

Lesson 23

Be a Buddy – Not a Bully

TEACHER PREPARATION

KEY CONCEPTS

We need to provide safe, secure learning environments for our children.

Teachers and administrators can take practical steps to help stop bullying in the school and classroom.

Children can be taught ways to stop bullying.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. recognize the signs of bullying and learn how to combat it from three perspectives – one who bullies, one who is bullied and one who is a bystander.
2. realize they can make a difference when confronted with bullying in their lives or in other people’s lives.

KEY TERMS

“At-risk” child – one who is less likely to transition into adulthood successfully without intervention.

Bullying: deliberate behavior intended to cause harm; usually repetitive.

Nemesis: an opponent or enemy who is very difficult to defeat; one who inflicts vengeance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bullying is a serious, widespread problem in every country, and needs to be addressed to safeguard our children. Research suggests 15 percent or more of the students in a school are being bullied. The rest of the students are often bystanders. As educators, we need to teach our students how to recognize if they are being bullied and give them strategies they can take to stop the bullying from taking place.

Teachers need to:

1. help develop schoolwide policies for dealing with bullying; if that is not possible, develop your own policies for your classroom.
2. create a warm, safe environment in your classrooms where your students know it is safe to talk to a trusted adult.
3. increase supervision during play/recess/lunch times.
4. recognize and encourage friendships between an “at-risk” child and a child who is confident and caring.
5. create a class culture in which bullying is unacceptable to the students by using discussion, role play, literature, etc., to encourage empathy and acceptance of differences.
6. teach conflict resolution.
7. reward students for positive behavior and choices.
8. immediately stop bullying when it is seen and take steps to find out what happened.
9. support the one who is being bullied and teach them steps to take to stop the bullying.
10. seek ways to help the bully by trying to figure out why he or she is treating people badly and try to redirect him or her toward doing something constructive.
11. teach bystanders not to ignore bullying by teaching them steps they can use to stop it from happening.

Teaching Tips:

Why do people bully?

1. They are pretending they are tough.
2. They are trying to get others to like them.
3. They are hiding their own fears.
4. They are copying someone else who is a bully.
5. They may be unhappy.
6. They may not like who they are.
7. They may be angry at life.

How do you deal with a bully?

1. Be assertive, but not aggressive.
2. Firmly tell the bully to stop and look them in the eye.
3. Try to stay calm and walk away quickly.
4. Immediately tell a trusted adult.

5. Seek good friendships and stay close to friends when you are in an environment of possible bullying.

What do you do if you are a bystander?

1. Recognize you can be a buddy to the victim.
2. If possible to safely do so, tell the bully to stop and encourage the victim to walk away with you.
3. Tell a trusted adult.

How to teach conflict resolution:

Teach your students that sometimes you have to learn to sit down and listen to each other in order to resolve a conflict. Here are some possible ways you can facilitate conflict resolution.

Tie a rope into a circle and have the students involved in the conflict sit in a circle with all hands on the rope. Each person has to share their feelings while the others listen to them; everyone gets a chance to talk. If the students can't come to an agreement, then, as the teacher, you may need to guide the discussion to a conclusion. This helps everyone feel like others listened and were aware of their feelings.

Another option is to create a "Peaceful Spot" in your classroom – a place in the room where students can go to talk things over when needed.

You could also have a table with pencil and paper where a student can go to write their feelings to share with you and the one with whom they are having a conflict.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION

1. In **Discovering the Lesson**, you will need to prepare three signs.
One says: *I love it!* One says: *I don't really have a strong opinion.* And the third one says: *I really don't like it!*
2. In **Applying the Lesson**, you will need to either use the board or have three large pieces of paper for your discussion time.
3. If you try conflict resolution circles, you will need a long rope that can be tied into a circle.
4. In **Going Deeper**, if you have access to a compass, you can include it in this lesson.

LESSON

BEGINNING THE LESSON

[Say to the students:] **Many of you have experienced being bullied or have seen someone being bullied. You know it is not a good thing. We must be part of the solution for this problem. Something happens to Edgar in our story. Let's see what Hector, Trish and Dugan do about it.**

READINESS (5 minutes)

[Read to the students:] **Chapter 23 – Edgar's Nemesis**

"What do you think?" began Dugan thumbing through a random book he'd just found on one of the library's side halls. "Does the library protect us from books we shouldn't read? Or does it just keep us from books we have no interest in?"

"Thinking back to when we first got here and tried to pull books off the shelves, huh?" replied Hector.

"I don't think it is the library's job to censor what we read," mused Trish. "But books can be dangerous creations and we should be careful what we put in our heads."

"Hadn't thought of books that way," said Dugan. "But I guess you are right. Books can definitely have an influence on us. Take this book, for example," he continued. "Seems to be about a dog and how its owners wanted it to fight other dogs for sport. The dog became vicious, but it didn't start out that way."

