

SAMPLE

Bully Free[®] Lesson Plans

-Sixth Grade-



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The definitions quoted in this book were taken from the *New Webster's Dictionary* (College Edition), Delair Publishing Company, 1981.

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PREFACE

Several years ago, the pain of being bullied visited our home. When our son, Curtis, was in seventh grade, he was bullied and eventually isolated by several students. My wife and I decided to transfer him to another school system. He found acceptance and a sense of belonging at the new middle school. Then at age fifteen, Curtis was in a car accident that changed his life.

My wife and I had to give the surgeons permission to remove two fingers and one-third of his right hand. He had two other fingers repaired and one rebuilt. When he went back to school, many of his classmates encouraged and supported him. But many were cruel to him. Once again, I asked myself, “How can kids be so cruel?” There was a cry from within me for answers. I wanted to know if I could stop cruelty from developing, and I wanted to stop it after it had already developed.

There was also a cry from within my son, and it was deeper and more intense than mine. The bullying had a tremendous impact on his self-esteem, confidence and emotional health even into his adult years. At the age of twenty-three, he suffered from depression and anxiety. He developed posttraumatic stress from the car wreck and the persistent bullying. He also sought the company of the wrong people. They convinced him to escape his depression, anxiety and emotional pain by taking an illegal drug, METH. He had a heart problem that no one knew about, and the drug killed him.

Now you understand why I am passionate about preventing and stopping bullying and why I am writing this book for you. I understand the pain expressed by children who are bullied and the heartache their parents experience. I want to stop the pain. I also have witnessed the frustration of professionals who seek to prevent and stop bullying. They have a tremendous need for resources designed to help them prevent and stop bullying.

In response to my son’s bullying, I wrote my first book, *The Bully Free Classroom*. I wrote this book because I do not want any student to experience what our son did. I especially do not want them to take the path he took. After his death, my wife, Linda, and I wrote several books and developed numerous other materials and resources (bracelets, brochures, posters and others) that now make up the Bully Free Program. Thousands of schools in the United States and other countries now use our materials and resources. Linda and I work full time helping schools implement the Bully Free Program. We have dedicated the rest of our lives to preventing and stopping bullying. Our efforts have expanded into presenting school assembly programs, presenting to parents, training school personnel and training others who work with young people. Visit our Website www.bullyfree.com for more information.

Bullying can be found in every neighborhood, school system and school. To prevent and reduce it requires a systematic effort in each school. Ideally, there will be a school system wide commitment to preventing and stopping bullying. There must be adult involvement, including parents and others in the community. But this kind of commitment doesn’t always exist. I have actually had school superintendents tell me that bullying didn’t exist in their school system. Adults denying that bullying exists or ignoring bullying is the worst thing that can happen to children, a school, and a community. When adults harness the energy of school personnel, parents, community representatives and children, bullying can be prevented and stopped, or at least significantly reduced. I often wonder if we can ever eliminate it—considering the nature of human beings. However, I am extremely hopeful. Using this book is the first step toward making that a reality. Please keep in mind that an effective anti-bullying program has several components. No single book or strategy is adequate by itself to prevent and stop bullying.

I hope you find this book informative and helpful.

- *Allan L. Beane*

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to our son, Curtis Allan Beane, who was bullied in seventh grade and high school. It is also dedicated to our daughter, Christy Turner; our son-in-law, Mike; and our grandchildren, Emily Grace Turner, Sarah Gail Turner, Jacob Allan Turner and Jimmy Andrew Turner. They have been a light in the darkness caused by Curtis's death. We hope this book, and those who use it, will bring light into the darkness of students who are bullied.

– Allan and Linda Beane

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INTRODUCTION

As a teacher or counselor, you will find this book a powerful instructional anti-bullying resource with an excellent scope and sequence of lesson plans. They purposefully have a heavy focus on anti-bullying content. The lessons were developed by teachers for teachers over a two-year period. They were field-tested in over 20 schools in the United States.

