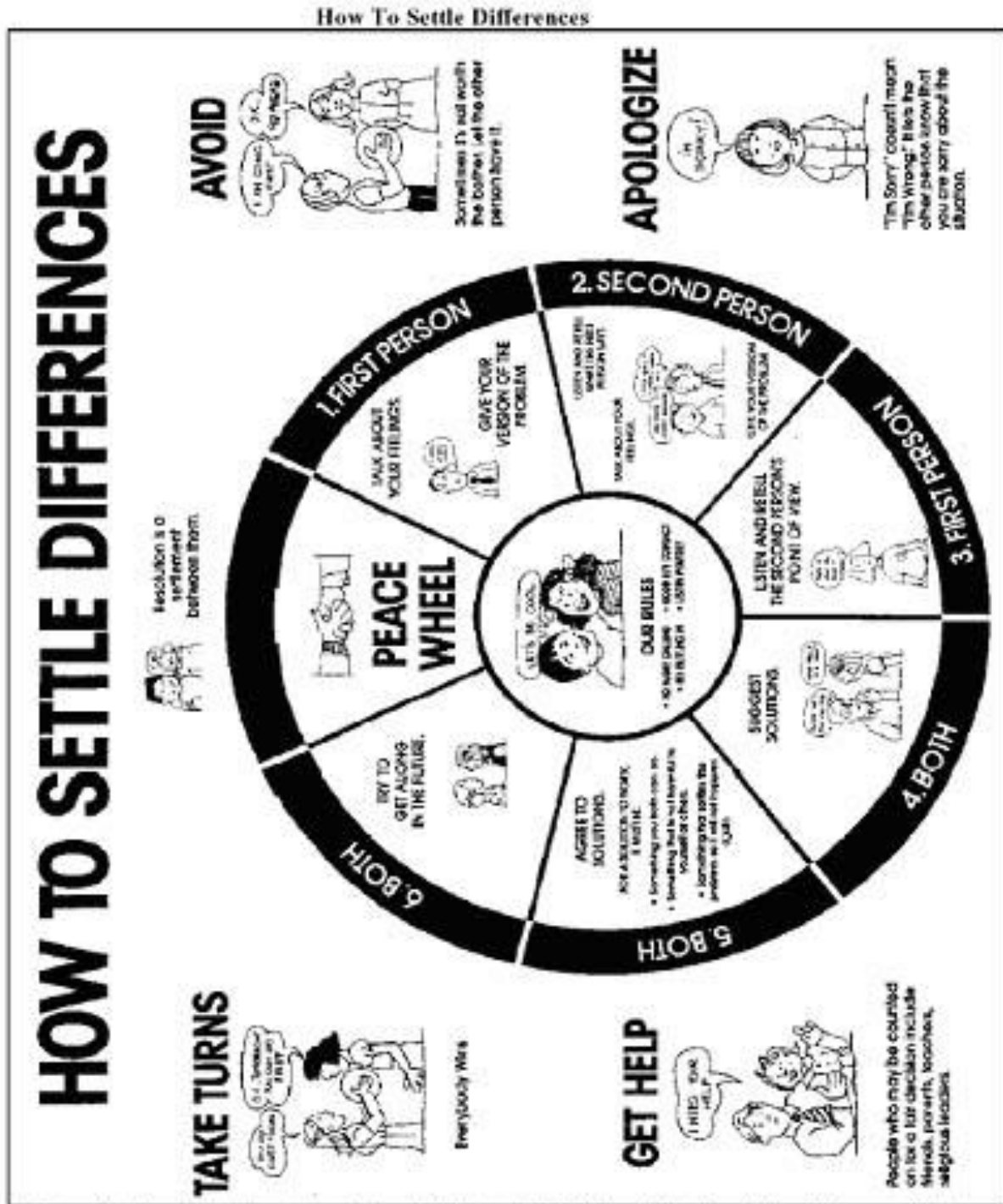


How to Settle Differences



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<http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/pdfs/cmw2000esag.pdf>



Creating a Democratic Classroom Environment: The Class Meeting

Twenty Kinds of Class Meetings

1. *Good news meeting*: "Who has some good news to share?"
2. *Circle whip*: Go around the circle: everyone can either complete the sentence starter or choose to pass. After everyone has had a turn, the teacher can use individual students' responses as a springboard for interactive discussion. Some sample sentence-starters are:
 - Something I like about this class
 - Something I think would make our class better
 - A decision I think we should make
 - I'm wondering why
 - Something that bothers me
 - I wish
3. *Appreciation time*: Who would you like to appreciate?
4. *Compliment time*: One or two children are chosen: taking one child at a time, the teacher invites classmates to say something they like or admire about that person.
5. *Goal-setting meeting*: Discuss the goals for the morning, the day, the week, a curriculum unit, the academic year.
6. *Rule-setting meeting*: What rules do we need for our classroom? For going to gym? For the upcoming field trip?
7. *Rule-evaluating meeting*: Have students write about, then discuss the following questions: What are the school rules? Why do we have them? Are they good rules? If you could change one rule, what would it be? Do any of our classroom rules need changing to make them work better?
8. *Stage-setting meeting*: For example, before a small-group activity: What can you do to make things go smoothly in your group?



