



## LESSON PLAN: BUILDING A BULLY-FREE BUILDING

**OVERVIEW:** This lesson helps students begin to think about what a school without name-calling and bullying might look and sound like. Students will engage in a guided fantasy activity on this topic, and will then extend their ideas into a group-created plan for what their ideal “bully-free” school would look like and sound like.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to explain what it would be like to attend a school entirely free of name-calling and bullying.
- Students will be able to describe their ideas of what a bully-free school would actually look like and sound like.
- Students will be able to identify places in and around the school where they know that bullying and name-calling can and do take place.
- Students will be able to creatively and cooperatively re-envision and build (be it with words, pictures, themselves and peers, or other constructive materials) a bully-free school.

**AGE/EXPERIENCE LEVEL:** Adaptable for K-5 (see suggestions in Adaptations section below)

**TIME:** 1-2 class sessions, 30-45 minutes each

**MATERIALS:** Bully-free School Guided Fantasy supplement; chart paper; markers; Looks Like/Sounds Like Handout, copied as needed; pencils; assorted writing/drawing/painting/sculpture materials

### PROCEDURE:

Part 1 – Guided Fantasy (10-15 minutes)

Ask students to make themselves as comfortable as possible, and to find a position in which they can relax and close their eyes. You may want to clear space for students to lie down or dim the lights for this portion of the lesson.



By reading directly from the Bully-Free School Guided Fantasy supplement, lead students into a quiet visualization session in which they spend time picturing in detail the way a school without name-calling would look, sound, and feel. Read slowly and pause in between sections of the guided fantasy so that students really have time to make clear pictures in their heads that they will be asked later to flesh out more completely.

When the guided fantasy has concluded and students are ready for discussion, pose the following questions and chart responses on chart paper:

- What did you see as you were thinking about a school free of name-calling?
- What did you hear?
- What did you feel?
- How was what you imagined different from how our school is now?

If time allows, or in a separate session, you may want to extend the guided fantasy so that it involves students visualizing more areas of the school, including for example the gymnasium, the bathroom, the school bus, etc.

#### Part 2 – Group Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Ask students to brainstorm a list of places in or around the school where they know that name-calling and bullying take place especially often; you can call these areas “hot spots” if you wish. List all the places that students mention on chart paper, and consider asking students to place these areas on a continuum of “hottest” to “coolest” as far as how often name-calling seems to happen there. Pose the following questions to students for discussion:

- Why do you think name-calling seems to occur more in some places in and around the school than in others?
- What is similar about the places you’ve identified as “hot spots” for name-calling in the school?

#### Part 3 – Group Planning (10-15 minutes)

Help students form groups that represent the different places in the school where bullying and name-calling most often take place. Students can choose a group based on their interest or groups can be pre-assigned. Distribute the Looks Like/Sounds Like Handout (attached) to students and ask that they work in their group to brainstorm as many ideas as they can about how their



specific place in or around the school would change if name-calling and bullying no longer happened there. Ask the following prompt questions to get students started:

- What would your part of the school look like without name-calling and bullying?
- What would it sound like?
- What else about it might change?

#### Part 4 – Building Activity (30-40 minutes)

Give students the following instructions for the next portion of the lesson:

Now that you have worked together to think about how your part of the school would look and sound without bullying and name-calling, it is time for you to build your own model of that bully-free place you have imagined. You can “build” it using words, pictures, objects, or yourself and your peers. When you have finished, you might end up with a story, a poem, a sculpture, a painting, a cartoon, a storyboard, a skit, or a play. Be creative, and remember to keep in mind what the school you pictured during the guided fantasy from earlier looked, sounded, and felt like.

Decide if you want students to work on this part of the lesson individually or in groups, and allow students ample time and lots of materials to use in working creatively on their piece. If possible build in an opportunity for each student or group of students to share what they create with the class. Display the pieces in groups so as to showcase the “Bully-free Building” that students have put together.

#### **ADAPTATIONS:**

**For lower grade levels:** Before beginning the guided fantasy, speak a bit with students about what imagination is, and what it feels like to imagine something in our head. Provide a few examples of times when students use their imagination – to make up a story they are telling a friend, to picture what they will look like when they grow up, etc. – and encourage students to practice using their imagination during this activity.

If students are having a hard time thinking of the places in and around school that name-calling happens, do this portion of the lesson as a guided walk in which students physically move around the building to visit the different areas and draw on their collective experiences to decide if each spot is a prime area for bullying.



Conduct Part 3 of the lesson as a large group, and record student ideas on a large T-Chart for everyone to see. Help students connect their senses (their sight, hearing, etc.) to name-calling so that they identify the behaviors that they might hear or see which would not be present in a bully-free environment.

Group students for Part 4 of the lesson if it is easier for students to work this way. Or, create a “Bully-Free Building” together by hanging large pieces of paper around the room and designating each piece to represent one area of the school where name-calling occurs. Then have a few students at a time visit the paper and draw their ideas for how that space would look and sound without bullying. Rotate students so they visit each area once, and then post the collective works around the room for all to see.

**For higher grade levels:** Upon completion of the guided fantasy activity, and before the group discussion, ask students to do a free-write about what they imagined their bully-free school to look, sound, and feel like.