The lesson plans in this book are designed to create a supportive, caring, peaceful and safe classroom and school. They are designed to help you establish an environment where students and adults feel psychologically, emotionally and physically safe. They help students who are bullied cope with their feelings and with the bullying, as well as encourage bullies to stop mistreating others. Many of the lessons are designed to empower bystanders and to teach them to play a major role in preventing and stopping bullying. Students can be powerful change agents in their classrooms and their school.

Help create a Bully Free classroom and school today by systematically implementing the lesson plans in this book.

Core and Supplemental Lesson Plans

Your goal is to teach at least one lesson each week. If possible, all of the teachers at the same grade level should teach the same lesson(s) each week, at the same time on the same day. This will prevent students from getting the same lessons from different teachers. The lesson plans have been divided into two categories: *Core Bully Free Lesson Plans* and *Supplemental Bully Free Lesson Plans*. The core plans are considered essential. The supplemental lesson plans can be used if you wish to teach more than one each week or wish to target specific problem areas. Since the lesson plans are very interactive, during the field testing of the lesson plans it was discovered the time required to teach the lessons varied from one teacher and class to another. However, you can assume they are 30 to 45 minutes in length.

Description of Lesson Components and Elements

You may adapt these lessons to meet the needs of their students and to adhere to lesson plan policies and procedures of your school, as well as state requirements. Most of the lesson plans have six components: Learner Outcome(s); Preparation and Materials; Activities; Journaling; Parent Chat and Go Further. The associated handouts and worksheets appear at the end of the lessons.

Learner Outcome(s). Each lesson includes a purpose statement that indicates what is mainly taught through the lesson.

Preparation and Materials. Some of the lessons include a list of materials and supplies needed to implement the lesson plan. Included are instructions for preparing for each lesson. Sometimes this includes gathering certain materials, copying handouts and/or worksheets, making a poster, and/or writing information on the board, chart paper or electronic whiteboard.

Activities. This component of the lesson plan includes a variety of activities based on the lesson's topic. The lessons utilize principles of learning and effective teaching strategies.

Journaling. Many of the lessons end with a writing assignment that requires students to reflect upon the lesson's content. A topic is usually provided, but you may assign a different topic or have students choose their own topic related to the lesson. Students should write in a journal (notebook). If you wish for students to keep handouts and/or worksheets from the lessons in their journal, require it to be a three-ring binder or to have pockets.

Parent Chat. Some of the lessons include a brief homework assignment called *Parent Chat* that requires students to briefly share what they are learning through the Bully Free Lessons. Sometimes parents are asked to share their experiences and thoughts regarding the topic(s). These are provided to reinforce learning and to educate parents about bullying and the efforts of the school.

Go Further. Some of the lessons include a *Go Further* section that includes extension activities or activities to help maintain what the students have learned. Sometimes, strategies for preventing and stopping bullying are also suggested.

Classroom Meetings

Classroom meetings, when used in conjunction with other strategies, have been found to be effective in preventing and reducing bullying. Therefore, the Bully Free Program endorses the use of classroom meetings but asks that they be used in conjunction with the Bully Free Lesson Plans to obtain the full effectiveness of the program. Classroom meetings teach students skills such as: active listening, problem solving, giving and accepting compliments, negotiation and compromise, respect for different opinions, taking turns, patience, etc. Such meetings can also reinforce learning and help students maintain content learned through the Bully Free Lesson Plans. Even though a review is built into the lesson plans, reviewing several previous lessons in classroom meetings can prevent the common practice of covering material and then moving to new topics. Such meetings also give you an opportunity to serve as an encourager, to correct errors in thinking and to discuss bullying issues that have surfaced since the last meeting.

Classroom meetings communicate your desire that students share in the responsibility of preventing and stopping bullying. This encourages students and helps create a "telling environment" where students report bullying. Students develop a sense of ownership in the program because they are given an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions that impact the classroom atmosphere, school culture and the behavior of others.

