

WHAT CAN WE DO?



BIAS, BULLYING, AND BYSTANDERS



"Every school and teacher should consider showing 'What Can We Do? Bias, Bullying, and Bystanders.' The film presents critical tools to help educators make our schools safe and secure places for all our students to learn and thrive."

~Michael Casserly, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools



Welcoming Schools



***What Can We Do? Bias, Bullying & Bystanders* FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Preparing to watch the film:

Whether you watch this film alone or with a group, preparation helps to set the tone and space to get the most out of your viewing. Here are some suggestions:

- ❖ Take a look at the three lesson plans demonstrated in this video. (On the DVD and website.)
- ❖ Review additional materials on the DVD and WS website related to bullying, bias, and best practices for effective programs, definitions of bullying and bias.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with your school or district policies and/or procedures regarding bullying and bias.

Elementary school staff often underestimates the number of students involved in frequent bullying. While the majority of school staff estimates that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of students say they were frequently bullied.

Catherine Bradshaw, 2007
School Psychology Review

Before you watch *What Can We Do?*

- ❖ Brainstorm a list of all the ways you think students might be experiencing bullying and bias especially those things that are based on their identity or who they are.
- ❖ Consider which of these are the most difficult for you to address and why.

Introducing the Film:

- ❖ This was filmed in two public schools that worked with a Welcoming Schools consultant who provided ongoing professional development for the entire faculty.
- ❖ The film shows the first time that these teachers have taught the lessons. We thank them for being brave enough to allow us to film in their classroom. The film only depicts a portion of each lesson. Using the actual lesson plans as a guide, viewers can consider nuances of the lesson that may not have been depicted in this film.

While you watch, pay special attention to the following:

- ❖ What topics the lessons address.
- ❖ The issues that children are “dealing with.” Notice all of the forms of bias or put-downs that the children mention in the film.
- ❖ How other students respond to and react to these issues.
- ❖ How the teacher addresses these issues.
- ❖ What preparation was needed by the teacher to implement the lessons.

57% of interventions by elementary age children stops the harassment within 10 seconds.

D.Lynn Hawkins, 2001
Social Development



Post viewing discussion: Allow time for reflection and deeper learning

I. Sharing and Reflection: Initial Reactions to the Film

- ❖ What stood out to you while watching the film?
- ❖ What moved you? What surprised you?
- ❖ What steps do you think your school would need to take to incorporate these lesson plans in your classrooms?"
- ❖ Did you notice the different forms of bias mentioned within the lessons, either by teachers or students? What were all the different kinds of comments mentioned by the students? How did this compare with your brainstorm list?
- ❖ What were some of the responses you noticed among the children when certain things were said?
- ❖ What kinds of biases are the students in the film especially looking to adults to handle?
- ❖ What did you notice about the teacher(s) in response to student comments and questions?
- ❖ How was what you saw in the film similar or different to the *Welcoming Schools* lesson plans?

Bystanders are more likely to act when they perceive they have the skills to do so.

Aboud & Joong, 2008

2. What Can You Say to Stop Hurtful Language and Educate Students? Discussing and Practicing Sample Responses

Saying "don't use that word" is not enough.

We need to educate students about why something is hurtful and not simply send them to the principal's office or assume they understand. Check out: *Bias, Bullying and Bystander: Tips for Elementary School Educators* and *What Do You Say to "That's So Gay"?* (Handouts are available on the DVD and website.)

Here are sample responses to things you might overhear students say. You can look for more samples within the handouts mentioned above. Also, you can start to develop and practice your own responses. Try these out...

- ❖ "Do you know what that means? It's a put down for someone's religion. There are many different religions in this world and in this school we have respect for all religions."
- ❖ "You may not have meant to hurt anyone, but saying 'that's gay' can hurt those around you. Do you know what that means? And if they say no, you can respond: "When used respectfully, it describes a man and a man or a woman and a woman who love each other. In our school we don't use words that describe people as putdowns."
- ❖ "That was a stereotype. Stereotypes are a kind of lie and they hurt people's feelings."



Some Scenarios From *What Can We Do?*

- ❖ “He said if you touch the floor it will turn you gay.” *How would you handle this? Is there a way to make clear that a person being gay is not a problem, but using the word “gay” as a putdown is not OK?*
- ❖ “He called him chocolate balls.” *How might you respond to this and other slurs based on skin color? What do you think about the teachers sharing her own experience in her response? In what kinds of scenarios might you share some of your own experiences?*
- ❖ “Adults can just make it worse...” *Why do you think students think this sometimes? What can you and all adults do to offer support, be available, and not make it worse when children tell us something is going on? (See below for what some 5th graders said.)*
- ❖ In response to a *comment* about race one student states, “I would get an adult. Because if I would just do it myself, I’d probably get in trouble. Because I might start something, too. You never know.” *What might you say to support the child in their decision? Keep in mind, a student who is self-aware and avoids conflict is probably showing good judgment – but also needs adult support.*

3. Engage Students in Deeper Learning:

Use open-ended questions during “teachable moments.” We don’t always have to discipline children who are using inappropriate language; often it is simply a matter of education. And, isn’t that what schools are all about? Here are some sample questions to help students better understand why what they are saying may be inappropriate and even hurtful to others.

- ❖ Why do you think it is wrong for boys to wear pink?
- ❖ Has anyone called you a name that made you feel bad?
- ❖ What are the things that help you to feel safe at school?

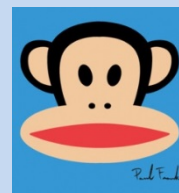
4. Skill Building

Allow time for review and practice to improve your skills and comfort responding to bias in the classroom

- ❖ Give educators the opportunity to practice teaching these lessons with their peers.
- ❖ Have multiple books available as suggested in the lesson plans. Review and think about how they could be used in a classroom. Have participants match them to the lessons they are aligned with.
- ❖ Make sure teachers have the chance to debrief the lesson after they practice.
- ❖ Have educators determine where in the current curriculum these lessons would fit.

A boy in the film said he was told, “You’re wearing a girl’s shirt!” and he said, “OK, I’ll change my shirt.”

