

# **PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITIES**

Jean Gilliam DeGaetano

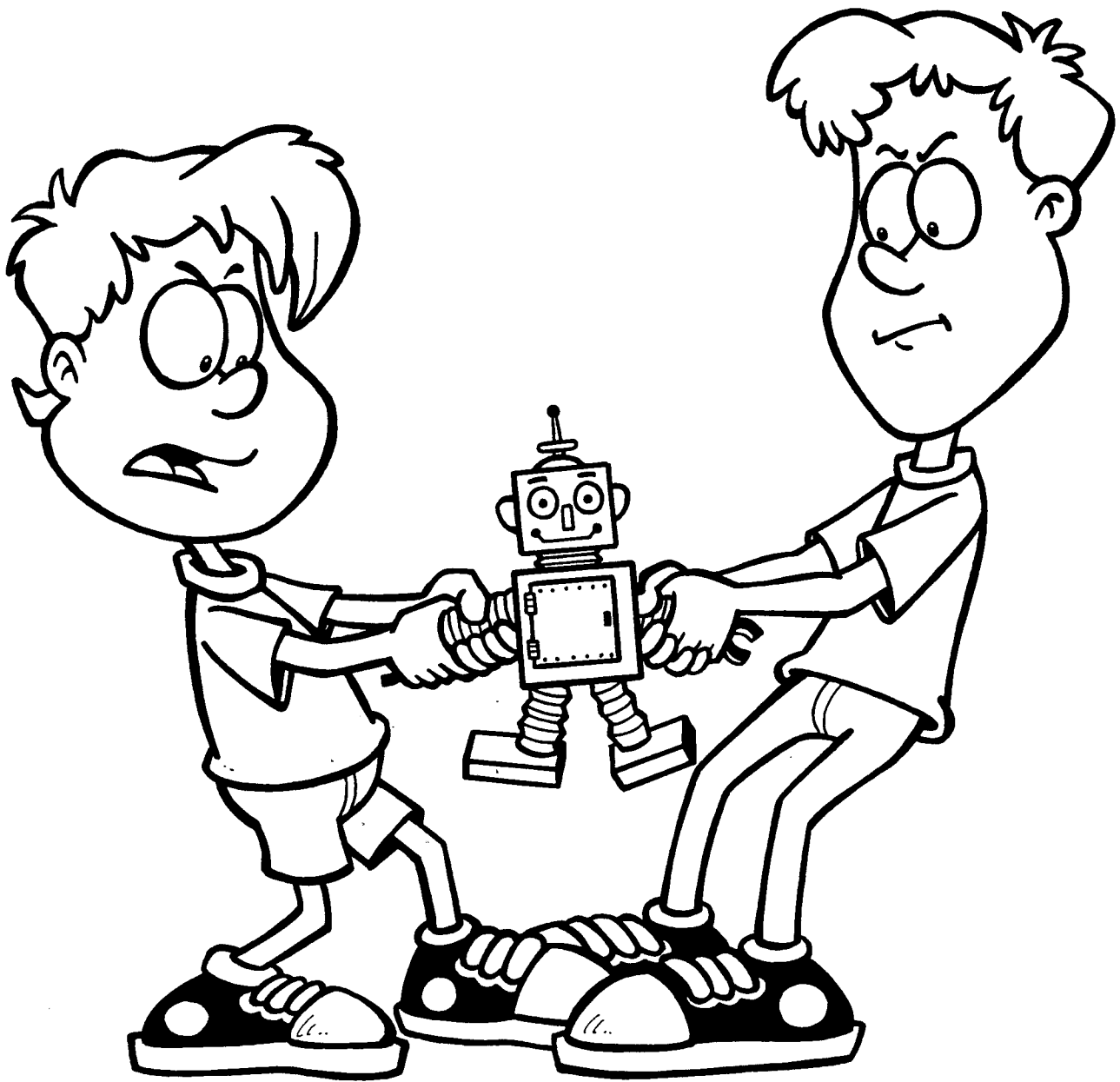
Illustrated by Kevin M. Newman

Problem Solving Activities is a 120 page unit, designed to increase awareness of choosing specific solutions to problems and the long-term results of these choices. Some illustrated options will not solve the problem. Other options may resolve the problem over the short-term, but the long-term results usually indicate which choice is best.

1. More than one good option or more than one bad option may be pictured. This gives the students the opportunity to compare the choices and their long-term outcome on the problem. It goes beyond simply choosing between good and bad.
2. The unit provides the opportunity to talk about and compare long-term results. This ability is frequently thought to be a later developing skill. However, an awareness of outcomes should be encouraged at a young age. Verbalizing and comparing thoughts on what may happen is a key method in understanding long-term results.
3. Verbalizing problem solving while using excellent cartoon illustrations to picture outcome is a strong approach to teaching this important language skill. Sharing ideas, verbalizing the strengths and weaknesses of the options, predicting long-term outcomes based both on personal experiences and common sense give students a good opportunity to understand how others in their peer group act. It identifies students who are concerned about others and those who are not able to see beyond the immediate solution. It allows students to compare doing what is right to doing what is wrong.
4. The entire unit should be discussed orally, providing an excellent opportunity to verbalize thoughts on a number of subjects.
5. The unit is designed for a wide age-group. It can be used from kindergarten through adult. What the different age groups have to say is where the unit will greatly differ. Each age group will bring in its own experiences and general knowledge.