Guidelines for Conducting Classroom Meetings

- Once or twice a week, ask students to sit in a U-shape facing you. This will encourage them to look at you and not at each other. When they look at each other, they are more likely to use names in their stories.
- One teacher recommended adding an extra chair as a signal that others can attend the meeting and to signify inclusiveness and acceptance.
- As students sit down, note good behavior by complimenting the students. Be specific in your praise.
- Meetings with middle school students usually last thirty to forty-five minutes. Teachers can determine the length of the meetings and the days to conduct the meetings.
- During the first meeting, ground rules should be established. Some ground rules are:
 - We raise our hands to get permission to speak.
 - We listen to the person speaking and do not interrupt.
 - We understand that not everyone has to speak.
 - We do not mention names, unless the teacher says it is okay.
 - We do not hurt the feelings of others.
- Time may be used to get to know each other and plan projects.
- At the beginning of each meeting, the teacher should tell students the purpose of the meeting.
- Time can also be allocated to discuss anti-bullying curriculum content and/or solve certain relational problems. Usually, no names are mentioned.
- Time may be allocated for role-playing.
- If the teacher wishes, students can suggest topics for the meetings by placing their ideas in a suggestion box or a notebook provided by the teacher for that purpose.
- Encourage discussion by asking open-ended questions.
- Ask students to raise their hand if they wish to answer a question.
- When possible, make up an activity or game that uses the content. All the students are to be on the same team – not competing with each other. Also, do not call on specific students.
- At the end of each meeting, review the major points made during the meeting.

In addition to reviewing the content learned through the Bully Free Lesson Plans, classroom meetings can also be used to explore solutions to real or fictitious bullying situations. Caution should also be used in presenting a real situation where the bullied student and the student who bullies are known by students. Students who bully love the publicity. The teacher may also make up a situation or describe a situation observed outside the classroom. The following guidelines will help teachers conduct meetings focusing on bullying situations.

Guidelines for Conducting Classroom Meetings Focusing on a Bullying Situation

- Introduce the purpose of the meeting (focusing on solutions to a specific bullying situation). Please do not mention names. State what they will learn from the meeting.
- Explain the classroom meeting rules:
 - Everyone has the right to be heard.
 - Raise your hand to speak.
 - Do not interrupt someone who is speaking.
 - It is okay to disagree, but do it in a nice way.
 - Do not use bad language.
 - Do not talk about someone (mentioning their name) in our class who is bullied or who is bullying others.
- Describe the bullying situation you made up. (It could be something you observed in the hallway, cafeteria or some other place on school property. The situation does not have to involve students in your classroom.)
- Let students ask questions to clarify information about the students and the situation. For example, they may ask you if the bully is bigger and older than the other student. Did the bullied student do something he/she shouldn't have done?
- Help students examine the details of the situation. Review the facts with them.
- Encourage the exploration of different perspectives (the victims and the bullies).
- Write their questions. If you can't answer them, you can address them later.
- Encourage discussion by asking open-ended questions. Ask questions that will help them develop sensitivity, empathy and encourage them to treat others the way they would want to be treated.
- Help students explore possible solutions. Facilitate their efforts to select the best possible solution(s). Ask them to select and rank the top three or four preferred solutions.
- When possible, use role-playing.
- At the end of the lesson, review major points and decisions made during the meeting.

Importance of Terminology

You will notice an effort in the lesson plans to avoid the terms or labels *victim* and *bullies*. It is our preference students not be labeled. When possible, we prefer “students who are bullied” and “students who bully others.” There are a few places in the lesson plans that we use the term *victim* or *victims* because we want to emphasize their victimization or abuse by others.

Additional Strategies and Activities

A wealth of additional strategies and activities can be found in *The Bully Free Classroom* (Free Spirit Publishing) by Allan L. Beane, Ph.D. and the *Bully Free Guide for Elementary Teachers and Counselors* available at www.bullyfree.com.

