

RESOURCE SHEET



Understanding the Foundational Issues

FIVE (5) TYPES OF CONFLICT

Volunteer to VBS Director

An unhappy volunteer who doesn't like a policy, they don't like their space, etc.

Volunteer to Volunteer

Volunteers don't get along: they have different ideas, opinions, personalities, and more

Parents to VBS Director

Parents who question logistics, protocols, decisions that present hard conversations that can become challenging and difficult to navigate.

Parents to Volunteers

Sometimes volunteers find themselves in the middle of conflict with a disgruntled parent. This usually happens when a volunteer enforces protocols or policies.

Kids

Obviously conflict may happen with kids and this could involve misbehavior, inability to follow directions or distractions.

FOUR (4) SOURCES OF CONFLICT

Poor Communication or Miscommunication (volunteers and parents)
Miscommunication leaves the door open for conflict and other issues. This occurs when we are inconsistent with disseminating information and making sure that everyone is in the loop. It is important that we ensure that our communication system is updated with correct information and that the communications we are making are clear and timely.

Change (volunteers and parents)
Change can be difficult and challenging. We also know that change is inevitable for growth and for making our event better. As leaders we should mitigate this as much as we can by being proactive. This will mean alerting everyone who needs to know of the change. This should be done through several means of communication (print, email, website, and even face to face).

Personality Differences (volunteers)
A personality clash occurs when two or more colleagues have incompatible personalities, backgrounds, or outlooks. These clashes can cause disagreements and mistrust among each other and can foster a negative environment. These disagreements should be addressed promptly and helping move volunteers to more favorable places in ministry is best.

Unmet Expectations (volunteers and parents)
"I thought it was going to be like this" or "I was hoping I would get to _____" or "This isn't what I thought it was going to be!"

Resolving Conflict Issues

Four (4) Elements in a Positive Resolution of Conflict

Preparation Begins with You

Conflicts will arise ... it is not a matter of if, but of when. As a leader, keep your event in prayer constantly and ask for wisdom and insight in dealing with people and the seen and unforeseen issues that might come up and need to be addressed. Prayer is your FIRST and BEST DEFENSE.

Keep a Gospel Lens

Remember where you are and why you're there. Those of us in a leadership position, we're fixers. We often race to an issue to solve the problem. Remember, Gospel first, solution second. This translates into being kind, not judgmental, even tempered, etc. **PRAYER IS KEY to keeping this gospel focus!**

Give people the benefit of the doubt

We don't know what kind of week they've had, how their morning went, or what they're dealing with at work or at home. Be ready to listen and offer solutions that are positive and seeking to put them first.

Behavior is communication

If someone is flying off the handle, there's a 99.9% chance there's something under the surface that's causing the outburst. Handle with prayer and with care. Find ways to communicate your willingness to work with them to rectify the situation. Involve them in helping to come up with a reasonable and positive solution so that everyone is heard and honored.

Conflict is inevitable,
but combat is optional.

-Max Lucado

It is easy to
damage
relationships when
conflict resolutions
do not work out.

- JOHN WARD



Six (6) Tips to Help with Conflict Resolution

BE PRAYERFUL

Every step of the way, any and all conflict should be covered in prayer. Don't act until you have bathed it in prayer!

BE PROACTIVE

No one enjoys conflict, and it can be tempting to avoid it. "Conflict delayed is conflict multiplied." - Jordan Peterson. Some conflict can be avoided through careful planning and communication. Do your best to make every effort to deal with potential conflicts before they happen.

APPROACH IN HUMILITY

Humility is the only posture when dealing with conflict. This helps to disarm and de-escalate. When we come with humility, it sends a message of empathy and caring. It says we want to work to a positive resolution. Use phrases like: "How Can I Help?" "Would It Be Helpful If _____?" "I'm sorry that happened." "Thank you for bringing it to my attention." "Can you help me understand what happened?" "Would you be willing to _____?"

LISTEN FIRST

Listening is an essential skill to solving conflict. Come ready to listen and don't come in trying to problem solve. Listen first, hear them out until they are done. It is important to have an open heart and mind so that you can be a conduit of compassion and caring.

REVIEW FOR REFLECTION

Sometimes when people hear it from your perspective, it clicks for them. Sometimes it is important to offer to the person with the issue a statement about what you are hearing so that you can be sure you understand what they are saying and wanting.

ADVISE FOR THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION

Work toward a win-win for all parties. Ask questions like:

- What is best for the kids? If kids are involved, what decision will be best for them?
- What is best for VBS as a whole? Sometimes you have to make decisions that may not be what someone wants because it's best for VBS as a whole.
- What is best for the individual?
- What's best for the other parties involved?

Next Steps and Possible Outcomes

ACCOMMODATE

When possible, accommodate the request or change. The goal is to de-escalate and bring harmony. Sometimes conflict is over something menial that was blown out of proportion. If compromise is possible, that's a win.

REDIRECT

To a new/different role – If a solution or compromise cannot be reached, consider redirecting the volunteer to a different role, different classroom, etc.

RESPITE

If the parent or volunteer continues to escalate and you can't come to a resolution or compromise, it may be time for a respite for a day. Take a break, let's talk tomorrow.

REMOVE

This isn't ideal, and should be a last resort when all options have been exhausted. Example: If you've heard them out, made an attempt to resolve the situation and de-escalate the conflict but they're refusing to make adjustments, or being a distraction, causing safety or security concerns, there are rare situations when you may have to ask them to leave.

Tips to Help De-escalate

Change locations – Sometimes walking with them down the hall or to the office area and removing them from the source of the conflict can help lower the tension.

If needed, invite them to sit down with you to talk – Sitting is a more casual, relaxed posture than standing.



VBS Webinar/Handling Conflicts

March 2024

