

# CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING CARDS

Level A  
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## About the Cards

These cards provide teachers with a practical method for helping gifted children in the primary levels develop their problem-solving ability. Both teachers and students will enjoy and benefit from the unique format of the cards which includes:

A picture side which depicts the problem and engages the children's interest.

The side intended for teacher use has thought-provoking questions which provide experiences in problem defining and solving.

Each card also includes independent learning activities and a relevant vocabulary.

The cards promote reasoning and effective communication skills through group discussion. The format is based on guided discussion with active participation by the teacher. This means that the teacher must think with the children. In this way the teacher helps guide the process of problem solving as the children think and reason. The cards provide a technique to help children consider what is desirable behavior in a given situation. Intellectual curiosity and cognitive growth are stimulated as the children develop the ability to listen, think, reason, and compare oral responses to the discussion questions.

## About Problem Solving

Children need to conceptualize many aspects of their daily experience and engage in problem-solving activities that relate to these everyday experiences. The concepts posed on the cards have real meaning for young gifted children and provide a springboard for developing basic skills of problem solving. Children develop the critical thinking skills needed for creative problem solving as they:

Review facts

Identify the problem

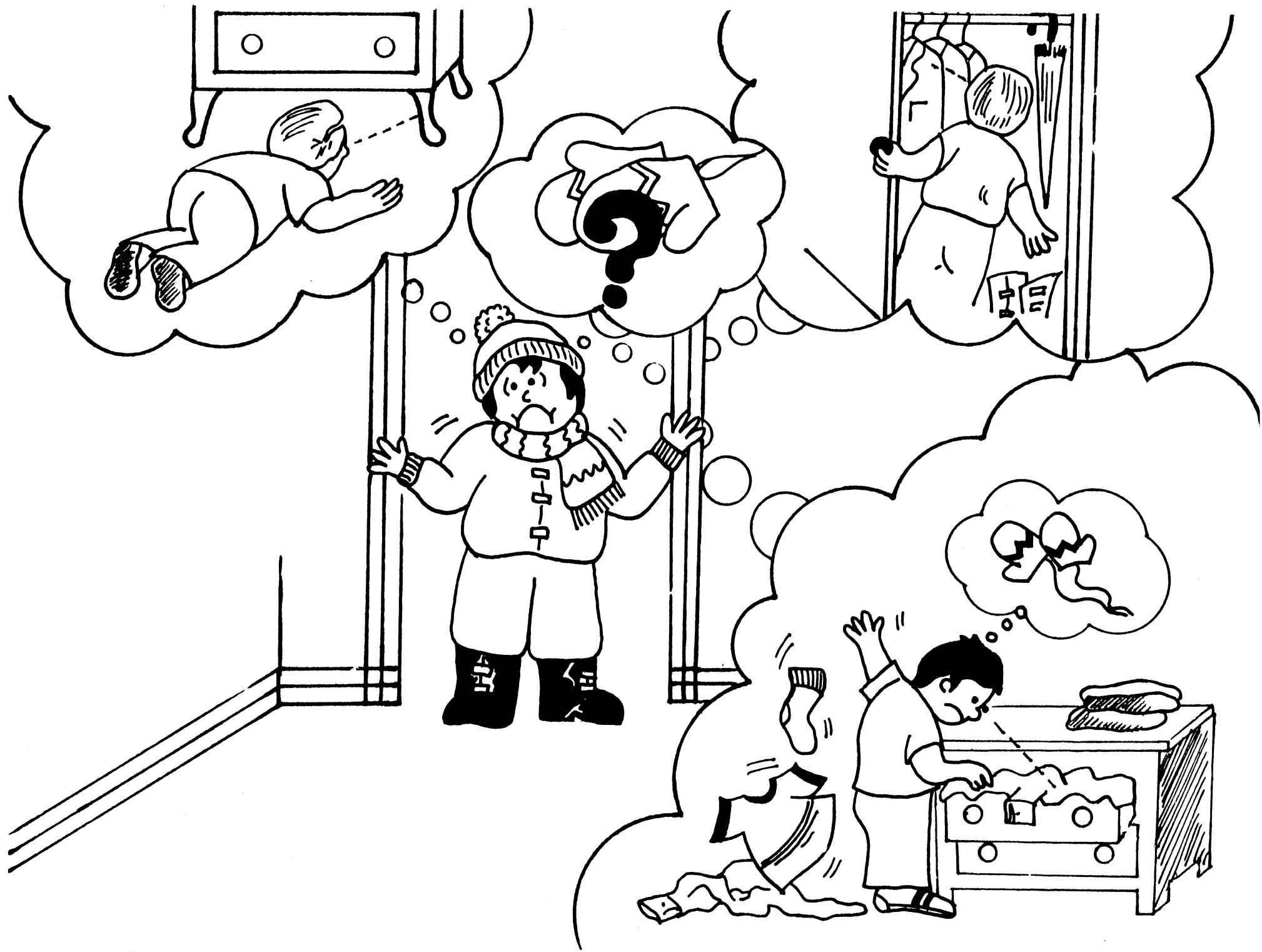
Consider possible alternatives

Evaluate cause and effect

Judge solutions

