

Taming Temper Tantrums

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When children are angry or upset, they create a ruckus. They may kick. They may bite. They may throw things. Help children learn to calm themselves down when they are angry.

For
Young Family

Season
Winter

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Prepare in Advance

Move to a space where family members can spread out and move freely.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

*God, help us to talk about what makes us angry. Guide us and help us learn how to calm down.
Amen.*

2. As a family, talk about each of the following questions:
 - Is it okay or not okay to express anger in our family? What makes you think so?
 - Which family members seem to get mad more often?
 - What happens when someone in our family gets mad?
 - What scares you when another family member is angry?
 - When have you seen someone express his or her anger in a good way?
3. Explain that when we are angry, a lot of energy gets trapped in our bodies. That energy wants to get out. It needs to get out in order for us to stay healthy.
4. Ask the following questions one at a time. Invite family members to respond in ways that don't hurt themselves or anyone else.
 - When you're angry, where do you feel the anger in your body? Encourage each family member to point to that part of his or her body and to point out how the energy moves around, if it does.
 - When you're angry, what does your body want to do? Encourage family members to move their bodies in this way.
 - When you're angry, what kind of sound do you want to make? Encourage family members to make that sound.
 - Explain that moving one's body in a fast way often can make the angry energy move out. Encourage family members to run in place as fast as they can until they get tired.
5. As a family, talk about the following questions:
 - How can we make it safe to express our anger?
 - How can we keep other people in our family safe when we express our anger?

- How can we move our angry energy out of our bodies in ways that are healthy? (Ideas include running fast, hitting a pillow, boxing with the Wii Fit® video game, jumping up and down, or cleaning something that needs cleaning.)
- What can we do when we get angry in a public place—if we're in a place where it is not socially acceptable to make a lot of noise or angry movements, what can we do then?
- How can we calm down when we're angry? (Ideas include counting to ten, taking slow, deep breaths, drawing an angry picture and then wadding it up and throwing it away.)
- How can we help each other talk about what is making us angry rather than just acting in angry ways?
- How can we help each other address the situation causing the anger so that we can do something to improve the situation?

6. As a family, pray together.

God, be with us when we're angry. Help us to talk about what makes us angry and to work with others to create change that makes life better for everyone. Amen.