Professional Development and Presentations to Students and Parents

To support you in your efforts to prevent and stop bullying, you might find it helpful to contact Bully Free Systems, LLC (www.bullyfree.com) who offers presentations to students, parents and school personnel. A variety of three to six hour workshops for school personnel are also available. *Contact:* Bully Free Systems, LLC, phone: (270) 227-0431 or email abeane@bullyfree.com.

Letter to Parents

We recommend you use the following letter to parents to introduce your anti-bullying efforts and the *Parent Chats*.

Date

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

As I look back on my school days, I remember times when students were mistreated almost every day, bullied. You probably can too. Bullying has become an important topic for parents and schools to address because it is different today. It is more prevalent and more intense. It is now understood to be very destructive to the well being of students, creates unsafe schools and creates a school climate that hinders learning.

We are committed to doing something about bullying. If it's not a problem, we want to make sure it doesn't start. That's called prevention. If it is a problem, we're determined to stop it. That's called intervention.

As your child's teacher, I'm committed to prevention and intervention in my classroom. That's why I will be teaching several lessons this year about bullying. These lessons are designed to create a positive environment where everyone feels safe, accepted, a sense of belonging and valued. They also provide students with information to help them develop empathy, self-control, and skills to cope with bullying and to become bystanders who take a stand against bullying.

From time to time, I'll send home a *Parent Chat* handout related to our Bully Free lessons. You are asked to discuss with your child what is on the *Parent Chat* handout. This is a school-wide effort, therefore, each year you may see similar *Parent Chats*. We believe this repetition in content is important for your children to learn the content.

If you have questions or concerns, I hope you will contact me personally.

Sincerely,

Name

Telephone

Email Address

Lesson Plan Record Chart

To assist you in keeping track of and reporting the lessons you have taught, the following “Lesson Plan Record Chart” is provided. Space is provided for notes regarding changes you wish to make the next time you teach the lesson. This chart also serves as an accountability tool or report form. A copy of it should be given to your principal on a regular/systematic basis to report the lessons you have taught. Ask your principal to specify the desired frequency of such reporting.

Bully Free Lesson Plan Record Chart (Sixth Grade)

Teacher: _____

Title of Lesson Plan		Check When Completed	Notes
Core Bully Free Lesson Plans			
Lesson C1	Are We a Welcoming Class?		
Lesson C2	What are My Favorite Things?		
Lesson C3	What is Bullying? What Does It Look like?		
Lesson C4	Should I Have Anything to Do with Gossip?		
Lesson C5	What are Seven Types of Words Used to Bully Someone?		
Lesson C6	What is a Bully Free Classroom?		
Lesson C7	What is a Notes-to-the-Teacher-Box and Reporting?		
Lesson C8	What is a Bully Free Student Pledge?		
Lesson C9	What Bullying Have I Experienced?		
Lesson C10	What Should I Do When Someone Tries to Bully Me? (Part 1)		
Lesson C11	What Should I Do When Someone Tries to Bully Me? (Part 2)		
Lesson C12	What Should I Do If I Hurt Someone?		
Lesson C13	How Can I Be an Empowered Bystander? (Part 1)		
Lesson C14	How Can I Be an Empowered Bystander? (Part 2)		
Lesson C15	What is Cyber Bullying? What Does It Look Like?		
Lesson C16	Do You Cyber Bully?		
Lesson C17	What Should I Do to Prevent and Stop Cyber Bullying?		
Lesson C18	What was My Behavior Like this Past Week?		
Lesson C19	How was I Bullied this Past Week on School Property?		
Lesson C20	What are Some Myths and Facts about Bullying?		
Lesson C21	When and Where Does Bullying Occur in Our School?		
Lesson C22	How Does It Feel to be Bullied?		
Lesson C23	What is Empathy and Why is it Important?		