## **VARIATION:**

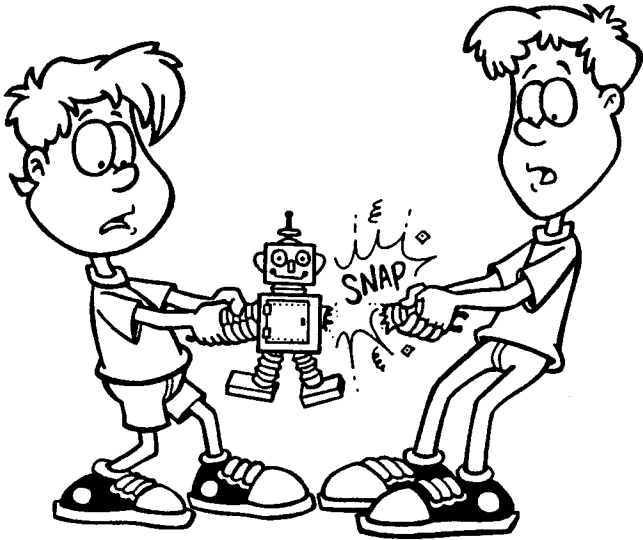
Make copies of the pictures. Cut them apart and mount them on cardboard. The instructor should describe a long-term result and let the students decide which action brought about this long-term result.



 **PROBLEM SOLVING 5**

**DESCRIBING OPTIONS**

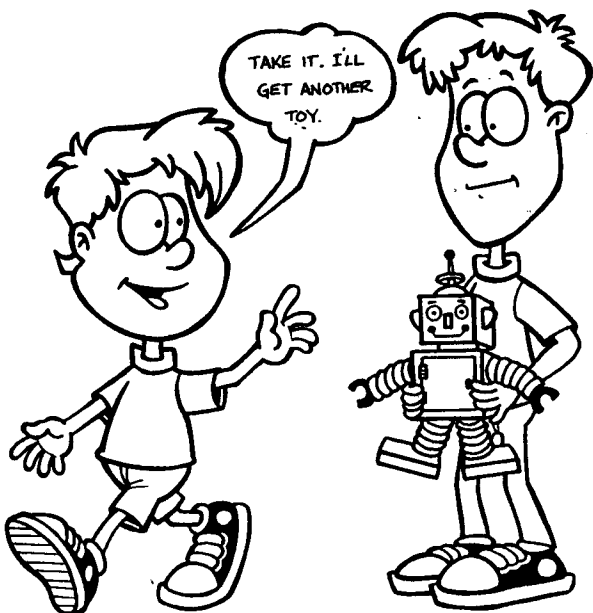
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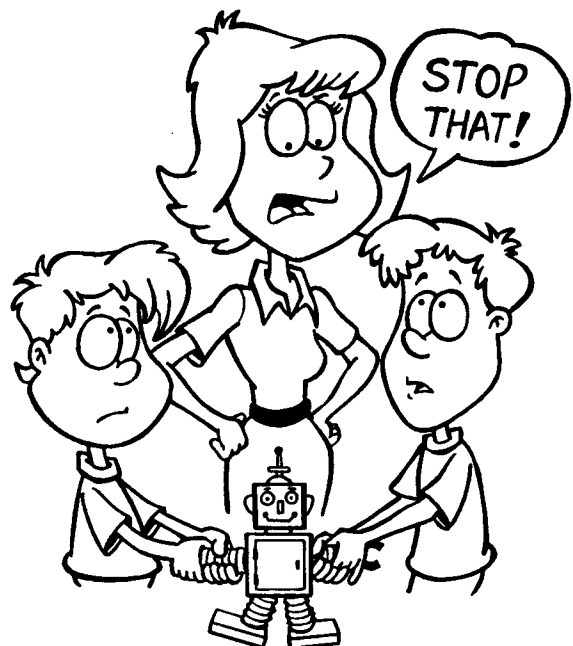
2