Children's intellectual growth is stimulated through thoughtful attention to the questions structured on Bloom's Taxonomy. As children listen and respond to these questions, as they analyze and compare various suggestions, they are provided with many opportunities to understand the complexity of human behavior since many of the problems defy simple solutions. When children analyze suggestions, they also learn to think through possible outcomes and consider results. As they cope with various dilemmas, they come to appreciate the thoughts and feelings of others. The children realize the value of flexible attitudes and alternative ways of resolving situations. Creative problem solving helps primary children's emotional and social adjustment.

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# The Lost Mittens

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## *Setting the Scene:*

Tommy wanted to go outside and play in the snow. It was a cold, blustery day. He was properly dressed for the frigid weather except for one thing. Tommy's mittens were missing. He knew the temperature was well below freezing outside. He would be cold and uncomfortable without mittens to keep his hands warm. He might even get frostbitten hands. Tommy tried hard to think of one more place his mittens might be. It was no use. He had searched in every nook and cranny. The mittens were lost.

## *Vocabulary:*

blustery \* properly \* frigid \* weather \* temperature \* freezing \* uncomfortable \* frostbitten \* searched \* nook \* cranny \*

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## **Developing Critical Thinking for Problem-Solving:**

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### *Getting the Facts:*

What had Tommy planned to do?

### *Defining the Problem:*

Why were his plans spoiled?

### *Considering Solutions:*

What can Tommy do about his dilemma? (Possible solutions: take off his outer wear and play indoors, borrow mittens, play outside without his mittens.)

### *Anticipating Consequences:*

What might happen if he did any of these things? (Possible consequences: he'd be unhappy staying indoors, he could play outside with borrowed mittens, his hands would be freezing cold without mittens.)