Lesson C24	Why Do Some Students Bully?		
Lesson C25	How Can I Manage My Anger?		
Lesson C26	What are the Behavioral Expectations on the Bus?		
Lesson C27	What are the Behavioral Expectations When Arriving at School, Entering School and Waiting for School to Start?		
Lesson C28	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Hallway?		
Lesson C29	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Locker Room?		
Lesson C30	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Classroom?		
Lesson C31	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Bathroom?		
Lesson C32	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Cafeteria?		
Lesson C33	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Library?		
Lesson C34	What are the Behavioral Expectations During Assembly Programs?		
Lesson C35	What are the Behavioral Expectations for Dismissal?		
Lesson C36	What are the Behavioral Expectations While Waiting for the Bus (After School)?		
Lesson C37	Bully Free Projects: How Do We Go Forward?		
Lesson C38	How are We Doing?		
Supplemental Bully Free Lesson Plans			
Lesson S1	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Stairwell?		
Lesson S2	What are the Behavioral Expectations While Walking to and from School?		
Lesson S3	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the School's Parking Lot?		
Lesson S4	What are the Behavioral Expectations in Front of, Behind or Between Buildings (Before and After School)?		
Lesson S5	What are the Behavioral Expectations in the Bike Parking Area?		
Lesson S6	How Can Conflict Be Resolved?		
Lesson S7	Do You Want to Celebrate – Have a Party?		

LESSON C1

Are We a Welcoming Class?

Learner Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

discuss the importance of helping new students feel accepted and have a sense of belonging.
discuss the importance of the Golden Rule.

Preparation and Materials:

- Copy the worksheet “T-Chart - Welcome New Students” for each group.
- If possible, provide each student with a journal notebook (with pockets or three-rings) or ask them to purchase one.
- Copy the worksheet “Bully Free Reflection Sheet” for each student.
- Chart paper and a marker or electronic whiteboard

Activities:

1. *Ask:* “Have you ever seen anyone mistreated on the school bus?”
2. *Ask:* “Have you ever seen anyone mistreated in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms and other areas of the school?”
3. *Ask:* “Have you ever seen anyone mistreated in our classroom?”
4. Explain that you will not tolerate it. It is not allowed in your classroom and you don’t want to see them or hear about them mistreating someone. Also explain that you do not want them to laugh when someone is mistreated.
5. *Say:* “When you are mistreated I want you to tell me. Telling me is the right thing to do and will not be considered tattling.”
6. *Say:* “When you see someone or hear about someone being mistreated I want to know about it. Telling me is the right thing to do and will not be considered tattling.”
7. *Say:* “Sometimes students are mistreated several times every day. When someone is mistreated again and again that’s called bullying.”
8. Explain that throughout the year you will be teaching several lessons that focus on bullying.
9. Tell students:
 - you are designating your classroom as “Bully Free” and will not tolerate anyone being bullied,