The shirt the boy referred to had this Paul Frank monkey on it:





THE LESSONS PLANS IN *WHAT CAN WE DO?*

- ❖ **Words that Hurt, Words that Heal** with the book “One” by Kathryn Otoshi: This lesson, appropriate for grades K – 3, illustrates the power of being an ally as well as the impact of bullying on students who are targeted as well as those who are bystanders. Generates discussion with students about ways they have experienced or witnessed bullying. Looks at ways classmates could stand up for each other.
- ❖ **Name-Calling and Feeling Safe in School:** A lesson appropriate for all grade levels that helps educators talk about the safe and unsafe places at school – both physical and emotional. A lesson like this, done school wide at every grade level, can help increase safety and inform staff if there are any safety issues that need to be addressed.
- ❖ **Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander:** This lesson for grades 4 - 6 helps students sort out their choices and consider how they will respond – do nothing, tell the person to stop, tell an adult or talk to the child being harassed – to different bullying or hurtful teasing situations.

According to the 5th graders in a study of over 13,000 students in grades 5-12:

Peer actions that make things better are:

- spending time or talking with them at school,
- helping them get away from the situation,
- making a distraction,
- and helping them tell an adult at the school.

Peer actions that make things worse are:

- blaming them for what happened,
- making fun of them for being teased or for asking for help,
- and ignoring the situation.

Adult actions that make things better are:

- listening, giving advice and encouragement,
- checking in over time to see if things got better,
- increasing adult supervision,
- and disciplining the student who was mean.

Adult actions that make things worse are:

- telling them to stop tattling,
- telling them to solve it themselves,
- telling the student that they should have acted differently,
- and ignoring the situation.

Stan Davis and Charisse Nixon, 2010, Youth Voice Research Project



MAKING DECISIONS: ALLY OR BYSTANDER

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 4 – 6

LENGTH OF TIME: One or two class periods of 45 minutes

GOALS

- For students to explore their own roles in incidences of bullying, harassment and name-calling.
- To explore and practice possible interventions.
- To define what it means to take action/be an ally.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will talk about bullying, harassment and name-calling.
- Students will consider different responses to bullying and how that might change depending on the situation.
- Students will discuss alternatives to ignoring bullying, harassment and name-calling.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS: SL 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4/5/6 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Social Studies Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity – Exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique, as well as how they relate to each other in supportive and collaborative ways.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

This discussion with students will explore how all of us, at one time or another, have had to make a decision about whether or not we will intervene or take a stand when we witness name-calling, bullying or harassment of a friend or a stranger. Often we make these decisions in the moment, reacting to situations as they come up. In this lesson students take the time to explore many different situations that could be seen at school and think about how they make decisions such as intervening, getting help, participating or walking away.

MATERIALS “4 Corners” placards (included in lesson) hung in the four corners of the room, Ally or Bystander: Situation Sheet (included in lesson), room arrangement suitable for activity and movement, chart paper or whiteboard, markers.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Review the list of scenarios and pick out ones that you think will generate discussion in your class or that you would like your students to consider. You could also develop your own to cover topics that may be issues in your school. Start with some scenarios that may be easier for your students to consider. Include some that are only slight variations so that students have to think about how things would be different if the scenario involves friends or not, students who are older or younger, students who are more popular or not. Include

different topics in your set of questions. You probably will have time for 6 to 8 scenarios in one class period.

- Print out or write out and post the “4 corner” placards in the area of your classroom where you will do the lesson. Students need to be able to move around to each “corner”.

ACTIVITY

- Explain to the students that this activity looks at situations where you must decide, in that moment, how to react if you see someone being teased or bullied. Sometimes you may do something. Sometimes you may not. It often depends on the situation, how well you know someone, if they are older or younger, etc. This activity involves movement and action.
- For each situation, students will make a decision regarding how they will respond using the following four choices. Briefly discuss each to ensure that your students understand each one.
 - Ignore the situation or walk away.
 - Attempt to negotiate or stop the situation.
 - Talk to the person privately later.
 - Seek assistance from an adult or someone older.
- Read the scenarios that you have chosen, out loud to the class. Make sure your students understand the scenario, especially if it is a variation of one you just read. Ask them first to think for themselves which of the four corners they would go to. Then, have them move to the corner of the room that represents how they would act in response to that particular scenario.
- Before you hear from students, you could have them turn and talk to another person in their group about why they chose to go to that corner.
- With each scenario, invite a couple of students from the different corners to say why they chose to stand in a certain corner. Follow-up on their answers as appropriate. You could ask them to give an example of what they could say to the person being teased or bullied and what they could say to the person doing the hurtful teasing or bullying. Make sure to hear from students in all 4 corners during the lesson. As your students say why they have chosen a particular action/corner, acknowledge their reasoning.
- To generate further discussion after you have presented the scenarios, ask some open-ended questions:
 - Did you respond differently to the different scenarios?
 - What are some of the reasons you chose one corner versus another?
 - With whom did you feel most comfortable intervening?
 - When were you more likely to ignore the situation? Why?
 - Would you respond in some other way not represented by the four corners?
- Discuss what it means to be a bystander.
 - How do you think the person being teased feels if people don't do anything?
 - How do you feel when you don't do something?
- Talk about what it means to be an ally. Using chart paper or a whiteboard, brainstorm ways to be an ally. (If you use chart paper you can keep it hanging on your classroom wall.)

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- Acknowledge that there are many ways to be an ally depending on the situation. The important message is that if students witness bullying behavior, that they take some kind of action. If they are not sure whether to do something, this means it is a good time to talk with someone about it. Ask students to also think about if there are times they feel unsafe being an ally. What could they do in those situations?
 - In closing, ask students to think of how they could be a better ally to the other students in your class or school.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Can students define what it means to be an ally or bystander?
- Do you observe students sticking up for each other more?
- Can students identify ways to be an ally?

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson.

I Am Jazz, Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings.

My Name Is Bilal, Asma Mobin-Uddin.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming, Cheryl Savageau.

Red: A Crayon's Story, Michael Hall.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock.

MIDDLE READERS

George, Alex Gino.

The Liberation of Gabriel King, K. L. Going.

The Misfits, James Howe.

