



**PARENTING  
RESOURCE**

**AGES: 2–18**

**TOPIC:  
Managing  
Emotions**

# Managing Those Tricky Emotions

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Emotions are like a filter on a camera lens — they affect how we see the world. Let some of our favourite Adventures in Odyssey® audio drama characters and friends show you the eight core emotions. Identifying them can help you control how you feel and act.

# Helping Your Kids Talk About Their Emotions

*Danny Huerta, Vice-President of Family and Youth at Focus on the Family in the U.S.*



## How We See the World

Your 6-year-old tries to hit his little sister after she takes a toy from him. Your 11-year-old breaks down in tears when you make a simple correction of her behaviour. Why do kids sometimes overreact? The answer could be that they're dealing with unmanaged or difficult-to-manage emotions.

Recently, I was with my family at an amusement park. My 13-year-old daughter refused to ride the roller coaster because it looked too scary. But after she saw we had a fun time riding it, she calmed down and reconsidered her feelings. Later, she decided to ride it and had a great time. Her thoughts helped shift her emotions and, ultimately, her decision.

The reality is emotions directly influence how we see the world. Emotions are not bad. However, they become negative when they cloud our judgment. Think of an emotion like a filter on a camera lens. It changes how you see things—adjusting the colours, capturing only part of the picture and changing the lighting.

When your kids are working through a difficult emotion, a great question to ask is: What do you see? Emotions consistently make sense in light of what we're viewing. For instance, David felt confidence when facing Goliath while others around him felt fear. David had confidence in God's strength and with the slinging skills God had perfected in him as a shepherd. David saw something different than what everyone else could see and that changed his emotional outlook on the battle.

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## Managing positive and negative emotions

Throughout Scripture, we see God's people handle and mishandle their emotions. Sometimes, their emotions create steadfast and courageous decisions. Joseph's compassion and love helped him forgive his older brothers and reunite his family (Genesis 43, 45:1-15). Other times, emotions led to terrible decisions, such as when Cain killed his brother because of the anger in his heart (Genesis 4:1-8). In order to maintain healthy relationships and have a healthy outlook on life, children (and adults) must learn how to manage positive and negative emotions and understand how these emotions impact their decision-making.

**The first emotions page will help you teach the eight foundational emotions to your younger children.** Ask your children to point to the character that matches their current emotion. Prompt them verbally by saying, "I feel sad because . . ." Then have them finish the sentence. Explain that feeling sad is not a bad thing. In fact, identifying this emotion helps us understand how we are seeing a situation. Are we looking at a situation neutrally or does this sad emotion taint or distort our view?

Next, teach your child how emotions create thoughts and how thoughts create emotions. When we shift our emotions, we shift our thoughts about a situation. Similarly, when we shift our thoughts, our emotions shift too. That's why a 9-year-old can be singing one minute and yelling the next. Discuss this idea with your child. Ask, "Can you think of a time when you decided to change your attitude and your negative emotions went from sad or mad to eventually happy? How did your thoughts help? How did shifting your emotions help you connect with others? How do emotions sometimes lead to disconnection?"

You can also explain that emotions are contagious. Positive emotions impact people positively and negative emotions impact people negatively. To start this conversation, ask your child, "When you are sad/happy/mad, what happens around you?" Watch a video on YouTube of babies laughing. It's hard not to laugh! Just like we feel happy after watching babies laugh, we want to display positive emotions so people around us experience the same feeling! Have you ever been around a person who is angry? Some people describe this experience as walking on eggshells—why? What does this mean?

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By using more specific words, [your kids] will better understand themselves and be able to explain to others what they are experiencing.

## Emotions can escalate

**The second and more detailed emotions sheet is best for kids ages 9 and older.** Listed underneath each of the eight core emotions are more descriptive words. For instance, mad can begin as frustrated and escalate to rage. Encourage your older kids to explain their feelings with the descriptive words listed on the page. By using more specific words, they'll better understand themselves and be able to explain to others what they are experiencing—and if their feelings are escalating. When emotions escalate, it can lead to poor decision-making and harmful behaviours. You can help your older kids own and manage their emotional world by asking these questions:

- Are your thoughts creating good or bad emotions? How do you know?
- If you change your thoughts, what new emotions could you experience?
- Are your emotions creating drama or unity with the people around you? What would you like to happen? Are your emotions helping you accomplish that?
- When you feel your emotions start to escalate, what can you do to stay under control? Why is it important for your emotions not to get out of hand?
- Who are some people you can talk to about how you're feeling?