- you want your classroom to be a place where students feel accepted and feel like they belong and
 - you want your classroom to be a welcoming place that is peaceful, safe and enjoyable.
10. Consider sharing with students a time you personally witnessed a new student being bullied or perhaps a time you were bullied as a new student.
 11. *Ask:*
 - “What is the Golden Rule?” (*Answer:* Treat others the way you want to be treated.)
 - “What are some examples of obeying the Golden Rule?”
 - “When a new student comes into our classroom, will he see students obeying the Golden Rule?”
 12. *Ask:* “What would our classroom be like if everyone obeyed the Golden Rule?” (*Answer:* Peaceful, safe and enjoyable)
 13. *Ask:* “What would it be like if all the students and the adults in our school obeyed the Golden Rule?” (*Answer:* peaceful, safe and enjoyable)
 14. Explain that you are aware new students are sometimes bullied at school and it makes you angry. They don’t find the school to be a peaceful, safe or enjoyable place.
 15. *Ask:* “Have any of you ever gone to a new school and had to make new friends?” Ask those who raise their hands to describe their experiences.
 16. Divide the class into groups of three students. Try not to group a student with those he bullies. Appoint a group facilitator/recorder in each group. Give each group facilitator the worksheet “T-Chart- Welcome New Students.” Explain to students you want to teach them a new approach to problem solving. It’s called *Reverse Problem Solving*. On the left side of their worksheet they are to list the things they could do to make sure a new student dislikes their class. After making this list, they are to reverse those things to turn them into statements about what could be done to make sure a new student likes their class. After a period of time, ask the group facilitators to share their group’s thoughts about helping students feel welcome. Record their responses on the board, chart paper or electronic whiteboard. (After the lesson, compile this information into a handout and give it to your students.)
 17. Work with students to formulate a plan for making sure new students feel welcome.
 18. Review the major points of the lesson.
 19. Distribute the worksheet “Bully Free Reflection Sheet” and ask students to answer the questions. Randomly select students to share their answers. Write their responses to the last question on the board, chart paper or electronic whiteboard. Collect the reflection sheets.
 20. Introduce *Classroom Meetings*. Explain that throughout the year, they will form a half-circle to review what they have been learning and to discuss various anti-bullying issues. Tell them these times will be referred to as “Classroom Meetings.” Express your desire to hear from each of them during these meetings. Share the following meeting rules:

- all students should participate in the discussion,
 - avoid using names of students,
 - if called on, students have the right to pass (if they do not wish to talk),
 - everyone is expected to listen respectfully and carefully to the speaker, interruptions of what is said are not allowed, etc.
22. Introduce *Journaling* to the students by saying: “Sometimes I’ll give you a writing assignment. I’m going to refer to this as *Journaling* because you are going to write in your journal (notebook) about an assigned topic. I’ll collect the journals and keep them between lessons. I’ll be reading your journals as a way to get to know you better. I’ll also be writing back to you with my own thoughts. Your journals will never be graded or criticized. Think of this as another way for us to communicate with each other.”

Journaling:

Ask students to address the topic “What Would a New Student Think about Class after the first two Weeks of School?”

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: In the left column, list things we could do to make sure a new student *dislikes* our classroom. Write the opposite idea in the right column that would a new student *like* our classroom.

T-CHART - WELCOME NEW STUDENTS

What can we do to make sure a new a *student dislikes* our classroom?

What can we do to make sure a new *student likes* our classroom? (The opposite of what is listed on the left side of this T-Chart.)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Answer the following questions as they relate to today's Bully Free Lesson.

Bully Free Reflection Sheet

What are some things you've learned from this lesson? _____

What are some things you plan to do differently because of this lesson? _____

LESSON C4

Should I Have Anything to Do with Gossip?

Learner Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

- discuss how gossip is harmful to the person who gossips.
- discuss how gossip trashes those who listen.
- discuss why students gossip.
- stop gossip.

Preparation and Materials:

- Copy the worksheet “Gossip” for each student.
- Copy the worksheet “Are You at Risk of Being a Gossip?” for each student.
- Copy the worksheet “Bully Free Reflection Sheet” for each student.
- Chart paper or electronic whiteboard

Activities:

1. Review the previous lesson.
2. *Ask:* “Why do you think we have one mouth and two ears? (*Answer:* We are to spend more time listening than talking.”)
3. *Say:* “But, we also need to be careful about what we listen to. For example, we should refuse to listen to gossip and we should not gossip.
4. *Ask:* “How would you define *gossiping*?” (*Answer:* It is spreading true or false information about someone.)
5. Pair students, but not with those they bully. Distribute the worksheet “Gossip” and ask students to read and following the instructions. Answers to the questions are provided as follows:
 - Is there good gossip and bad gossip? (*Answer:* Some people feel all gossip is bad. Sometimes the truth is told for the wrong reasons. The truth and what may seem like harmless information to us can also hurt and damage someone’s reputation. People can use the truth to be very cruel. There could be some truths about us we wouldn’t want anyone to tell others about. So, gossiping is often disobeying the Golden Rule. Gossip is also dangerous because the truth can be taken out of context and get distorted as it is passed along. Some feel like there is good gossip. If you are passing on good, positive information you know is accurate and you are sharing it to be complimentary of the person and not to make someone jealous or angry. It should also be obvious you are happy for the person. However, some people believe the word *gossip* implies you aren’t sure the information is true, so it shouldn’t be told. Therefore, it is best not to gossip.)

