



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**