Playground: A Mostly True Story of a Former Bully, Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, Laura Moser.

The Popularity Papers: Book Two: The Long-Distance Dispatch Between Lydia Goldblatt and Julie Graham-Chang, Amy Ignatow.

Wonder, R.J. Palacio.

ALLY OR BYSTANDER – SITUATION SHEET

This activity takes two 45-minute periods to complete all 15. If you only have 45 minutes to spend on this activity, pick 6-8 situations. Start with an easier one. Use ones with slight variations to make students think about how they might handle each situation differently.

1. A classmate or friend constantly makes fun of a another student because they are small for their age
2. An older student makes fun of a younger student because they are small for their age
3. When you are with a group of friends, one of them makes fun of a younger student because of the way they dress.
4. A new kid at school calls your friend a bad name because of their skin color.
5. A friend of yours calls a new kid at school a bad name because of their skin color.
6. A kid you don't know calls another kid you don't know a bad name because of their skin color.
7. Someone in your class says something mean to another student in your school because of their religion.
8. A new kid at school calls your friend "gay"
9. A group of students your age keeps saying, "That's gay" to mean they don't like something.
10. A group of students your age keeps saying, "That's gay" to mean they don't like something and you know that your friend's dads are gay.
11. A friend of yours keeps saying to other boys, "Hey stop acting like a girl."
12. A boy in your school that you don't know very well keeps saying to other boys, "Hey stop acting like a girl."
13. A friend in your class teases a younger boy for having a teddy bear or a doll.
14. A student in your class teases a boy for wearing a pink T-shirt and nail polish.
15. A girl in your class teases another girl for always dressing like a boy.

Include any others that might apply to your school or community.

**IGNORE THE SITUATION
OR *WALK AWAY***

INTERVENE MYSELF

**TALK TO THE PERSON
IN PRIVATE**

**SEEK HELP FROM AN ADULT
OR SOMEONE OLDER**



WORDS THAT HURT AND WORDS THAT HEAL

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: K – 4

LENGTH OF TIME: One 45 – 60 minute session.

GOALS

- For students to consider the importance of words and actions.
- For students to see themselves as allies standing up for each other in a caring community.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will apply literature to real life experiences.
- Students will share their understanding of the harmful nature of words or actions to make others feel “less than” or unwelcome.
- Students will strategize effective ways to welcome and stand up for someone who has been treated unkindly.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS: SL 1.2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.. Also SL K.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2
- CCSS: RL 2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. Also RL K.3, 1.3, 3.3, 4.3
- CCSS: RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events. Also RL K.7, 2.7, 3.7, 4.7

EDUCATORS' NOTES

This lesson illustrates how words or actions can hurt – or heal. After reading the book, *One* by Kathryn Otoshi, the teacher leads students in a discussion of words or actions that have hurt them or other students in your school. Then students discuss what they can do to help each other and stand up for each other.

If you don't have a copy of the book, the activity and discussion can be done as a stand alone lesson.

It is important to caution students not to use people's names or identify anyone when sharing. The intent is to ensure that students change hurtful practices without bringing attention to individual students who have bullied others or who have been targeted. Special thought and care will need to be taken if certain students are vulnerable due to differences or recent incidences in order to avoid unwanted attention or discomfort for that student. Following up with such students after the activity, in a discreet manner, may be necessary as well.

As the lesson proceeds, try to ensure that the different kinds of name-calling you have heard in your school are mentioned. If you have heard students at your grade level using “gay” as a put-down, raise that as a discussion topic, as students may think it is taboo to mention. If you have heard students being teased or excluded for not meeting cultural norms of femininity or masculinity, raise those points. If you have heard teasing about economic differences, race, or ethnicity, ensure those are brought up.



MATERIALS A large piece of paper cut into the shape of a heart

BOOK *One* by Kathryn Otoshi. (If you don't have a copy, see the modified lesson plan below.)

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Listen to and monitor ways that students or others in the school put each other down or exclude each other. Listen for put-downs related to gender, race, class, family structure or personal appearance. Notice who gets excluded and why.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR CLASS

- Gather students in a group and say, "Today, we are going to talk about and explore our classroom paying attention to how we treat each other—what makes us feel welcome, happy, and important and what makes us feel lonely, sad and unimportant." Explain that students often have difficulty fitting in because they are in a situation where groups of students have already formed bonds of friendship or because they are different in some way. Point out that some people will automatically put up barriers to another student, deciding quickly that they dislike the student, without even trying to get to know him or her. State, "In our class and school we want everyone to be treated kindly, to belong and to do their very best."

LESSON INCLUDING READING THE BOOK, *ONE* BY KATHRYN OTOSHI

Before you begin reading:

- Ask your students to pay attention to the colors that are in the book and what the colors mean. Also, ask them to think about the word count. Count refers to two different things in the story—something that matters and numbers.
- As you read, pause to ask the students questions and reflect on the book.
 - After Red says, "Red is hot. Blue is not," you could ask how they think Blue feels?
 - After Red picked on all of the colors and got bigger and **BIGGER**, you could ask your students, if they were one of these colors how would they feel at this point?

Crumpling up a heart activity:

- After reading the book, ask your students if they have ever noticed in your school or classroom, people acting like "Red" or people feeling sad or unimportant because of things that were said that might have hurt their feelings.
- Ask them to take a minute to think about these things.
- Say that you have a heart that you are going to crumple up a bit each time someone says one of these things that hurt. The heart represents student's hearts and when something is said to us that feels unkind it makes our hearts hurt.
- To start things off, ask again: have you heard anybody say unkind things or do mean things in our classroom or our school?
- Interact with students as they bring things up. Ask them follow-up questions for clarification or to see how it felt to either hear the unkind words directed at them or to hear the unkind words directed at someone else. Appreciate them if they have said something that may have been difficult.
- Are there any words that they have heard other students say that are hurtful?

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- Each time another student says something that they've seen or heard that is hurtful, crumple of a part of the heart.
 - After students have had a chance to say a number of things about what has been or could be hurtful and after you have had a chance to interact with students on these experiences, turn to what could make things better.
 - Ask the students, what are some things that they could do to help when they have heard or seen something mean. How would they make someone feel more welcomed again? How would they help stop the hurtful teasing or bullying?
 - Say that each time someone comes up with an idea you will smooth out the heart a little while they are talking.
 - If somebody was being mean to you and making you feel unimportant, what would you hope someone would do?