He casually tossed the book aside and it flopped open on the floor. The conversation soon turned to other things and they probably wouldn't have even remembered it – if not for what happened a few hours later.

Edgar was not being himself. He seemed restless and agitated. Then he began to whimper and look around.

"What's with Edgar?" asked Hector.

"Beats me," said Dugan.

The words were barely out of his mouth when a dreadful howling sound began to echo down the halls of the library.

"That doesn't sound good," said Trish.

"It isn't good," added Dugan, pointing at a very large, strange mongrel dog racing toward them.

Before anyone could react, the new dog had jumped on Edgar and began to tear into him. Edgar tried to get away, but couldn't. The bigger

dog had Edgar down on the floor and all Edgar could do was yelp and whine.

The three friends stood there not sure of what to do. They wanted to help Edgar, but they didn't want to get bitten either. A sense of helplessness kept them rooted where they stood. Edgar finally broke free from the other dog's grip and ran behind Hector.

The big dog lowered his head and approached Hector with a menacing snarl.

"Get out of here!" Hector suddenly yelled as he waved his hands at the dog. It was as if a spell was suddenly broken, for Trish and Dugan added their voices to Hector's and also began to gesture at the big dog as well.

The dog stopped his approach, pulled his head back into his shoulders, turned and then disappeared back the way he came.

"Oh Edgar!" cried Trish. "Are you okay?"

Edgar pressed into his three friends as they all tried to comfort him at the same time.

"Uhmhhh!" said the Librarian drawing their attention. "I see you met Bully. I wondered how long it would be before he put in an appearance."

"The dog's name is Bully?" remarked Dugan.

"Well ... that is one of his names," answered the Librarian. "Bully always travels with three questions. Would you like to know what they are?"

The Librarian looked each of them in the eye before continuing.

"The first question is this — Where did Bully come from?"

"I think I know the answer to that," said Dugan. "I recognize him from the book I was thumbing through. Is he a bully because of what he went through in the book?"

"Yes and no," answered the Librarian. "What he went through certainly pushed him in that direction, but he still had a choice. He didn't have to become a bully."

"The second question is this," continued the Librarian. "Why didn't you help Edgar when he was first attacked?"

The three students all looked at their feet and didn't say a word. The Librarian didn't rush in to ease their discomfort, but after a rather awkward silence she said, "The third question is this — What caused you to eventually stand up to Bully?"

“I think we have some thinking to do,” said Trish, looking at her two friends. Hector and Dugan both nodded their agreement, and Edgar wagged his tail.

EXPLORE (5 minutes)

[Say to your students:] **What happened in the story with Edgar? Why didn’t Hector, Trish and Dugan help him at first? When they all started yelling at Bully to go away, what happened? How does this relate to us?**

Today, we are going to talk about bullying. What does the word bullying mean? *[Discuss their answers.]* Sometimes, someone might be a bully. Sometimes, someone might be the one being bullied. And sometimes, someone might be the bystander seeing bullying taking place, wondering how to stop it.

DISCOVER (20 minutes)

[Play the “Where do I belong?” game. Put your signs up in three distinct areas along a wall so the students will understand where to line up when you begin the game.]

[Say to the students:] **This end of the line represents the “I love it!” end and the other end of the line represents the “I really don’t like it” end. The middle of the line would represent the “I don’t really have a strong opinion” section of the line. You will notice I have put signs with these sentences in each area. I am going to make a comment and I want you to move to the area of the sign that best describes your feelings about what I say. When you get to the general area, you will have to talk to your friends in the same area and communicate your feelings enough, so you can agree to an order of like or dislike. You should end up in a straight line according to your feelings. Let’s begin with an easy comment. I want you to think about how you feel about broccoli (or some other vegetable). Move to the area representing the idea of how you feel and decide where you should put yourself in order. For example, I may not like broccoli, but my friend REALLY can’t stand it. We would both go to the area of “I really don’t like it!” She would be closer to the end of the line, representing she can’t stand broccoli.**

[Give the students a few minutes to move, discuss and make adjustments so they end up in a straight line in their area.]

[Say to the students:] I am going to choose someone close to the ends and someone in the middle to tell me why they are standing in those spots.

[Choose a few more of easy comments to make them move like ‘How do you feel about thunderstorms?’ At the end of each move, choose someone different toward each end and in the middle to share his or her thoughts. Continue the game by saying other comments for the class to react to such as: ‘How would you feel about singing a song in front of the whole class?’ ‘How do you like the idea of running for president or prime minister one day?’ Use these or make up your own.]

[Be sure after each comment/question, you allow for three opinions. Monitor discussion so all opinions are accepted.]

[Say to the students:] Now, as you go sit down, I want you to think about what we learned by playing this game. Tell me something you have learned. [Some possible answers might be that everyone doesn’t agree on everything and that is okay. Opinions are based on prior experiences. Opinions can be changed with new experiences, but recognition of differences should be acknowledged and respected.]