- Why do students spread bad gossip? (*Answer:* First, we need to understand we are never justified to engage in bad gossip. Some of the reasons students gossip are: to look intelligent, to bond with those who enjoy gossiping, because they are angry with the person, because they are jealous of the person, to get revenge, to feel superior, to impress others, to be the center of attention, they are bored and need excitement, they may think making someone look bad makes them look good).
- It's been said that when you listen to gossip you are agreeing to be a "trash receptacle." Why would this be true? (*Answer:* Most of the information being spread by gossip is as valuable as garbage. Many times the information stinks because it makes people feel bad and it can make you feel dirty.)
- A Spanish proverb says: "Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you." Do you agree? If so, why? (*Answer:* People who gossip are not trustworthy.)
- What should you do when you are with students who are gossiping? (*Answer:* Say, "You know, I'm very uncomfortable talking about someone behind their back. If they knew we were talking this way about them, they would be hurt. I would be hurt." (Smile and then walk away.) Or you could say "I'm sorry to hear this about her, I'm going to talk to her and see if I can help her." (Smile and walk away.) As soon as someone says, "You won't believe what I heard" or if they say "I can't tell you who told me, but . . ." it's a good time to say, "Sorry, I don't have time for gossip, I've got to go." (Smile and walk away.) If the person says "Did you hear about _____." Say, "No, it's probably better I didn't." (Smile and walk away.) Try to quickly change the subject or ask a question and try to keep the conversation going around the question. Defending gossip victims may discourage others from gossiping about you. Just walk off quickly if you hear anyone make the following statements – they are about to gossip:

You want to hear the latest?
 Did you hear what happened to _____?
 Guess what I heard!
 Don't tell her I told you but . . .
 Wait till you hear this!
 This might be gossip, but . . .
 Don't say you heard this from me, but . . .
 Can I tell you something just between us?
 You won't believe what _____ just told me!

- Gossip has been found to lower the self-esteem of the person who gossips. Why do you think that is the case? (*Answer:* When most people gossip they know they are doing something that is wrong and they feel guilty. A desire to gossip is a weakness in character and not appreciated by most people. We feel best about ourselves when we do things that are right and valued by others. They know they could get a reputation as being a gossiper.)
- What can you do to stop yourself from gossiping? (*Answer:* Remind yourself of the Golden Rule. It is wrong to gossip. Bite your tongue and count to ten. Pretend the

person you want to gossip about is next to you and she/he is your best friend. Remind yourself that gossiping reflects badly on your character and self-control. If you can't control your tongue you probably can't manage the rest of your life well. Therefore, people will see you as not being dependable or trustworthy. Remember, your words are like feathers in the wind, they get scattered everywhere. You can never get your words back. Also, people may hear what you said and you did not intend for them to hear. If you hear that someone is gossiping about you, confront them about it. Let them know you know about their gossip.

6. *Ask:* "What are some steps you can take to protect yourself from gossip?" Record their responses on the board, chart paper or electronic white board. (*Answer:* Don't share everything with people. Just because someone asks you a question, you don't have to answer. Usually what someone wants to know is none of their business. They just want to gossip about it. Someone once said the gossip game always takes turns; the only way to avoid being "it" is to stop playing – refusing to gossip may protect you from being gossiped about. The best way to keep your friends from gossiping about you is to not gossip about them. Don't say derogatory things about yourself to others – they may use them against you.)
7. Distribute the worksheet "Are You at Risk of Being a Gossip?" and ask students to follow directions. Do not ask students to share their responses. If you wish, collect the worksheets.
8. Review the major points of the lesson.
9. Distribute the worksheet "Bully Free Reflection Sheet" and ask students to answer the questions. Randomly select students to share their answers. Collect the reflection sheets.