Optional: Mini role-play with the students:

- After students have had a chance to name ways that they could help a person who is being teased or bullied, have students think about the end of the book.
- Ask: who was it that stood up to red? What did One do to let Red know that picking on the other colors was not okay behavior? (Answer: He stood up straight and tall like an arrow. If students don't come up with that answer, prompt them or turn back to that page in the book to remind them.)
- What number do you think you would be in the book? (Someone will probably say the number one.)
- Ask who else would want to be number one? Raise your hand. Who would want to be number two? How about number three or four?
- If you raised your hand, stand up.
- Look at all the people standing up. If all of these people stood straight up like an arrow and said, "No." (Have kids say, "No.") Do you think it would help stop someone from getting teased or hurt?
- How do you think it would feel to see people standing up for you if you were the one being teased or hurt?
- What would you think if you saw someone else standing up for someone?

Going back to the book:

- After One stood up and said, "This is not okay" and the other colors did the same, did you notice how that word count was used? The book says, "Blue saw the colors change. He wanted to count." What does Blue mean? Discuss how it feels good to count.
- At the very end of the book red blew a fuse and then got smaller and smaller and smaller. Did red disappear? Did you notice, what happened to red at the end? He turned another color, right. And then it says, "Then red laughed and joined the fun." What do you think about that ending? Were the colors just standing up to red and saying, "Stop it. Go away. We don't want to see you ever again" or were the other colors saying, "Hey, you stop. You don't have to be mean. We know you can be nice"? Even though somebody is mean to us they can still be nice if we help them and they listen.

Going back to the heart:

- Ask: Why did I crumple up the heart? Why did I smooth it out? What do you notice about the heart? Does it look the same as when I started? How is it different?
- This is the same as when somebody is bullied. If someone is bullied and told they're not important, and *even if* someone says, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that," the person's heart can never be the same.
- Discuss how this is true for anyone who is targeted –called names or bullied for being different. So that's why it is important to not be mean to other people and to help to be a kind and welcoming person.

LESSON PLAN WITHOUT READING THE BOOK

- Ask students to think for a minute about ways they have heard kids tease others, or words that they have heard kids use to put someone down that made them feel lonely or unhappy. Our words and actions are important and have outcomes. Ask, "Have you ever felt that you hurt in your heart when you hear or witness sadness?" (Educator might give personal example.) Our words and actions matter. In this activity we'll show that discomfort or sadness by crumpling a paper heart when we share a hurtful word or experience. Invite students to share the kinds of teasing, hurtful acts, or bad words that they have heard at your school. Each time a mean thing is said, scrunch up a piece of the heart to make it wrinkly.
- After everyone has had a chance to share, ask the students how they think they would feel after hearing these kinds of words. Would they want to come to school? Would they feel like doing their best work? Do hurtful words and actions help each other?
- Ask the students some ways that they could help each other feel better. What could they do to help each other feel included and do their best? A variety of ways to reach out to a peer should be discussed. Examples might be inviting the child to play ball or draw together or sit together at lunch.
- Say that each time someone comes up with an idea you will smooth out the heart a little while they are talking. Even when the paper heart is as flat as you can get it, the heart will not look the same as before it was crumpled.
- Ask questions to lead students to the understanding that, although some of the damage has been repaired, when we hurt someone, they will never be exactly the same; when your heart or feelings are deeply hurt, the scars remain, just like the wrinkles remain. Chances are those scars will never go away. Discuss how this is true for any people who are targeted—called names or bullied for being different.
- Ask the children to name reasons or differences for which children are excluded, teased or bullied.
- Ask the children if they know anyone whose feelings have ever been hurt in this way and invite them to share about it. This invites children to speak about things that may have happened to them or their family members but does not put them on the spot or force them to identify themselves as a target.

Going back to the heart:

- Ask: Why did I crumple up the heart? Why did I smooth it out? What do you notice about the heart? Does it look the same as when I started? How is it different?
- This is the same as when somebody is bullied. If someone is bullied and told they're not important, and *even if* someone says, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that," the person's heart can never be the same.
- Discuss how this is true for any people who are targeted –called names or bullied for being different. So that's why it is important to not be mean to other people and to be a kind and welcoming person.

EXTENSIONS

- Post the heart on a wall as a reminder of the power that words can have to hurt and heal. The heart will serve as constant reinforcement of a vivid lesson in kindness.
- Have students write a letter to their family about words and actions that heal activity and suggest thoughtful actions that they will use at school and at home.
- Encourage students to practice kind words and actions and record on the classroom heart.
- Include words like ally, bystander and upstander on a word wall.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Work with your students to create a list of guidelines for making the classroom feel safe and affirming for everyone. Ask them to say what they think the goals should be in order to be a welcoming community where everyone feels safe and like they belong. Ask them to think of ways they can all participate in making these guidelines work and create strategies for intervening, requesting the assistance of an adult or joining with others to make someone feel better, safer and more welcome. Educators will monitor and encourage engagement and empathy.

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y la palabra, Daniel Olivas.

Confessions of a Former Bully, Trudy Ludwig.

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina, Monica Brown.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming, Cheryl Savageau.

Pinky and Rex and the Bully, James Howe.

Say Something, Peggy Moss.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock.
Wings, Christopher A. Myers.

Adapted by Rhonda Thomason, M.A. NBCT from a lesson by Gary Hopkins, Education World, and Kevin Gogin, San Francisco Unified School District.



NAME-CALLING AND FEELING SAFE IN SCHOOL

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 1 – 4

LENGTH OF TIME: Two 30-minute sessions or one one-hour session

GOALS

- To help students begin to take responsibility for creating emotional safety in school.
- To help students identify places in the school where they feel safe or unsafe.