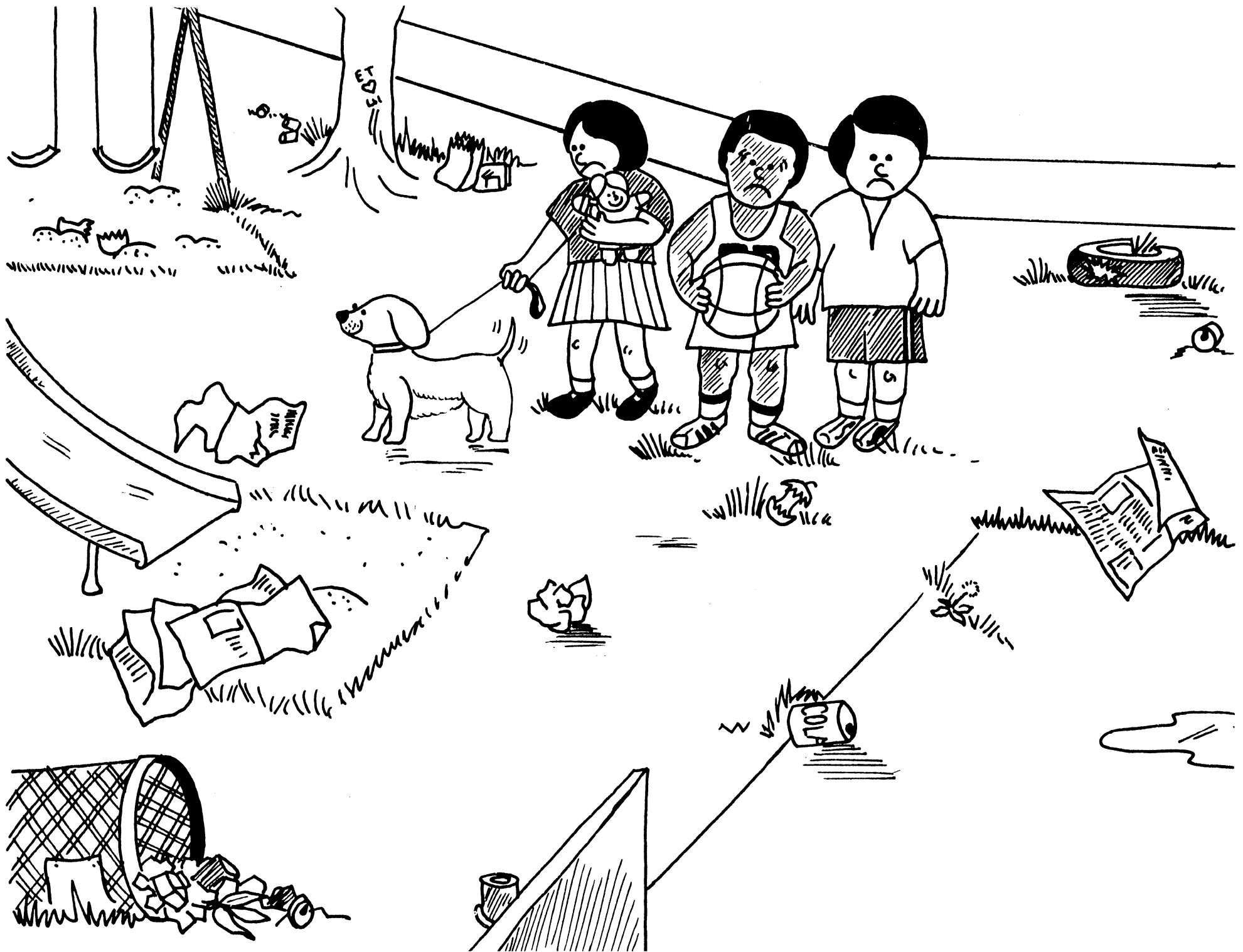
### *Choosing a Solution:*

What would you do if you were Tommy?

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## **Creative Activities for Building Concepts:**

- \* Conduct a survey. Ask your friends to suggest ways that will help Tommy keep from losing his mittens in the future.
- \* Make a snowman out of clay. (Why does a real snowman melt?)
- \* Draw or paint a snow scene. (Write a sentence to describe the scene.)



# The Dirty Park

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*Setting the Scene:*

A group of friends arranged to meet at the playground after school to play ball. They were horrified by the condition of the park. The playground was strewn with litter. The ground was covered with boxes, bottles, and paper. Debris was all over. The children didn't want to play in a park like this. It was dirty and it could be dangerous, too.

*Vocabulary:*

group \* arranged \* horrified \* condition \* playground \* strewn \* litter \*  
debris \* dangerous \*

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## Developing Critical Thinking for Problem-Solving:

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*Getting the Facts:*

What plans had the children made?

*Defining the Problem:*

What was their reaction when they arrived at the park?

*Considering Solutions:*

What could they do about this situation? (Possible solutions: work together and clean up the playground, forget about playing ball, play ball in someone's yard.)

*Anticipating Consequences:*

What might happen? (Possible consequences: they could enjoy a ball game in a clean park, they would feel sad about not playing ball, they're in the city and no one has a yard.)

