



TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

Published on *Teaching Tolerance* (<http://www.tolerance.org>)

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Playing the Bully Card

Teaching students how to stand up to bullying behavior, particularly when that means asking the teacher or another adult to intervene, can be a challenge.

Sometimes, students lack the skills to stand up for themselves and others in a bullying situation. To help students identify when it's appropriate to tell an adult about a bully and when it's appropriate to take a stand themselves, I start out by asking the class the following questions:

- What is the difference between tattling and requesting help?
- Should you sacrifice your popularity to "stand up" for someone?

After I write some of their responses on the board, I tell them we are going to work together to avoid bullying incidents by deciding as a class what behaviors should not be tolerated. In this interactive lesson, we also review strategies to handle teasing and bullying.

Make single copies of four "Bully Cards":

- Teasing someone on the bus because the person is "nerdy"
- Taking someone's dessert in the cafeteria
- Excluding someone from a game at recess
- Gossiping about someone's clothes

Create other "Bully Cards" based on specific issues in your school or classroom. Then make multiple copies of four different "Stand Up Cards":

- Don't react. Walk away, don't cry, ignore the bully.
- Smile or laugh. If you do the opposite of what the bully expects, the bully doesn't have any fun.
- Communicate. Tell the teaser calmly how you feel. When you're calm, bullying loses its power.
- Inform an adult. If you need help, ask for it. That's not tattling; that's standing up for yourself.

Distribute the cards. Each student who does not have a "Bully Card" should have a "Stand Up Card." Have a student with a "Bully Card" read or act out the scene. Then those students with "Stand Up Cards" stand if they want to participate, explaining or acting the

solutions suggested by their cards. Continue the activity until all the "Bully Cards" are used.

As a follow up, work together to make "Stand Up to Bullying" posters to display in the classroom.

Caroline Figliel, music educator

Related activities:

- [Allies: A Discussion Activity](#) ⁽¹⁾
- [Crocodile and Ghost Bat Have a Hullabaloo](#) ⁽²⁾
- [A Bullying Survey](#) ⁽³⁾
- [A Contract on Bullying](#) ⁽⁴⁾

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Source URL: <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/playing-bully-card>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/allies-discussion-activity>
[2] <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/crocodile-and-ghost-bat-have-hullabaloo>
[3] <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/bullying-survey>
[4] <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/contract-bullying>

"Bully Cards"

Create other "Bully Cards" based on specific issues in your school or classroom. (these are in Calibri (Body) font, size 12)

Teasing someone on the bus because the person is "nerdy"	Taking someone's dessert in the cafeteria
Excluding someone from a game at recess	Gossiping about someone's clothes

"Stand Up Cards"

Don't react. Walk away, don't cry, ignore the bully.	Smile or laugh. If you do the opposite of what the bully expects, the bully doesn't have any fun.
Communicate. Tell the teaser calmly how you feel. When you're calm, bullying loses its power.	Inform an adult. If you need help, ask for it. That's not tattling; that's standing up for yourself.
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Communicate. Tell the teaser calmly how you feel. When you're calm, bullying loses its power.	Inform an adult. If you need help, ask for it. That's not tattling; that's standing up for yourself.
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[Home](#) > Allies: A Discussion Activity

Allies: A Discussion Activity

Educator and author Mara Sapon-Shevin offers strategies and ideas to help students become allies -- people who stand with or for others.

After leading students in a discussion about ways children and adults are discriminated against, the next question is: "So what do I do if I notice this happening?" One useful way to begin the discussion with young children is as follows:

- Seat students in a circle and go over some of the "isms." This might follow an incident that has occurred in the classroom or the community, or something else.
- Ask students to think of times when they witnessed some kind of oppression. This might be someone ignoring a child who is waiting to be served in favor of an adult (adultism), making a racial slur about African-Americans (racism), one student calling another a "faggot" or a "lezzie" (homophobia), and so on.
- Then ask students to think about a time when they took action or did not take action, and ask them share their story with a partner. Ask students to consider the following: Why did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable speaking up? Students likely will share issues of power ("It was my teacher who said something sexist, so I didn't know what to say"), relationships ("It was someone I'm good friends with, and I knew it would be okay even if he got mad at me right then for telling him not to do that"), or knowledge ("I knew it was wrong, but I didn't know what to do or say" or "I was afraid that if I said something I'd get in trouble or make it worse").
- From there, engage students in role-plays or discussion about how they can interrupt bullying or other oppressive behaviors, using their own experiences or provided examples:
 1. You're on the playground and one of your friends tells you not to invite Marcus to be in the game because he's a "homo." What do you do?
 2. Three of you are planning what to do over the weekend, and one of your friends proposes a plan that you know the third person won't be able to afford. What do you say?
 3. One of the students in your reading group starts making fun of a student in a lower reading group, calling him a "retard" and telling him he reads "baby books."
- Generate, with students, a list of things they might say when they see an injustice being perpetrated.

I have often found a three-step response to be important to young students when they deal with oppressive comments by their peers: First, stop the commentary and behavior.