APPLY (30 minutes)

[Say to the students:] Let’s talk about bullying. Bullying is a big problem all over the world. I imagine most of you have either been bullied, been a bully or been a bystander as you have seen bullying taking place. Bullying is deliberate behavior that causes harm. It can be physical bullying, verbal bullying, cyber bullying or social bullying. I want you to help me make three charts. One will be characteristics of a bully and one will be characteristics of someone being bullied and one will be characteristics of a bystander.

*[Lead a class discussion on the characteristics of each of these and write them on the board/paper. Your class discussion may cover the thoughts noted in the **Background Information** section on bullying. If this discussion doesn’t cover all of those points, please take time to bring them up and*

Unit 2	DreamBreakers	Be a Buddy – Not a Bully	23
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discuss them with your class as appropriate for your grade level. Discuss what they should do if they are the victim, the bystander or the bully.]

SHARE (30+ minutes)

[Choose one activity or do both activities as time allows.]

Activity 1: *[You may want to discuss conflict resolution with your class as an alternative way to learn to understand each other better without creating bad feelings or bullying someone. You could model some of the ideas suggested in the **Background Information** section or other ideas you have used that have proven successful and decide what you could use in your classroom.]*

Activity 2: *[Divide your class into small groups to prepare skits about possible bullying scenarios. Have each group prepare an outline for the skit and present the idea to you for approval. Have your students create sock puppets or puppets made out of paper and sticks to use in their skits. Younger students may need help with skit ideas.]*

For Older Elementary Students

[If possible, have your class become a Buddy Class with a younger classroom at least two grades below your grade. Pair one of your students with one of the younger students. Talk to your class about the responsibility of being an “older, trusted friend” to their younger partner. Begin to develop activities to build trust between the buddies. Friendships between older and younger students can be a powerful deterrent to bullying.]

ENDING THE LESSON

[Remind your students they can always come and talk to you anytime during the year if they are ever concerned about bullying. Your students need to know and trust you will be consistent in how you handle your classroom in this area. Your classroom should be a safe place for everyone. If you do see bullying going on and cannot handle it yourself, seek help from an administrator.]

GOING DEEPER (optional)

*[Say to the students:] **Previously, we talked about how some things can change the direction of compass points. Remember, when some kinds of metal are close to the compass, it pulls the pointer away from north. Can***

you think of things we might do to a compass to keep it from pointing north? For example, a compass needs a flat surface or to be held flat in order to work. [If you tilt a compass on its side, it will no longer point to the north. If you have access to a compass, tilt it sideways to show the students how it will not work correctly when tilted.] Are there other things that could cause a compass not to work properly? [You could discuss how draining the water, or pulling the needle off its spindle in a homemade compass, would render it useless.]

Just as a compass can lose its ability to point north when it is damaged or knocked off course, so, too, human beings can lose their desire to do the right thing. A bully is usually someone who hurts others because they themselves are hurting (their compass is damaged). In Galatians, Paul lists some of the things a person with a damaged internal compass is likely to do:

“... hating, fighting, being jealous, being angry, arguing, dividing into little groups and thinking the other groups are wrong” (Galatians 5:20b, New Life Version).

[Say to the students:] Can any of you describe a time when you saw someone who was anything like Paul’s description? Please don’t mention names. Bullies are troublemakers because they are troubled inside. A person’s outward behavior is a reflection of their inner well-being or lack of it. But as we will see in the next lesson, there is an alternative to being trapped in the inner brokenness causing us to behave badly.

PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

Bullying is a serious, widespread problem in every country that needs to be addressed to safeguard your children and their friends. Research suggests 15 percent or more of the children in schools are being bullied. There are bullies in virtually every school and the rest of the children are often bystanders. As parents, we need to teach our children how to recognize if they are being bullied and give them strategies in how to stop the bullying from taking place. If your child's teacher talks with you about his or her behavior problems at school, you and the teacher can work together as a team to teach your child appropriate gentleness and compassion for weaker children. If your child is being bullied, it is important to communicate with the teacher to form a team to help prevent bullying from happening.

Questions you might ask your child:

1. Can you tell me the story your teacher read? Who was Edgar's nemesis and what did he do? ("Bully" was a bigger dog, and he attacked Edgar.)
2. Do you remember the Librarian's first question? ("Where did Bully come from?" – Bully came out of a book, but the question really is about why bullies are bullies. Usually they have been bullied themselves, and sadly, they have chosen to bully.)
3. Do you remember the Librarian's second question? ("Why didn't you help Edgar when he was first attacked?" – The friends didn't answer. At this point, you might share with your child a time when you were bullied or were a bystander in a bullying situation, and then discuss together wise choices to be made in times of bullying.)
4. Do you remember what the Librarian's third question was? ("What caused you to eventually stand up to Bully?" – Ask your child to share with you about what they learned about how to be a buddy and not a bully.)