OBJECTIVES

- The students will discuss and consider ways to make their school safer.
- The students will identify areas of the school that feel unsafe and where name-calling occurs.
- The students will list and discuss put-downs and how it feels to be put down because of name-calling.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS SL 4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Also SL 1.1, 2.1, 3.1
- Social Studies Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity – Exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique, as well as how they relate to each other in supportive and collaborative ways.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

Spend a few days listening for the kinds of name-calling that take place in the classroom, at recess, in the hallways, in the gym, etc. By listening ahead of time, you can then make sure all of the different kinds of name-calling you hear are addressed when you do the lesson. Listen for examples of what children might give as reasons for not playing with another student. These reasons might relate to race, gender, family structure, class or physical appearance. If you hear anti-gay name-calling, make sure to include it as students may not bring it up themselves.

MATERIALS: Chart paper, markers, pencils, paper or note cards.

ACTIVITIES:

PART 1) IDENTIFYING SAFE AND UNSAFE AREAS IN THE SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the idea that you want to find out where in the school students feel safe or comfortable and places where they do not feel safe or places where they feel less comfortable or uneasy.
- It is important to acknowledge that students will have different feelings about the same spaces.
- Discuss what makes students feel safe and unsafe at school. You could do a quick brainstorm on chart paper or a white board.

- Remind students that there are different ways to feel safe – physically and emotionally. Make sure that they understand that you are also talking about the emotional ways people feel safe.

IDENTIFYING WHERE STUDENTS FEEL SAFE OR UNSAFE

- With your students, brainstorm a list on chart paper of all the places in the school that students go to or walk through. Make sure all of the different places in the school are included, such as hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, classrooms, learning centers, cafeterias, different parts of the playground, the nurse’s office, the principal’s office, etc. Also include walking to school, on the bus and at the bus stops.
- After the list of places is identified, give your students a minute to look over the list and pick two to three places where they feel safe. Also, ask them to pick two to three places where they feel less safe or where they have heard name-calling, hurtful teasing or seen bullying. Tell them there may also be places where they feel safe sometimes and not others. Have them pick two to three of those as well.
- While your students are reviewing the list, add three columns to the chart: “Safe,” “Unsafe” and “Sometimes Safe/Unsafe.”
- Allow the students to go up to the chart and make tally marks in the appropriate columns.

MODIFICATIONS

- All students may not feel comfortable placing the tally marks in front of the whole class. If you suspect this is the case, have students write on paper or note cards where they feel safe, unsafe and sometimes safe/unsafe. Then you can make the tally marks on the chart.
- Another alternative is to do this exercise in small, self-selected groups that report back to the whole group and complete the chart.

PLACES IN THE SCHOOL, AROUND THE SCHOOL, ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL	FEEL SAFE	FEEL UNSAFE	SOMETIMES SAFE / SOMETIMES UNSAFE

DISCUSSION

After the chart is finished, ask your students the following questions:

- Which areas of the school have the most “Safe” tally marks?
- Which areas have the most “Unsafe” tally marks?
- What makes you or others feel safe in these areas?
- What might make someone feel less safe in areas?
- What makes a place feel safe sometimes and less safe other times? What is different?

PART 2) LOOKING AT HOW NAME-CALLING MAKES THE SCHOOL FEEL UNSAFE – A BRAINSTORM OF WORDS OR NAMES STUDENTS HEAR

Begin by asking students for words, names or comments they have heard that can make people feel unsafe. Again, pay attention to what students might give as reasons for not playing with another child. These reasons might relate to race, gender, family structure, class or physical appearance.

Add any additional names or comments that you have heard or prompt the students to say additional names that you have heard. (For example, if you have heard anti-gay, skin color based, or gender based slurs at your school, make sure to include those words. Students may feel uncomfortable saying these at first but then often feel relieved that someone has actually mentioned them.)

Note: Be careful not to do this in a way that might make one student stand out. For example, if there is only one Latina student in the class and she has been targeted because she speaks with an accent, don't hold this situation up as an example.

Using the chart of the areas of the school, ask students where they hear name-calling.

DISCUSSION

Lead a discussion about name-calling with the following questions as guidelines:

- How does it feel when someone calls you a name?
- How does it make you feel when you hear someone else called a name?
- Why do people call others names?
- Why does the name-calling happen where it does?

ACTION STEPS

Look at what can be done to stop the name-calling and help your school feel safe and welcome for all students. Use some of these questions to prompt the discussion. Make a list on chart paper.

- What can we do about the places where we feel unsafe? How can you help someone who has been called a name?
- What can students do to help stop name-calling and help others feel safe and welcome?
- What can teachers and other adults in the school (administrators, lunch and recess monitors, bus drivers...) do to help stop the name-calling and help students feel safe and welcome?
- **Note:** If it comes to your attention that an area of the school seems particularly unsafe, you or some of your students should report this to the administration along with developing an action plan to make that area safer.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

- If name-calling such as "That's so gay" comes up, ask the students what is meant by this. Find out what the intention was. Explain that "gay" is a word that describes individuals or a group of people. Define the words "gay" or "queer" if students have mentioned them. Explain that when you use that word to mean something is bad or stupid, not only does it hurt the feelings of the student who is taunted with the word "gay," but it hurts the

feelings of anyone who is gay or who may have a parent, relative or friend who is gay, because it implies that “gay” is bad.

- “Tattling” and “reporting”: It is important to create a climate where kids have a common understanding that reporting an incident that is harmful to themselves or others is different from “tattling” on another student for the purpose of getting him/her in trouble – that there is value in each person taking responsibility for making the school feel safe for all people.

MODIFICATIONS

There may be a situation in a class where it is very important for children to maintain anonymity as they answer questions about safety in school. We don’t want to create a situation where kids will feel like tattle tales. It is possible to create a true/false questionnaire about the safety of areas of the school. Students can hand these in and then you can tally them. Also, doing this exercise in small, self-selected groups might create a level of safety in reporting to and discussing with each other.