In addition, you can pair students up and have them trade their free-writes. Ask each student to carefully read and then write a comparison response to the other person’s ideas about a bully-free school, highlighting any similarities or differences between themselves and their partner.

During the Part 2 discussion engage students in a further conversation about why name-calling and bullying often seem to happen in places where there aren’t many other people, especially adults. Ask students to think about the motivation for bullying and name-calling, and what need the behavior might meet for the individual(s) involved in it.

Incorporate a group report-back after the brainstorming session of Part 3. Have students write their ideas for how their area of the school will look and sound on large chart paper, and then ask the groups to present their ideas to the whole class before individuals begin constructing their model of a “bully-free” part of school

Challenge students to mix media when building their model in Part 4 – encourage them to construct something physical to show their ideas, but also to consider incorporating a written description that shares more specific details of their vision.

**EXTENSION/ASSESSMENT:** Arrange for students to give other classes, parents, or school administrators a tour of the “Bully-free Building” that they created within the classroom. Let



students develop informational cards about their section of the building (gymnasium, library, hallway, etc.) that they can read from or hand out to visitors.

Ask students to write a newspaper article that describes a new bully-free school that has been built in the area. Encourage students to include quotes (real or invented) from students, parents, and administrators about the specifics of the building (how it looks, sounds, and feels) and how it has affected the community's feelings about school.

Literature suggested for extension of lesson themes (see the Suggested Literature supplement):

*Cherries and Cherry Pits*

by Vera B. Williams (PreK-2)

*Yoko*

by Rosemary Wells (PreK-2)

*And To Think That We Thought That We'd Never Be Friends*

by Mary Ann Hoberman (PreK-2, 3-5)

*The Misfits*

by James Howe (3-5)



### **BULLY-FREE SCHOOL GUIDED FANTASY**

I want you to find a comfortable position that you can stay in the whole time I am reading. When you are comfortable, I want you to close your eyes. Take a deep breath – breathe in, and now breathe out. Let your body begin to relax, and as you breathe deeply in and out, let all the noises around you fade into the background. We are going to use our imaginations to take a journey to a school. This school is a lot like our school, but it is special because in this school there is no name-calling and no bullying at all. I am going to help you walk through this school, but it is up to you to decide what this school looks and sounds like, and how it feels to be there. We'll talk later about what you see, but for now, let's start our trip...

You are standing in front of the bully-free school building. You are looking at the building, and you can see the name of the school written on the front. What is the school called? What does it look like? Take a look all around to see what is outside the school, and then move a few steps closer so that you are near the door of the school. Turn your head towards the door, and listen to the sounds coming from inside. What can you hear? Is it noisy or quiet inside? Based on the noises you hear, what do you think people inside are doing at this time of the day?

Now take a step so that you are inside the school. You can see a school office ahead of you, and there are adults and students inside, working and talking. What are the people in the office doing? What are they talking about? Walk past the office and into one of the school hallways. There are students in the hallway, opening lockers and talking. Can you hear their conversations? What do you hear the students saying to one another? How are they acting? What do you see?

Now walk past the students in the hallway until you get to the door of a classroom. Stand outside the classroom for a moment and listen by the door. You can hear a teacher's voice – what is it saying? How does the teacher's voice sound? Now you hear students talking and answering the teacher. What are the students saying? Walk into the classroom and look around. What does the classroom look like? How are students sitting in the room? What is hanging on the walls? What types of activities are students doing? As you look around, remember that in this school there is no bullying, and no one calls names. When you are ready, stand up and walk back into the hallway. Walk down the hall until you see the door that leads into the cafeteria. Wait outside the door and listen to what is going on inside the cafeteria. It is lunchtime for some of the students at the school. Is it noisy or quiet? Step inside the cafeteria and walk towards the tables where



students are eating lunch. Sit down at a table and listen to students talking as they eat. What are students talking about? Look around and notice how students are seated at the tables. Are students sitting alone or in groups? Is anyone left out? Do students seem happy to be in the cafeteria today, or are they eager to leave and go back to class?

Stand up and use the door on the side of the cafeteria to walk outside to the playground where some students are having recess. Walk over to where students are playing on the swings, monkey bars, and slide. Watch how they play: are they playing in big groups or small groups? Are some students playing alone? What do you hear students saying to one another while they play? Walk over to where two students both want to use the tire swing. Listen to the students talk about what to do. Remember, neither student is calling names or bullying the other. How do they figure out what to do with the swing?

As you watch the students solve the problem, begin to walk back towards the school. As you leave the playground, look around at the students playing and think about if what you see there looks different from at our school. Walk back to the door and go through the cafeteria again, out into the hallway, and back towards the office. When you reach the front of the school, enter the office and ask to speak to the principal of the school. The principal comes out – what does she/he look like? Say hello, and tell the principal one thing that you really liked about your visit to the school. Say goodbye to the principal, and leave the office. Walk out the front door of the school...

We are done with our tour of the bully-free school now, and it's time to talk about what each of saw, heard, and felt while we were visiting. When you are ready you can open your eyes and return to a seated position, and we can share our ideas.



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NO NAME-CALLING WEEK  
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If the \_\_\_\_\_ of our school was free of name-calling and bullying it would...

Look like this:

*AND*

Sound like this: