



Twelve Gardens of Stewardship

Online Curriculum Example from 'Learning to Give'

Garden of Decisions

Lesson: Got a Problem? Let's Solve It!

(Grades levels 6 – 8)

Purpose:

In this lesson the learners will define **problem solving** and identify some problem solving approaches. They will explore how individuals, groups, and organizations use problem solving approaches, especially as it applies to animal welfare and humane treatment, to address concerns and issues while promoting the **common good**.

Duration:

One 45 to 50 minute class period.

Objectives:

The learner will:

- define **problem solving**.
- identify three approaches to problem solving and articulate their effectiveness in promoting the common good.
- demonstrate new learning by application to a "life-like situation."
- review/define the term **common good**.
- articulate the merits of using different methods of problem solving, especially to promote the humane treatment and welfare of animals for the **common good**.

Materials:

- Copies of **Attachment One: Dear Abigail** for each learner. (Follows)
- Copies of **Attachment Two: Three Approaches to Solving Problems** for each learner. (Follows)
- Journals or writing paper

Instructional Procedure(s):

Anticipatory Set:

*Place the term **problem solving** on the display board in large letters for all to see. As the learners enter the classroom give each of them a copy of **Attachment One: Dear Abigail**. Once everyone has a copy, divide the learners into three or four groups. Designate areas in the room for the groups to meet and ask them to read and follow the directions at the top of the handout.*

- After an appropriate amount of time, ask one person from each group to share the advice his/her group would offer in response to "Trying But Not Succeeding."

- Point to the term **problem solving** on the display board and encourage the learners to share their understanding of this term. Define problem solving, n.) the identification and application of knowledge and skills that result in goal attainment--reaching an agreement that promotes the common good. Define or review the term **common good** (*That which results when individuals work together or as members of a group or organization for the greater benefit of all*).
- Distribute **Attachment Two: Three Approaches to Solving Problems** to each learner.
- Have the learners read the three problem solving approaches and identify what problem solving approaches "Trying But Not Succeeding" may have demonstrated.
- Now discuss the three or four pieces of advice from the class groups and determine which of the three approaches the class ideas represent.
- Challenge the class, through discussion, to identify advice that would represent a **rational approach** to this problem. Try to bring the class to consensus on the "best" advice. (A rational approach would be for "Trying" and the neighbor to work together in solving the problem, perhaps "Trying" could even volunteer to walk the dog on a trial basis.)
- Conclude this lesson by having the learners discuss and then respond in writing in their journals to these two prompts: (1) How would using the **rational approach** in this situation demonstrate "Trying But Not Succeeding's" love for animals and a concern for their humane treatment? (2) How is the humane treatment and welfare of animals important to the common good?

Assessment:

Learner involvement in the classroom discussions will be the major portion of the assessment for this lesson. Consideration could also be given to assessing the learner's response to the journal prompts based on depth of thought of the response.

School/Home Connection:

Encourage the learners to talk with their families about the three ways to problem solve. Ask them to encourage the adults in the family to share which approach might have been the best approach to take in the **Dear Abigail** example. As a part of their reflection, consider having the learners summarize these conversations in their journals.

Lesson Developed By:
Dennis VanHaitsma
Curriculum Consultant - Learning to Give
Barbara Dillbeck
Curriculum Director - The LEAGUE Curriculum by Learning to Give

The Stewardship website, Learning to Give, offers a wide variety of lesson plans which may be used to incorporate the Twelve Gardens of Stewardship into your curriculum. Though philanthropy is the filter for many of these lesson plans, you will find a large number of appropriate choices and useful ideas to adapt to your needs. Visit LearningToGive.org.

ATTACHMENTS ONE AND TWO ARE ON FOLLOWING PAGES:

Dear Abigail

This letter, seeking help from a newspaper advice column, could very well have appeared in any local newspaper. Please read the letter, discuss, and decide how to respond to “Trying But Not Succeeding”. Select someone to share your group’s response during a whole class discussion.

Dear Abigail,

My slightly forgetful neighbor has a very cute little dog named Tassie. Mrs. Lizdale tries to take good care of her companion, but she is quite elderly and can’t walk very well. Many times she puts her dog outside and then forgets about him, or I think maybe she falls asleep. Tassie ends up outside for long periods of time, sometimes in extreme heat or cold, without shelter, water, or food. He also runs around the neighborhood and has almost been hit by cars.

A few times I have put a bowl of water by Mrs. Lizdale’s back door, hoping she would see it and keep it filled for Tassie, but the water bowl has never been refilled.

Once I even heard him barking outside in the middle of the night. I let him in my garage and gave him water, and then returned him home the next morning. Mrs. Lizdale didn’t even remember that she had put him out the night before!

I hoped that after this traumatic experience she would be more careful about putting him out, but he has been outside overnight several times since then.

Now I just ignore the dog because I’m tired of getting up in the middle of the night. I hope her family members or another neighbor will tell her that she should take better care of her dog.

I like Mrs. Lizdale, I’m very concerned about her dog, but the barking at night and the worry that something bad will happen to Tassie is driving me crazy!

What can I do?

Signed:

Trying But Not Succeeding

Three Approaches to Solving Problems

1. The **Laissez Faire Approach** (Laissez Faire - from the French meaning "let alone, let pass")

Individuals, groups, and/or organizations that use this approach to solve problems want to avoid direct confrontation if at all possible. Those who do problem solve in this manner are likely to remain "silent" while hoping that their "example" will serve as a model for the "right way."

2. The **Direct Action Approach.**

Individuals, groups, and/or organizations that use this approach to solve problems take matters into their own hands. They often seek immediate resolution to problems and issues. Those who use this approach to problem solve have little or no patience with the time and effort it takes to hear all sides and work together for the benefit of all (common good). Their mantra is "action" and their impatience for results may find them involved in non-rational behavior, illegal activities, and violent confrontation.

3. The **Rational Approach.**

Individuals, groups, and/or organizations that use this approach to solve problems typically involve in dialogue and discussion those connected to the problem. They work to clarify the problem, analyze its causes, identify and assess possible alternatives, choose and implement a plan, and then evaluate whether it worked. They continue working together to successfully resolve problems to insure a resolution that promotes all involved - for the common good.