EXTENSIONS

- *Literacy*: Have students write about an area of the school in which they feel safe and an area in which they feel unsafe. What could help make the “unsafe” area feel safe?
- *Write a letter to the principal* stating that a particular area feels unsafe with suggestions for actions that can be taken to make it safe. It might be best for small groups to each address one area and write a letter specific to that.
- *Creating a Safer School*: Review the list of action steps. Decide on one to three actions that students could take to make your school feel safer. Develop and carry out a plan to implement those actions. This could be done as a whole class or students could work in small groups to plan and carry out one of the actions.
- *Whole School Activity*: Over the course of a week, have many classes in the school use this lesson as a schoolwide evaluation tool.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Come back to the chart in a few weeks or months and see if there are any changes in the safe and unsafe areas.

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y La Palabra, Daniel Olivas.

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina, Monica Brown.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming, Cheryl Savageau.

One, Kathryn Otoshi.

Pinky and Rex and the Bully, James Howe.

Say Something, Peggy Moss.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock,

Thank You, Mr. Falker or *Gracias, Señor Falker*, Patricia Polacco.

Wings, Christopher A. Myers.

Part of this lesson was based on ideas in Where I Feel Safe/Unsafe in: Merle Froschl, Barbara Sprung, and Nancy Mullin-Rindler with Nan Stein and Nancy Gropper. Quit it!: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grades K-3. Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, NEA Professional Library. 1998. www.wcwonline.org

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO 'THAT'S SO GAY' & OTHER ANTI-LGBTQ* COMMENTS?

It doesn't matter if it is a first grader who might not know what the word "gay" means, a sixth grader trying to sound cool, or a tenth grader "teasing" a friend. All of these scenarios have the potential of creating an unsafe classroom or school environment and must be addressed. **So, what can caring adults do?**

STOP IT...

Keep it simple with quick responses:

- "Remember, we don't use put-downs in this class."
- "Do you know what 'gay' means?"
- "It's not OK at this school to use 'gay' disrespectfully to mean something is bad."
- "You may not have meant to be hurtful, but when you use the word 'gay' to mean something is bad, it is hurtful." Follow-up with, "Do you know why it is hurtful?"
- "Using the word 'homo' to tease someone is harassment and is unacceptable."
- "Even if you didn't mean to offend people who are gay, it is offensive to call this assignment gay (or queer); if you don't like something, then say you don't like it!"
- "It is never OK to say, 'you act like a girl (or look like a boy)' as a put-down."
- "Using the words 'queer', 'dyke' or 'fag' to joke around is not OK. These are hurtful words and can impact anyone who overhears them."
- "It doesn't matter who said it, I don't want to hear that kind of language again. Is that clear?"

DON'T IGNORE IT...

- Harassment does not go away on its own.
- Ignoring mean name-calling and hurtful teasing allows it to continue and possibly get worse.
- If other students do not see action, they get the message there is nothing wrong with it.
- Not speaking up teaches the student targeted, as well as anyone within hearing range, that they will not be protected from harassment.
- Almost any response is better than ignoring the situation. You may not know exactly what to say, but you must stop the harassment.
- Taking action reaffirms limits. Interrupting name-calling and harassment isn't always easy. With experience you will become more comfortable in handling it. Practice with colleagues.
- You can always go back to the student and say or do something else if you feel you did not respond well.

***LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning**



WHY STOP ANTI-LGBTQ COMMENTS?

“Middle-school students called anti-gay names report increased anxiety, depression, personal distress and a lower sense of school belonging regardless of their sexual orientation.”

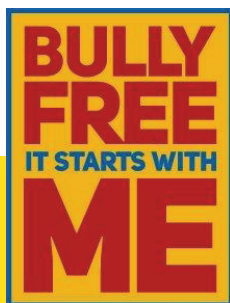
— V.P. Poteat and D.L. Espelage, 2007

“Both students who are targeted and students who exhibit bullying behavior have lower academic achievement in school.”

— J. Juvonen, Y. Wang and G. Espinoza, 2011

“If name-calling or other discrimination happens at school and goes either unnoticed or is not discussed by adults, students infer that the behavior is widely accepted.”

— F.E. Aboud, 2008



EDUCATE...

- If you have the time and opportunity to educate on the spot, do it. If you don't, make time later.
- If you have been hearing the phrase "That's gay" or "no homo," take time during class to make sure that your students know what "gay" means and know why it is hurtful to use as a comment or put-down.
- Be clear that using the word "gay" in a negative way is disrespectful. Be clear that using the phrase "That's gay" is hurtful to other students who may have family members and friends who are LGBTQ.
- Be prepared to provide accurate information. For the youngest students, keep it simple — for example, "The word 'gay' describes a man and a man or a woman and a woman who love each other." As students get older, they may want more explanations and discussion.
- In lessons on respect, prejudice or civil rights, include information about discrimination against LGBTQ people and the LGBTQ civil rights movement.

A safe and welcoming school environment is essential for student success. **Educators are a critical component** in creating an environment that enables all students to thrive!"

— Lily Eskelsen García, President, National Education Association

BE PROACTIVE...

- Develop an environment of respect and caring for all students in your school and classroom using inclusive language, books and other materials.
- Establish clear schoolwide and classroom policies against hurtful teasing and bullying. Ensure that all members of the school community understand what the policies are and why they are important.
- Be explicit that rules against hurtful name-calling include "That's gay!" "Homo!" "Fag!" "Tranny!" "Sissy!" and other LGBTQ put-downs.
- Develop the capacity of students and educators to be allies that stand up for students who are harassed.



I wish more teachers could elaborate on it [LGBTQ topics] and talk about it more, instead of like, two sentences and then dismiss the subject."

— Elaina in *What Do You Know? Six-to Twelve-Year Olds Talk About Gays and Lesbians* (A Welcoming Schools Film)

RESOURCES

Welcoming Schools

www.welcomingschools.org

K – 5 resources on gender, bullying & family inclusive of LGBTQ topics

NEA Bully Free Campaign

www.nea.org/bullyfree

Bullying prevention for educators

Time to THRIVE

www.timetothrive.org

Annual conference for youth-serving professionals focused on LGBTQ youth

PFLAG

www.pflag.org

Parents and allies of LGBTQ youth

The Trevor Project

www.thetrevorproject.org

Suicide prevention

GLSEN

www.glsen.org

Safe schools for LGBTQ youth

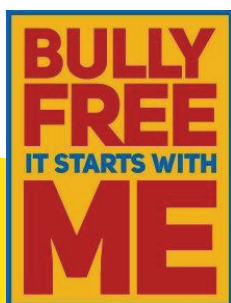
Gender Spectrum

www.genderspectrum.org

Gender identity and expression for youth of all ages

StopBullying.gov

Information and resources from various government agencies





BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS AND PUT-DOWNS ON GENDER

Practicing answering questions related to gender or interrupting hurtful teasing based on gender will help you respond more easily when the situation arises. As educators, take the time to practice simple phrases. As teachers, work with your students so that they also have simple responses to gender exclusion or put-downs.

