

Dealing with Teasing

- OBJECTIVES:**
- To talk about ways to handle teasing
 - To talk about ways to help someone who is being teased
 - To identify when it's okay and not okay to tease

REVIEW

Ask several students to share their experiences in trying to deal with annoying behaviors since the last Open Circle. (*Ask them to talk about the behaviors but not to name the students involved.*) Ask if they used the steps we discussed. Was anyone asked to stop a behavior that was annoying someone? What happened?

INTRODUCE

Tell students that they are going to discuss teasing behavior. Ask students the following questions: *Are there times when you've been teased or you tease each other and no one minds? Give some examples. Could someone use the exact same words and it wouldn't be okay? How would you know?* Tell students that it is important to be sensitive to how others feel about being teased. Ask students how they can tell if teasing is hurtful to others. (*Body language, facial expression, nonverbal signals, what they say — such as "Stop it!" "That's enough!" "You're being annoying!" "You're making me feel bad."*)

Ask students to give examples of teasing that is not okay. (*When the teasing involves hurtful behavior or makes fun of something like a disability, race, sex, or ethnic background; when you are being teased about something that you already feel bad about, like a low grade, something you don't do well, or something about your appearance; when others join in and gang up on someone; when the same person is teased in a mean way over and over; when someone is being bullied, etc.*) Remind students that mean teasing and bullying are Double D behaviors and are not acceptable. Remind students that when they observe mean teasing or bullying, they should tell a responsible adult immediately.

PRACTICE/APPLY

Ask students for typical examples of hurtful teasing in fifth grade. Ask for several students to pantomime a teasing situation, such as teasing someone about a new haircut.

The person being teased should respond with body language to show if they don't mind being teased or if they are annoyed or upset. Ask the class to observe what they notice about how the person being teased might be feeling. Repeat the role play and have the person who is doing the teasing respond with words.

Ask students what they would do if they were part of a group that was teasing or bullying. Would they join in the teasing? Would they speak up against it? Why or why not? What would they say? (*"I don't think he/she likes this. Let's drop it. Let's do something else."*)

What if they were with a friend and the friend was teasing someone in a mean or destructive way? How would they feel? What could they do?

HOMEWORK/EXTEND

Ask students to write a short story about teasing. They may choose to write about a person being teased, a person observing someone else being teased, or a group that is teasing someone. They should include how the person being teased feels, how the person being teased responds, and how it all comes out.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

Mochizuki, Ken. *Baseball Saved Us*. Lee & Low Books, 1993.

"Shorty" is the object of teasing because of his size and ethnicity.

Discussion Prompts: How do you think Shorty feels when the spectators taunt and tease him? Does anyone help Shorty? What would you do if you saw him being teased?

Myers, Christopher. *Wings*. Scholastic Inc., 2000.

Only one person stands up for the "strange" boy when he is teased by others.

Discussion Prompts: Why do you think the girl speaks up on behalf of the boy when he is teased? Do you know someone who has been teased? Talk about ways you can help someone who is being teased.

Polacco, Patricia. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. Philomel Books, 1998.

Trisha's classmates tease her because she is unable to read as well as other students her age.

Discussion Prompts: How do you think Trisha feels when she is teased? How does Mr. Falker help Trisha? Why do you think Eric continues to tease Trisha? What could Trisha's classmates have done to help her?

SUPPLEMENTARY LESSONS

The following supplementary lessons can be used following this lesson:

What Is a Bystander?

What Should a Bystander Do?

What Is Bullying?

Classroom Rules on Teasing and Bullying