

I Am Jack

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TEACHERS' GUIDE

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Educator's Notes

Bullying is insidious. It is not one great dramatic incident. It is a gradual process of victimization where the child becomes more and more isolated and afraid, and the bully gets more and more aggressive, strengthened through group support and lack of adult action.

Children aged 9 to 13 years old are at the highest risk.

How bullying hurts kids:

- Lowers self-esteem.
- May lead to depression.
- Often results in failure at schoolwork.
- Leads to isolation and loneliness.
- The bullied become fearful.
- The bullied learn to become a victim.
- The bully learns the success of aggression.

Recent studies show that the negative effects of bullying continue into the adult years, damaging both the bullied and the bully.

Reading and Discussion

I Am Jack is based on real incidents. Jack is a real kid and he's in trouble.

Name calling

Read pages 27-30 - Jack is called "BUTT HEAD."

Discussion starters

- Do you know anyone who was called names? Why do you think this happened?
- What do bullies pick on? (ANYTHING - being fat or thin, red hair or black, freckles, divorced family, Italian father, dumb brother ... anything is an excuse. There isn't a real reason.)
- When does name calling/teasing become more than that?
 - o When other kids join in the name calling.

- When the kid is the scapegoat.
- When friends abandon you.
- How does Jack react?
 - He feels sick.
 - He feels scared.
 - He feels angry.
 - He tries to stand up to the bullies.
 - He feels powerless.
- What can he do when he's outnumbered?
 - Ignore the bullies.
 - Run away.
 - Hide.
 - Fight - but he'll just get beaten up.
 - Where are the teachers? Could he ask a teacher to intervene?
 - He thinks Mum could help, but she's too busy.
 - Can his family offer help and support?

How far can bullying go?

Spitting

Read pages 58-60 – Kids spit at Jack.

Discussion starter

- Why do the other kids do this?
 - They forget who Jack is.
 - Jack isn't a person to them anymore.
 - It's just a game.
 - Kids don't really understand their actions.
 - Kids may follow the bully out of fear of him.
 - Kids may not have the courage to oppose the bully.

Follow-up Activities

Discussion and posters

Organize small groups to work together to answer the following questions and report back to the class:

- If you are frightened of a group of children who are teasing you, what would/can you do?
- If you saw someone being bullied on the bus, what would you do?
- Why is the library a safe place? Can you think of any other safe places?
- Would you report bullying to the Principal or your parent? Why or why not?

Use these answers to prompt further discussion. The answers can also be the basis of anti-bullying posters. As a class, create slogans against bullying (See pages 108-109 for examples.) for use on the posters. Mount the posters all over campus.

Kids are special

Read pages 20-21 – Jack tells a great joke.

Read pages 7-8 – Jack is a photographer and experiments with plants.

Ask the class to name some of the ways a person are special. Some examples might be:

- Athletic/excel at sports.
- Talented in art/dance/music/writing.

- Helpful to their family.
- Avid reader.
- Imaginative inventor.
- Enthusiastic cook.

Have every child tell what they like doing, what makes them special. Make a list of the children and their talents on the board. Use this list to generate a poster for the classroom showing how everyone in the class is special.

Role playing

Create your own play based on what happens in these scenes.

Fear in the classroom

Read pages 35-36 – Jack enters the classroom.

The victim when bullying out of control

Pages 56-57 – Jack on the school bus.

It's okay to get a bit of help against bullying

Pages 101-102 – Jack enters the schoolyard with Rob.

Understanding why someone is a bully

Pages bottom of 111-115 – Jack and George Hamel meet in a class.