“Why does Martin like pink?”

- There doesn't have to be boy colors or girl colors. Colors are colors. All people like different colors.
- Do you think it's wrong for boys to wear pink? Why's that?
- Why do you like blue, or green, (or whatever color that child likes)? Why don't you like pink?
- Did you know that pink used to be considered a boys color and blue was the girl's color?

“Why is her hair so short? She looks like a boy.”

- Girls and women can have hair in many different styles and so can boys or men.
- Hair is hair. That is how she likes it.
- Why does it matter if a girl's hair is short or a boy's hair is long?

“Juan plays with dolls. That's weird.”

- It's true that some boys don't like to play with dolls but some boys do! Just like some of you like to draw and some of you don't. Some of you like to play kickball and others don't. No one should have to pick and choose what they do just because they are a boy or a girl.
- The dolls are for all children in this classroom.
- Sometimes this is confusing. We get messages about some things being for boys and some things being for girls. They are just for kids!

You overhear a student say to another student who identifies as a girl, “You look like a boy.”

- Why do you say that?
- There is no one way for girls or boys to act or look.
- Girls and women can have short hair. That's just how she likes it.
- Those are the kinds of clothes that she likes to wear. Why do you like to wear what you're wearing?

“But he's a boy, why does he dress like a girl?”

- There are lots of different ways that boys can dress and lots of different ways that girls can dress.
- Some boys like to wear pink or to have long hair. All of these things are OK in our school.
- There are many ways of being a boy (girl), and all are okay ways of being a boy (girl).
- Those are the kinds of clothes that he likes to wear? Why do you like to wear what you're wearing?

“Dominic is always hanging out with girls. Why?”

- I encourage all boys and girls to play together.
- Dominic hangs out with friends who he likes to spend time with, just like you do with your friends.
- Some boys like the activities that more of the girls are doing and therefore like to play with girls.

You overhear a student call another student who identifies as a boy, a “girl” in an insulting way.

- That's not OK at our school to call someone a “girl” to insult them or make them feel bad.

-
- Student: “But he is always playing with the girls and with girl toys!”
 - At this school all children can play and do things together. He’s a boy who likes to play with girls and that’s OK. All kinds of toys and games are for all children.

“Why does she always play with the boys?”

- Those are the activities that she likes to do just as there are different activities that you like to do.
- There are many different ways of being a girl (boy), and that’s great!

You overhear a student say, “Boys are better at math than girls.”

- Some boys are good at math and some are not, and some girls are good at math and some are not. All kids have different things that they are good at.

Sample language when a biological boy socially transitions to a girl.

- Although Angela was born a boy, she has always felt like a girl inside She wants everyone to call her Angela now and she wants to be able to wear the types of clothes that she likes the most and do the activities that she enjoys.
- Sandy has always felt like a girl deep down inside. That is the way Sandy likes to dress now.

Simple phrases students could say to each other.

- “There’s no such thing as boys’(girls’) clothes (haircuts, toys, colors.)”
- “You can’t say, ‘Girls (boys) can’t play.’”
- If someone says, “Boys are better at sports.”
A student could say, “No group is best. Some are good. Some are not.”
- If someone says, “Girls are better at art.”
A student could say, “No group is best. Some are good. Some are not.”

Ideas for talking with a student’s parents or guardians.

- Educator: There was an incident at school today in which your child called a boy, a “girl” to intentionally hurt him. At our school we are working on not using gender in a negative way to limit our students. It is important to us that all of our students are physically and emotionally safe to learn here everyday.
- Parent/Guardian: “But my son told me that Bobby wears girls’ clothing, paints his nails, and mostly plays with the girls.”
- Educator: Some boys prefer typical boy activities, some do not. We affirm all of the interests of our students and work hard to not limit children based upon gender. It’s important for children to learn not to tease someone in a hurtful way because of how they dress or who they play with.

When you overhear a colleague make a gender stereotypical remark about a student

- Remark: “Andre’s parents should really try to get him to do some more sports with boys like baseball.”

Sample responses:

- Why do you say that? And then engage in conversation.
- Andre’s parents are trying to do what is best for him. He has always loved gymnastics.

When my son was five years old, he went to a party wearing a pink shirt and sparkly blue sneakers. An adult referred to him as a girl in front of the whole group. A child in the room said, "He's not a boy. He's a boy who dresses like a girl." Most of the children in the room began laughing. Then one child said loudly, "He's my friend, stop laughing at him!" The laughter stopped immediately. If this young child could speak up and make a difference, then surely we can too.
– Mother of a 3rd grader.

Ideas based on: The Gender Inclusive School by Gender Spectrum, Graciela Sleseransky-Poe, “Not True! Gender Doesn’t Limit You” by Lindsay Lamb, et al. Teaching Tolerance, and Johanna Eager

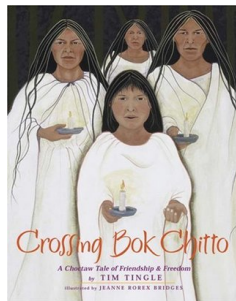
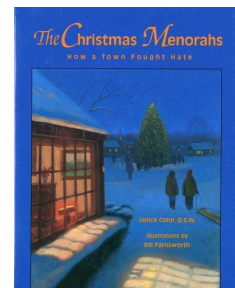


STICKING UP FOR EACH OTHER: THE POWER OF ALLIES

PICTURE BOOKS

Across the Alley. Richard Michelson. (1 – 2) Willie, an African American boy, who is supposed to play baseball has a secret friendship with Abe, a Jewish boy, who is supposed to play violin. They teach each other their skills.