9. *Feedback and evaluation*: How well did you work together? How could you make it go better the next time? What was good about today? How can we make tomorrow a better day?
10. *Reflections on learning*: What did you learn from this activity (unit, project, book)? One new idea or understanding.
11. *Student presentation*: One or two students present a piece of their work, such as a project or story; other class members ask questions and offer appreciative comments.
12. *Problem-solving meetings*:
 - *Individual problem*: Who's having a problem that we might be able to help solve?
 - *Group problem*: What's a class problem that we should talk about?
 - *Complaints and recommendations*: Ground rule: You can make a complaint about a problem, but you have to offer a recommendation for correcting it.
 - *Fairness meeting*: How can we solve this conflict (e.g., cutting in line, disputes over materials or equipment, arguments over cleanup) in a way that's fair to everybody?
13. *Academic issues*: Why do we have to study this? What would help you do a better job on homework? On the next test? How could the last test have been improved?
14. *Classroom improvement meeting*: What changes would make our classroom better? Possibilities; changing the physical arrangement of the classroom, new ways of working together, new learning games, ideas for class-created bulletin boards, etc.
15. *Follow-up meeting*: How is the solution/change we agreed upon working? Can we make it work better?
16. *Planning meeting*: What group projects would you like to do? What topics to study? What field trips to take? What would be fun to do differently next week in spelling, math, or science? What would be the most exciting way to study this topic?



17. *Concept meeting*: What is a friend? How do you make one? What is a conscience? How does it help you?
18. *Sticky situations*: What should you/would you do if: You find a wallet on the sidewalk with \$20 in it? You find just a \$20 bill? You see a kid stealing something from somebody else's locker? There's a new kid that you'd like to be nice to but your friends think he/she is weird? A friend asks to copy your homework? A friend you're with shoplifts a CD? Two kids on the bus are picking on a little kid and making him cry?
19. *Suggestion box/class business box*: Any appropriate item students have submitted for discussion.
20. *Meeting on meetings*: What have you liked about our class meetings? What haven't you liked? What have we accomplished? How can we improve our meetings?

Ten Steps in a Class Meeting

1. *Circle up*: Form a good circle and call the meeting to order.
2. *Set the agenda*: State the purpose and goals for the meeting.
3. *Set the rules*: Establish or review rules for good talking and listening.
4. *Identify partners*: Pair up students who will discuss the problem or topic under consideration.
5. *Pose the problem or question*: For example, Several people have said there's a lot of name-calling on the playground lately. What can we do to solve this problem?
6. *Personal thinking time*: Give students a silent minute to think about the question individually.
7. *Signal for quiet*: Establish a signal (e.g., flick of the lights) for stopping partner talk in order to begin whole-group discussion.
8. *Partner talk*: Have partners (in place) share thoughts with each other (3 to 5 minutes); circulate to help those who may be slow to interact.
9. *Whole-group discussion*: Invite several pairs of students to share their ideas with the group; invite reactions to these ideas; pose follow-up questions; if



appropriate, reach and record agreement on action to be taken and plan implementation, and set a time for a follow-up.

10. *Close the meeting*: See "Various Ways to Close a Class Meeting" below.

Various Ways to Close a Class Meeting

1. *Review*: If the meeting produced an agreement, review it.
2. *Round the horn*: Let's go around for final, brief comments: you may pass if you wish.
3. *Remembering*: What's something somebody said that you thought was a good point, even if you didn't agree with it? Take a moment to think, then share.
4. *Learning*: Think of something you learned from today's meeting. Then go around, or ask for volunteers.
5. *Questions*; What's a question that's still on your mind?
6. *Complete the sentence*: Invite all to complete a sentence starter (e.g., At the end of this meeting, I think or, I feel, or I hope).
7. *Partners*: Students respond to any of the above, then share it with their class meeting partner (or change partners).
8. *Future topics*: Suggested topics for our next meeting?
9. *Silence*: Take a minute to think about today's meeting a new idea you got something you'll do differently as a result of our discussion. Write it down or just keep it in mind.
10. *Evaluation*: What did you like about today's meeting? What made it a good discussion? What could we do better or differently next time?

Excerpted with permission from *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* by Thomas Lickona 1991 Bantam Books



S.O.S.: Steps To Resolve a Conflict Grade Level: 3 - 6
Begin with the Big Cs: Calm Down Cool-Off Chill-Out
Remember to:

- Find a good time and place to talk.
- Avoid the blame game.
- Get all of the facts.
- Acknowledge feelings.
- Listen to what the other person is saying.
- Focus on the problem, not the person.

S STORY

1. Both people agree to talk about the problem and follow ground rules:
 - One person talks at a time.
 - No interrupting.
 - No name-calling or put-downs.
 - Be honest.
2. One person tells his/her side of the story, including I-Message to say how you feel.
3. The other person restates what the first person said (e.g., What I hear you saying is) and may ask questions to clarify understanding.
4. Now, the second person tells his/her side of the story, including I-Message.
5. The first person then restates what the other person said and may ask questions to clarify understanding.
6. Agree on what the problem is.

O OPTIONS

Brainstorm options with both people suggesting possible solution options (e.g., Well,



how about). Remember no evaluating - all suggestions are accepted at this point and written down.

S SOLUTION

1. Evaluate options: Look for options that are safe, fair and will work for both people.
2. Choose a solution where both people can be winners.
3. If it doesn't work, get back together and discuss other options.
4. If this doesn't work and there is still a problem, ask someone for help.

Developed by Gail Hines and Vinia Roberts, Park Layne Elementary School.
Based on "Steps to Resolve a Conflict," Community Board Program, Inc.

