



# Helping Your Child Deal with Anger



**Teach your child that not all anger is wrong.** The Bible says, “Be angry and sin not.” (Ephesians 4:26) When someone is wronged, it is right to be angry. (Remember that Jesus chased the thieves out of the temple.) Sadly, most of *our* anger is because we didn’t get our way.

**Set limits for what is appropriate.** No, you cannot pick up things and throw or break them. Yes, you can go to your room and punch your pillow. Explain (when no one is angry) what behaviors are acceptable and what will not be tolerated.

**Give your child some time to calm down alone.** Letting a child cool down in a quiet, safe place can diffuse some of their anger. Then comfort him/her and speak calmly.

**Try to understand what’s behind the anger.** Fear, shame, guilt, disappointment, worry, sadness, hurt, jealousy, and embarrassment are all reasons children get angry.

**Praise good behavior.** In the fictional book, *Little Men*, every Sunday the mother, Jo, spent time with each boy and showed him where she had written one way she had seen improvement in his behavior that week. Children need to know when they get it right.

**Model self-control.** It is not easy to control your own anger, but it is imperative that we show by example how to handle anger. And when (not *if*) you blow it, apologize. Many parents are afraid that their children won’t respect them if they have to apologize, but the opposite is true. They will respect you more, and you will be modeling how it should be done. When you lose your temper say, “I was wrong for yelling at you. Will you forgive me?”

## Some practical ideas:

- “Take a deep breath” or “Count to 10” are two good calming strategies (for parents, too).
- Go outside for physical activity. If you see the kids fighting over screen time, one idea is to send them outside (or even better, go with them) and play a game or run around. When our own kids seemed restless and began fighting or arguing, we would tell them to run laps around the house.



- School-aged children can benefit from journal writing or drawing as a good way to vent.
- Pray for and with them and help them practice self-control. As our children (and us) say yes to the Holy Spirit living inside, we will see more and more of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Role-play situations to practice new skills. Every temptation is an opportunity to do what's right.