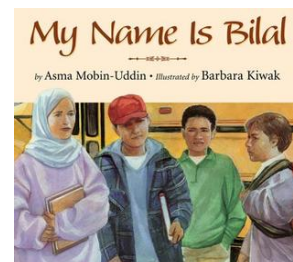
The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate. Janice Cohn. (2 – 6) Based on real events that happened in Billings, Montana, in 1993. This powerful narrative tells how two children, two families – one Jewish, one Christian – and a community resolve to stand together against the shameful actions that have been happening in their town.



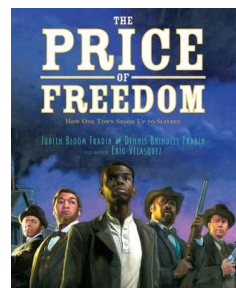
Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom. Tim Tingle. (2 – 5) Set in the 1800s, this story about the friendship between a Choctaw girl and an enslaved African boy dramatically evolves into one about responsibility for others and their well-being.

Gifts from the Enemy. Trudy Ludwig. (3 – 6) Tells one moving episode during Alter Wiener's internment in Nazi prison camps, when an unexpected person demonstrates moral courage in repeated acts of kindness towards him during his imprisonment.

My Name Is Bilal. Asma Mobin-Uddin & Barbara Kiwak. (3 – 5) A brother and sister are the only Muslim students at their school. When the sister is teased for wearing a headscarf, Bilal finds the courage to stand up for her.



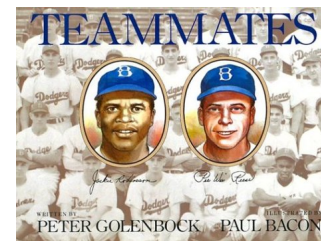
The New Girl ... and Me. Jacqui Robbins. (K – 2) Mia is intrigued by the new girl, Shakeeta, but shyness holds her back. When a bully bars them both from playing soccer, the pair strike up a conversation and become friends.



The Price of Freedom: How One Town Stood Up to Slavery.

Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin. (3 – 5) In 1856 John Price escaped to freedom in Oberlin, Ohio. When he was recaptured two years later, the town rallied to free him. A dramatization of the events illustrated with rich oil paintings.

Teammates. Peter Golenbock. (1 – 3). The moving story of how Jackie Robinson became the first black player on a major league baseball team and how, on a fateful day, PeeWee Reese took a stand and declared Jackie his teammate.

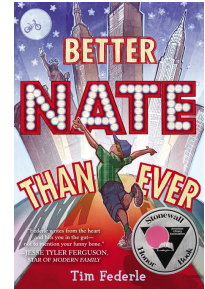


Wings. Christopher Myers. (1 – 5). Take flight with Ikarus Jackson, the boy with wings who remains true to his dreams despite taunts. One girl realizes he must be lonely and resolves to stop the hurtful words.

Zero. Kathryn Otoshi. (Pre-K – 1) While learning about numbers and counting, students are introduced to accepting different body types, developing social skills, and learning what it means to find value in yourself and in others.

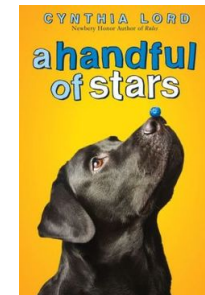
MIDDLE READERS

Better Nate than Ever. Tim Federle. (3 – 6) Thirteen-year-old Nate runs away from his small town in Pennsylvania to New York City to audition for E.T. the Musical. With the help of his best friend, can he come back home before anyone notices he's gone?



George. Alex Gino. (3 – 6) When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. George really wants to play Charlotte in Charlotte's Web. Will she be able to?

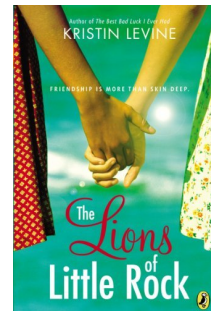
A Handful of Stars. Cynthia Lord. (3 – 6) This powerful middle-grade novel from the Newbery Honor author of RULES explores a friendship between a small-town girl and the daughter of migrant workers.



The Liberation of Gabriel King. K. L. Going. (4 – 5). In Georgia in 1976, Gabriel, a white boy, and Frita, an African American girl, overcome their fears of bullying and prejudice together as they enter 5th grade.



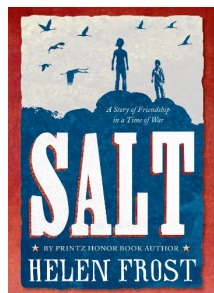
The Lions of Little Rock. Kristin Levine. (5 – 8) As twelve-year-old Marlee starts middle school in 1958 Little Rock, it feels like her whole world is falling apart until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. But when Liz leaves school without a good-bye, the rumor is that Liz was caught passing for white.



The Misfits. James Howe. (6 – 9) Four best friends try to survive seventh grade in the face of all-too-frequent taunts based on their weight, height, intelligence and sexual orientation/gender expression. The characters though are not cast as victims, but as agents of change. The series continues with **Totally Joe**, **Addie on the Inside**, and **Also Known as Elvis**.

Number the Stars. Lois Lowry. (4 – 7) In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

Return to Sender. Julia Alvarez. (4 – 7) After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family hires migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm. Can Tyler and Mari find a way to be friends despite their differences? Full of hope, but no easy answers.



The Revealers. Doug Wilhelm. (5 – 7) Three bullied seventh graders start an unofficial e-mail forum to publicize their experiences. Unexpectedly, many others come forward to confess their similar troubles.

Salt: A Story of Friendship in a Time of War. Helen Frost. (5 – 8) Two twelve-year-old friends, Native American Anikwa and European American James, are caught in the growing conflict between their communities during the War of 1812. Written in verse.

Seeing Red. Kathryn Erskine. (5 – 8) In 1972 in a small Virginia town, twelve-year-old Red Porter learns the unsavory racial history of his own family and tries to remedy the past injustice.



Wonder / La Lección de August. R.J. Palacio. (5 – 7) Auggie was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school until 5th grade. Told from multiple perspectives that highlight different struggles with empathy and acceptance. English and Spanish editions.