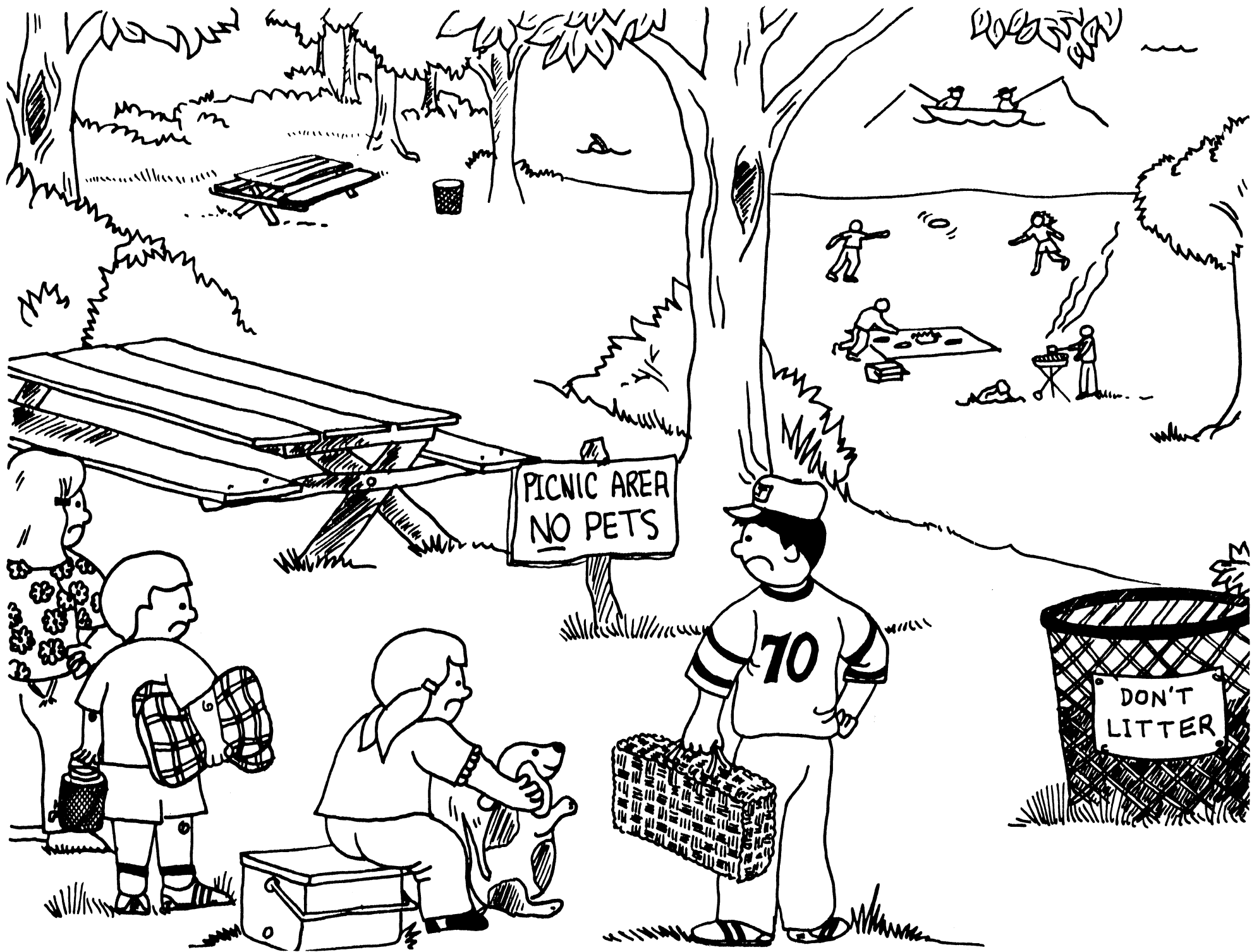
*Choosing a Solution:*

What do you think the children decided to do?

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## Creative Activities for Building Concepts:

- \* Fold a piece of drawing paper in half. On one half draw a dirty park. On the other half draw a clean park.
- \* Create a slogan that encourages people to keep parks clean. (You can write the slogan at the bottom of your picture.)



PICNIC AREA  
NO PETS

DON'T  
LITTER

70

# No Pets Allowed

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*Setting the Scene:*

The members of the Green family had been up since dawn getting ready for their trip to the state park. The park was quite a distance from their home. They wanted to get an early start. When they arrived at their destination they were distressed to see a sign forbidding pets. Their joy turned to gloom. They had brought the family's pet dog, Spot, along to enjoy the day's outing.

*Vocabulary:*

members \* dawn \* destination \* distressed \* forbidding \* joy \* gloom \* enjoy \* outing \*

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## Developing Critical Thinking for Problem-Solving:

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*Getting the Facts:*

What were the Green family's plans?

*Defining the Problem:*

What went wrong?

*Considering Solutions:*

What are some of the things they could do? (Possible solutions: find a nearby park that allows pets, leave Spot in the car, ignore the sign.)

*Anticipating Consequences:*

What might happen? (Possible consequences: they could all have fun at another park, it's not humane to leave an animal in a car, the park ranger could give them a summons and they'd have to pay a fine.)

*Choosing a Solution:*

What do you think the family decided to do?

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## Creative Activities for Building Concepts:

\* Plan a skit about a little dog and a park ranger. What will the ranger tell the little dog? What will the dog reply?