

# “Bully Busting 101” Discussion Guide

Use this three-part discussion guide to explore various aspects of the problem of bullying. Discuss each section separately, to allow time for processing. NOTE: In using these prompts for class discussion, be clear that names, personal references, and gossip don't belong here. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject, and the ease with which discussion could get personal, you might reserve some prompts for small group discussions led by a school counselor, or assign some as writing prompts for personal journal entries, to be kept confidential.

## Part 1: The Basics

**NOTE:** *Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends* and *Blue Cheese Breath and Stinky Feet* are good resources for dealing with bullying in general.

- What is a bully? What specific behaviors earn someone a reputation as a bully?
- Are bullies always boys? Are they always big? Are good students ever bullies?
- Do you think people who hurt, scare, or embarrass others on purpose know that they are bullies?
- Why do you think some people bully others? Brainstorm possible reasons.
- Do you think people who feel happy, strong, capable, and appreciated are likely to be bullies? Why or why not?
- What can you do if a bully or group of bullies picks on you? Brainstorm possible responses. Then discuss advantages and disadvantages of fighting back, ignoring them, laughing it off, telling them how you feel, asking them why, trying to negotiate, showing you're upset, telling an adult, trying to be friends, asking other kids to help, getting back at them, etc.
- How can you help someone else who is being bullied? Go through the same process.

## Part 2: Teasing

**NOTE:** *Just Kidding* offers information and discussion questions about unkind teasing.

- We've all been teased. We've all probably experienced teasing that hurt our feelings, and we've probably all been told, "Lighten up! Can't you take a joke?" When is teasing funny and when is it bullying?
- What's an example of funny or affectionate teasing?
- What's an example of mean teasing?
- How can you tell the difference between teasing that was meant to be affectionate or funny and cruel teasing? (Who's doing it? What's your history with that person? Are you friends? What does the teaser's tone of voice, facial expression, or body language tell you? Is the teasing done privately or in front of an audience? Does it reveal private information you don't want shared? Does it emphasize something about you that bothers or embarrasses you?)
- Try some examples in role-play mode to demonstrate differences that suggest intent.
- Conclude with the reminder that teasing isn't funny if the person being teased doesn't like it.

## Part 3: Cliques

NOTE: *Cliques, Phonies, and Other Baloney* is full of helpful definitions and information for this discussion.

- What is a clique?
- Are there clearly defined groups of kids who socialize together here at school?
- Do these groups have leaders who hold power in the group, and followers who do not?
- Are certain groups considered popular and others not?
- Are certain groups known for being kind and inclusive?
- Are other groups known for acting superior and mean?
- Do your friends form a clique?
- How do your friends treat each other?
- How do your friends treat kids who are not part of the group?
- Do your friends appreciate you as you are or expect you to conform to the group's image or expectations?
- Conclude with a reminder that our friends shape how we behave and how our character develops. It's important to choose friends who appreciate and bring out the best in us.

# Bully Free Kids® Group Guides

Give each group a copy of the guide for their book in the Bully Free Kids®Weird! Series and have them follow the steps. Assign a moderator in each group to keep discussion moving and the process on track.

## **Weird!** by Erin Frankel

### Follow these steps:

1. Read the book aloud, taking turns with each two-page spreads.
2. The group's moderator will lead a discussion, using the "Reflection Questions for *Weird!*" near the end of the book.
3. Prepare to share your story with the class.
  - Divide the story into sections so each person gets about the same number of pages.
  - Read your sections silently.
  - Take turns sharing sections, but don't read from the book. Describe what happens in your own words.
  - The moderator will ask three students to volunteer to read the notes at the end as Luisa, Sam, or Jayla.
  - Practice sharing the story in this way before you present it to the class.

## **Tough!** by Erin Frankel

### Follow these steps:

1. Read the book aloud, taking turns with each two-page spreads.
2. The group's moderator will lead a discussion, using the "Reflection Questions for *Tough!*" near the end of the book.
3. Prepare to share your story with the class.
  - Divide the story into sections so each person gets about the same number of pages.
  - Read your sections silently.
  - Take turns sharing sections, but don't read from the book. Describe what happens in your own words.
  - The moderator will ask three students to volunteer to read the notes at the end as Sam, Luisa, or Jayla.
  - Practice sharing the story in this way before you present it to the class.

## **Dare!** by Erin Frankel

### Follow these steps:

1. Read the book aloud, taking turns with each two-page spreads.
2. The group's moderator will lead a discussion, using the "Reflection Questions for *Dare!*" near the end of the book.
3. Prepare to share your story with the class.
  - Divide the story into sections so each person gets about the same number of pages.
  - Read your sections silently.
  - Take turns sharing sections, but don't read from the book. Describe what happens in your own words.
  - The moderator will ask three students to volunteer to read the notes at the end as Jayla, Luisa, or Sam.
  - Practice sharing the story in this way before you present it to the class.