3



4



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

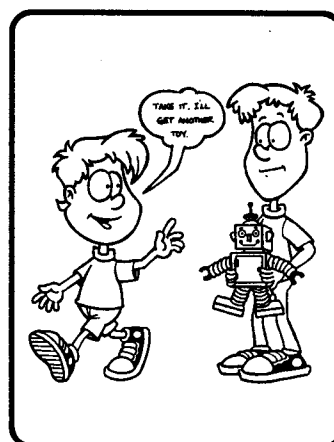
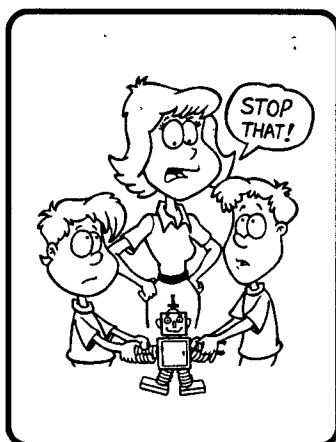
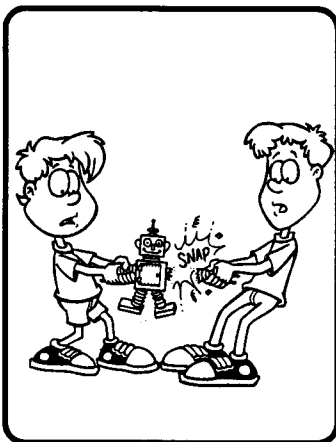
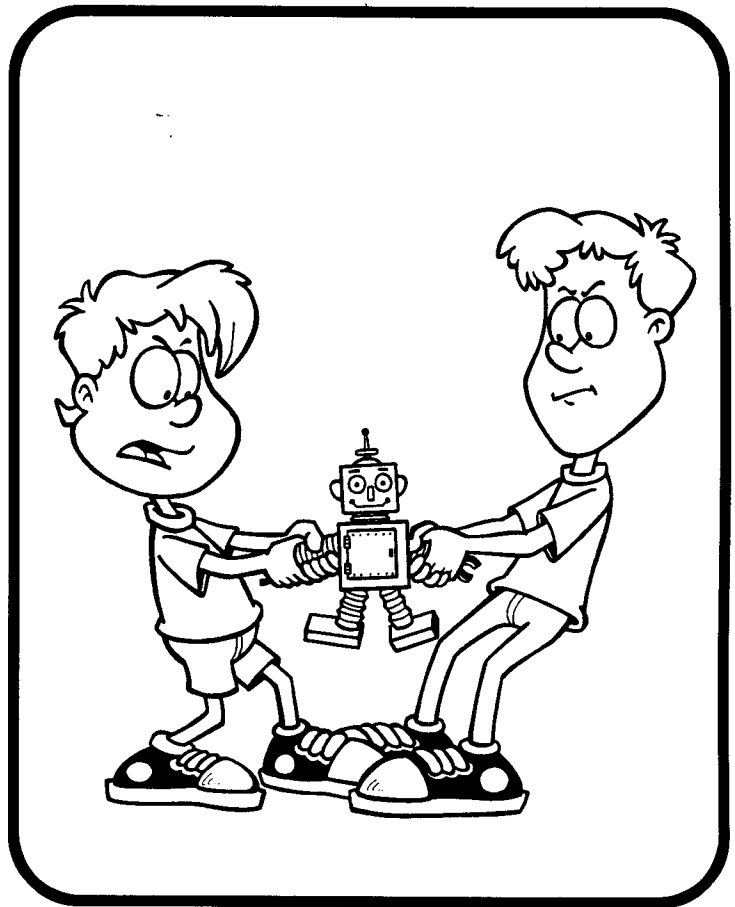
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

 **PROBLEM SOLVING 5**

Put a ★ under each action that may prevent a problem from happening.

Put an X under each action that may make the problem worse.

Circle the picture you think is the best solution to the problem.





# PROBLEM SOLVING 5

## INSTRUCTOR'S SHEET

It is recommended that the pages of this book serve as masters. Make as many copies of the masters as needed.

### GENERAL DIRECTIONS:

There are four activity pages and one instructor's page for each problem that is to be solved. The first page has a large picture that shows the problem. The second page shows four options that may or may not solve the problem. The third page allows students to identify which actions may solve the problem and which actions may make the problem worse. Students have the opportunity to compare good solutions in order to decide which is the best. The fourth page allows students to rate the various actions and then to predict and explain both the immediate outcome and the long-term outcome of each. In some instances, realizing the long-term outcome may change the students' opinions as to which solution is best.

### SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS:

On page 21, the students should discuss aloud that two boys are fighting over a toy. This is the problem.

On page 22, four options are pictured. These should be discussed aloud. The toy may break. One of the boys may tell his mother. One boy may agree to let the other boy have the toy. Their mother may get very angry with them for fighting over the toy.

On page 23, follow the directions on the page, explaining each answer aloud. Non-readers should have the directions read aloud to them.

On page 24, the students should discuss and rate each action and then orally explain the possible long-term outcome of that choice. For example, fighting over the toy may break it. The long-term outcome is that the toy may be completely destroyed. Discuss which action is the best solution to the problem and why that action is better than the others.

Expand the lessons to include the students' similar experiences and how they solved or did not solve their problems.