

Conflict Role Play: Disagreement Moving into Conflict

(For use with chapter 5 of book, page 50 of PowerPoint)

Setting: parents talking during the sharing time of their small group

Allison: I've really been struggling with my kids lately. It seems like they're acting up more and more often. They've even been taking toys away from the other kids in the church nursery. Talk about embarrassing!

Susan: Yeah, kids will definitely test you. But that's usually all it is . . . a bit of testing, and then they go back to normal.

Bryan: I don't know, Susan. I don't think it's helpful to take a "wait till it passes" kind of approach. Kids are looking for boundaries, and as parents we need to provide those. Personally, I don't put up with misbehaving.

Allison (getting a bit defensive): Well it's not like I'm not trying, Bryan. And it's not like my kids don't have any boundaries. (shifting to the offensive) But I tell you one thing . . . I don't go in for those repressive types of parenting techniques.

Bryan (reactively): Repressive?

Susan: Oh, I don't think Allison meant to imply that your approach is repressive, did you Allison?

Allison: Not really. I mean, we all know there are different approaches to parenting. But kids need to be able to express their feelings and some approaches just tend to be so punitive . . .

Bryan (interrupting with energy): My approach is *not* punitive! And yes, we all know there are different approaches to parenting, but we also know that some of them are completely ineffective. Just ask anyone trapped next to an obnoxious kid on an airplane!

Allison (with sarcasm): Oh, I'm sure your kids never misbehave! I guess I shouldn't have shared. This obviously isn't a safe place to say when you're struggling with something.

Bryan (with an attempt at balance): Why are you reading so much into what I'm saying? Am I not allowed to have an opinion here? I was just trying to be helpful. You shared a problem and I shared a solution. (genuinely) What I'm doing really works . . . maybe you should try it. There's this book—

Allison (interrupting with energy): This is exactly what I mean! Susan, do you see what I'm saying?