

SAFE ENVIRONMENT LESSON PLAN

“BULLYING”

Grade: High School

OBJECTIVES

The High School student will:

1. Define bullying.
2. Discuss reasons why kids bully.
3. Create a plan to be a defender against bullies.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Student needs:

- Pencil
- Notebook

Teacher needs:

- Chart paper
- Permanent marker
- Definition of bullying
- Assessment materials:
 - Bullying Action Plan
 - Bullying Scenario

CONTENT

BULLYING

We all know how powerful words and body language can be. That is because God designed our bodies to speak a language even when our voices are silent. We were created with a greater dignity and worth than any other creature on Earth. When we respect ourselves and others, we are reflecting His great dignity. In relationships, being assertive and speaking and acting directly affirms our dignity and worth without diminishing the worth of others. On the other hand, aggressive behavior (as opposed to assertive), is hurtful and destructive to others, particularly when one tries to diminish another's character or value. Bullying is a form of aggression. Let's look at what we already know about bullying. (Have students brainstorm and write down what they already know before sharing their ideas aloud with the class. Make a list for the class to see as students share their responses.) From the suggestions, see if the class can come up with a definition of bullying. I would like each of you to write down a sample definition of bullying based on the information we have on the board. (Give students time to draft a definition of bullying before asking students to share their examples with the class. Once a few students have volunteered, display the definition card for the class.) The definition of bullying that we will use in our class is: Intentional, aggressive behavior repeated over time that involves unequal power, and causes injury or leaves the victim feeling fearful, hurt, distraught or isolated. Bullying behavior may include physical contact, verbal assault, social shunning, obscene gestures or other

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aggressive attacks. People are bullied for many different reasons. Often, someone is bullied because they are different in some way from those around them. It may be because of their weight, skin color, religion, the way they talk or walk, their lack of skills in sports, how smart they are or another reason. A bully picks on what makes the other person a unique and unrepeatable individual; the bully uses those great unique qualities to try to put the person down.

A lot of kids bully because they:

- Have trouble at home and use bullying as a way of taking out their anger on someone else
- Are trying to be part of a group that bullies
- Have low self-esteem and want to feel better about themselves and feel powerful
- Are searching for attention, and bullying someone else is the only way they know to get it.

Bullying is wrong because it hurts others, and because it goes against our nature to love others as Jesus loved. Jesus calls us to love as He loves. He respected everyone – men, women, children, young, old, disabled, rich, poor, all religions, all races. He treated everyone with care and dignity. We are all called to do the same. That is why bullying hurts so much – it goes against what we were created to be and do, which is to love.

Unfortunately, too many of us have experienced bullying. When have you seen or experienced bullying? (Have students share the examples they have witnessed or experienced but without names included. Ask them how it made them feel and what happened as a result of the bullying.)

If you are being bullied, use the same NO, GO, TELL action plan. This action plan gives you the tools you need to take an assertive stand against this kind of behavior, get out of the situation, and then to tell a trusted adult. No one deserves to be treated badly! God tells us to love Him, ourselves, and others. By seeking help when you are being bullied, you are affirming your worth – you are saying, “I deserve better than to be bullied.”

OUR CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

Let's look at what our responsibility is as a Christian in terms of how we should view and respond to the behavior of others. As Christians, God calls us to love others. The Golden Rule summarizes our responsibility perfectly: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. So what is our responsibility as Christians if we know someone is being bullied? *To help them, to get help for them, to stand up for them, to protect them, to not join in the bullying.* We need to remember that while many of us would not call ourselves bullies, we are aiding the bully by NOT taking action if we know it is happening. If you stand around as someone else is getting picked on, if you laugh as a bully calls someone names, if you walk away from a

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bullying situation so you “don’t have to deal with it or get involved,” you are helping the bully. Standing by or doing nothing as someone gets bullied is assisting the bully. We will discuss how to be a “defender against bullies” in a few minutes.

Let’s take a moment to think about our actions and attitudes. If you close your eyes, I am sure that each of you can picture someone whom you would call a “bully.” No one wants to be labeled a bully, and sometimes it is easy to dismiss the idea that we might be bullying someone and tell ourselves that we are “just joking around” or “just playing.” For this reason, it is important that we self-check our words, actions, and attitudes towards others. Ask yourself: Do I put others down, enjoy humiliating or embarrassing others, threaten or intimidate others, mock or poke fun at someone’s differences, spread rumors, or alienate/exclude others from a group or team? Even if you don’t see yourself as a “bully,” you must put yourself in the other person’s shoes. Are your words or actions showing love, acceptance, or respect or are they hurtful, damaging, or disrespectful? This daily self-reflection is an important part of our lives as Christians. Taking the time to develop our sense of empathy towards others and love them as we would love ourselves, is living the Golden Rule..

BEING A DEFENDER AGAINST BULLIES

We are called to help those in need. When it comes to bullying, that means defending those that need help or are being bullied, whether this takes place online or in person. Defending someone who is being bullied may mean telling the bully directly to stop, supporting the student being bullied, not joining in the bullying, or telling a trusted adult. It may mean walking up to the bully (who may be your friend) and saying, “Leave that guy alone,” or “Enough already, that’s not cool!” While it likely feels easier to just ignore the bullying, we are encouraged to stand up when we see someone being wronged. Friends don’t let friends bully! Jesus shows us the same lesson in the story of the Good Samaritan:

“But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instructions, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was

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neighbor to the robbers' victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:29-37)

Jesus challenges us to always do what is right even when it is the hard choice. Jesus wants us to live lives of virtue, practicing good Christian habits every day and trying our best to be more like Christ. Being Christ-like is difficult, especially when those around us aren't. It makes us stand apart, but we are reminded in the book of Jeremiah that if we put our confidence in God, we will live a satisfying, fulfilling life.

“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17: 7-8)

We can truly be confident that following God's direction for our lives will not disappoint us and will lead us to experience the best kind of life!

CLOSING PRAYER

God of love, you made each of us a temple of the Holy Spirit. We know that we are precious in your eyes. Be with us today – help us always to look out for not only our own safety but for the safety of friends, family members, and people you put into our paths. Watch over us and help us every day, so that we might fulfill Your plans for us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from Diocese of Joliet

ASSESSMENT

Ask student to complete:

- Bullying Action Plan (Resource A)
- Bullying Scenario (Resource B)

TEACHER RESOURCES COVER PAGE

- Definition of
bullying

Bullying:

Intentional, aggressive behavior repeated over time that involves unequal power, and causes injury or leaves the victim feeling fearful, hurt, distraught or isolated.

Bullying behavior may include physical contact, verbal assault, social shunning, obscene gestures or other aggressive attacks.

ASSESSMENT RESOURCE COVER PAGE

- Bullying Action Plan
(Resource A)
- Bullying Scenarios
(Resource B)

Name _____

Bullying Scenarios

For the bullying scenario below, write about how you, as a high school student, would combat the bullying.

Rumors are starting to spread about you on Facebook. A group of kids in your class thought it would be funny to make up a story about you to humiliate you. The kids you used to hang out with at recess now don't want to spend time with you or speak to you because they think the rumors are true.

A group of girls are fighting with one of their friends, Liz. They create a "Rate Liz" group on a social networking site. They post embarrassing photos of Liz from middle school and high school and invite their hundreds of online "friends" to join the group to view the photos and tell Liz how she stacked up. Cruel and crude comments are being posted. One message said that some girls were planning to physically attack Liz.