As family members understand and appropriately respond to their emotions, celebrate this accomplishment together! Developing emotional understanding, control and growth in your family is an achievement worth celebrating.

### Questions to Ask Your Kids

#### *Younger children*

What do you see?  
How are you feeling? "I feel \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_." (Use Emotions chart.)  
What can you think about that will change how you feel?

#### *Older children*

Are your thoughts creating good or bad emotions?  
What would you like to happen? Are your emotions helping you accomplish that?  
Who are some people you can talk to about how you feel?





# EMOTIONS

Emotions can drive or ride—you decide.

Proverbs 29:11; Proverbs 15:18



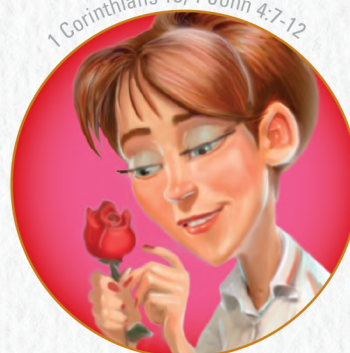
**MAD**

Psalms 128; Psalm 91



**HAPPY/JOY**

1 Corinthians 13; 1 John 4:7-12



**LOVE**

Psalms 51; Psalm 77



**SAD**

Psalms 120; Psalm 69



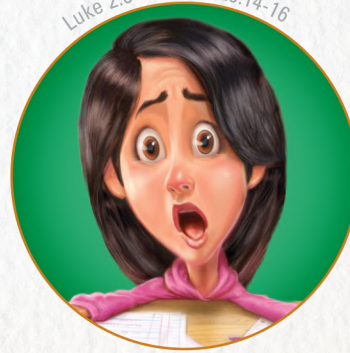
**AFRAID**

John 18; Matthew 26



**SHAME**

Luke 2:8-10; John 20:14-16



**SURPRISE**

Mark 10:46-52; John 12:20-22



**INTERESTED**



# EMOTIONS

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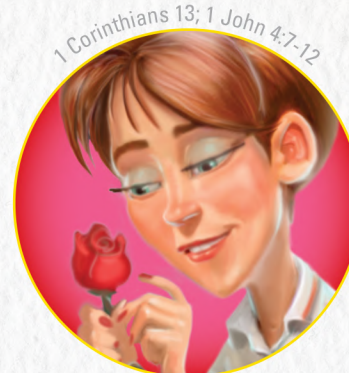
## MAD

Frustrated Disgusted  
Irritated Angry  
Jealous Rageful  
Explosive



## HAPPY/JOY

Satisfied Hopeful  
Relieved Proud  
Calm Excited  
Ecstatic



## LOVE

Peaceful Connected  
Thankful Romantic  
Interested Addicted



## SAD

Disappointed Depressed  
Bored Empty  
Lonely Hurt  
Betrayed



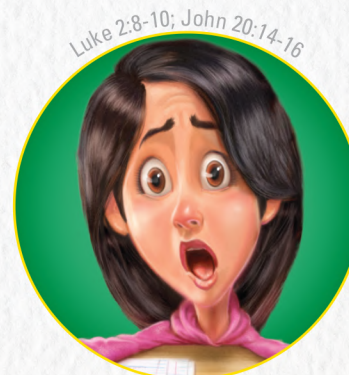
## AFRAID

Worried Tense  
Nervous Anxious  
Stressed Fearful  
Terrified



## SHAME

Embarrassed  
Inadequate  
Humiliated  
Awkward



## SURPRISE

Amazed  
Confused  
Shocked



## INTERESTED

Motivated Energized  
Inspired Focused  
Passionate



Focus on the Family Canada  
19946 80A Avenue  
Langley, BC V2Y 0J8



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