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### **Problem Solving**

## **When Kids Have a Problem**

*by Keith Elder and Doug Marks*

Developing a good rapport with a child will build a foundation for a lasting relationship. When the child has a problem he will be more likely to come to you for help.

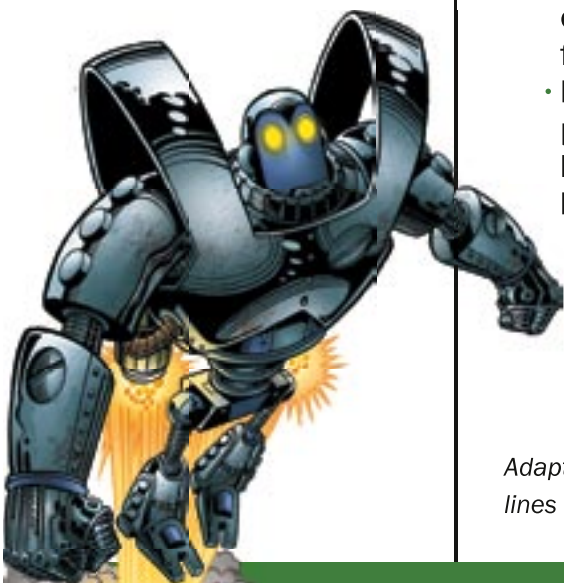
### **Tips for Developing Rapport**

- Be yourself. Kids can identify a phony more quickly than anyone.
- Be positive in attitude and action. Compliment kids on positive points you see. Be truthful in these areas.
- Be a listener, not a lecturer. Most kids are eager to express themselves but won't do it until they trust you. They won't trust you until you prove you are listening to them.
- Be a Christ-like model. You have the opportunity to affect their lives for eternity. Be a person they can look to as an example of Christian love and understanding.

### **When Kids Come with a Problem**

- Be available and approachable.
- Don't try to solve the child's problem for her. Guide her into the Word of God, where the Holy Spirit can speak to her and where she can find principles for making right choices.
- Not all problems have a spiritual origin, but the child will not find a permanent solution until he is in proper relationship with Jesus. Lead him to the point where the Holy Spirit can affect an inner change in his life.
  - Try to find out why a child acts the way she does. If you discover the "why" it may help you prevent future problems.
  - By faith, commit your kids to the Lord. Trust Him to work in their lives, to give them insight, motivation, and change.

*Adapted from "Tips on Counseling Children" by Keith Elder and "Guidelines for Developing Rapport" by Doug Marks. Used by permission.*



## Holsom Comics Discussion Questions

After the kids have read [Holsom Comics Issue 4](#), ask these questions to spark discussions about problem solving.

- What method does Mouse use to solve problems? (*Science, his brain, knowledge*)
- How does Rover challenge Mouse to think about a power greater than himself? (*He uses logic to explore the possibility that Mouse has a Creator far superior to himself.*)
- How does Noah choose to problem-solve Jordan's situation? (*He warns her and tries to sneak her back into her room before her parents get home.*)
- What steps do you take to solve big problems? (*Responses will vary.*)
- What advice would you give to Noah about how to help his friend Jordan? (*Responses will vary.*)
- Share your favorite Bible passage or story that shows how someone problem-solved with God's help. (*Responses will vary.*)



*Involving kids in the process helps them to develop the ability to solve future problems and become more responsible.*

## Work Together to Solve Problems

Sometimes kids will approach an adult with a problem and need some help solving it. Often it is the adult who has identified a problem and wants to change the situation or behavior.

For example, a teacher may have difficulty getting class started because students would rather talk among themselves.

Or a parent may be unhappy because her son keeps his room a mess. Adults could just demand certain behavior from kids. Or they could involve kids in solving the problem. Involving kids in the process helps them to develop the ability to solve future problems and become more responsible.

### Steps To Solve a Problem

Here's one approach to solving a problem together.

1. Be honest about what the problem is.
2. Ask kids to brainstorm with you for various solutions to the problem.
3. List pros and cons for each possible solution.
4. Choose the best solution that you're both willing to try.
5. Put the solution into action.
6. Review the process frequently, making needed adjustments.

### A Solution for the Teacher

So how does this work? Here's a scenario, following the previous steps, for a teacher who's having trouble getting class started.

Tell your students, "I'm glad you like to be with your friends, but we have lots to do in class and need to get started sooner."

Brainstorm solutions and write them down on the board. Suggestions might be:

- Just talk and don't have a lesson.
- Allow talk until a predetermined time.
- Plan an arrival activity that allows kids to interact with each other.
- Begin the lesson right away and leave time at the end of class to talk.

Discuss the pros and cons of each possible solution and then choose one both you and the kids are willing to try. Decide when you will start and set a date to discuss how things are working. Adjust your solution or try a different solution until you are pleased with the results.

As kids gain experience in solving their own problems, they will become more independent and responsible. And you will feel better about their behavior.