Go Further:

Throughout the year, remind students to not gossip and to discourage others from gossiping.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Record your group's consensus regarding the answers to the following questions.

Gossip

Is there good gossip and bad gossip? If so, what is the difference? _____

Why do students spread bad gossip? _____

It's been said that when you listen to gossip you are agreeing to be a "trash receptacle." Why would this be true? _____

A Spanish proverb says: "Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you." Do you agree? If so, why? _____

What should you do when you are with students who are gossiping? _____

Gossip has been found to lower the self-esteem of the person who gossips. Why do you think that is the case? _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: As you read each of the characteristics below, place a check mark in the column to the right that best describes how often you exhibit that characteristic.

Are You at Risk of Being a Gossip?

Characteristics	How Often the Characteristic Describes Me			
	All the Time	Most of the Time	Some Time	Never
Seeks to look intelligent				
Seeks to be accepted by those who gossip				
Seeks revenge when jealous				
Seeks revenge when angry				
Seeks to feel superior				
Seeks to impress others				
Seeks to be the center of attention				
Seeks excitement because of boredom				
Seeks to make yourself look better by making others look bad				
Not concerned what others think about them				
Doesn't think about the Golden Rule very often				
Hangs out with others who gossip				
Desires to be accepted by those who gossip				
Enjoys listening to gossip				
Spends a lot of time on the phone				
Spends a lot of time on the computer				
Has trouble controlling their tongue – lies, uses profanity, etc.				

REFERENCES

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Allan L. Beane, Ph.D. and Linda Beane

Allan L. Beane, Ph.D., is an internationally recognized author, speaker and expert on bullying. He has over 36 years experience in education, which includes teaching special education, teaching regular education, serving as Director of a School Safety Center and serving as vice president of a university. He has served as an expert in criminal cases and as a consultant in lawsuits involving bullying. He has also made numerous television appearances.

Dr. Beane's son was bullied in seventh grade and high school. Bullying contributed to his son's untimely death at the age of 23. His son's life inspired him to write his first book, *The Bully Free Classroom*, and other books about bullying. His first book is in several languages. Schools and districts all over the United States have adopted his Bully Free Program.

As a dynamic and highly sought-after speaker in the United States and other countries, Dr. Beane presents keynote addresses, presentations and workshops for school districts, organizations, colleges, students and parents. His down-to-earth speaking style, inspirational stories and practical strategies appeal to audiences everywhere.

Linda Beane has over 20 years of experience in educational settings. She is the co-author of several anti-bullying books included in the Bully Free Program. Also a mother and grandmother, Linda has been widely recognized for her support of children and her responsiveness to their needs.

Allan and Linda operate Bully Free Systems, a company dedicated to preventing and stopping bullying. Since the death of their son Curtis, in whose death bullying played a part, they have devoted their lives to creating safe and supportive learning environments where all students can have a sense of belonging and acceptance. For information on speaking, training and workshop opportunities, visit www.bullyfree.com.



Pam Durbin Matlock, M.A.

Pam Durbin Matlock began teaching special education in 1975. Her experience includes teaching in a self-contained classroom and resource programs. She has twelve years of experience as a consultant-collaboration instructor. She retired in 2002 from Paducah Independent School District and accepted a position as an instructor at Murray State University in the Adolescent, Career and Special Education Department. She has served as a lecturer, as well as Education Coordinator of the Murray State University Off-Campus Site in Paducah, Kentucky. Pam is an advocate for students who struggle with problems and is passionate about promoting the Bully Free Program.

She completed her Bachelor of Science Degree in Special Education from Western Kentucky University, Masters in Learning Disabilities and Rank I Program in Psychometry from Murray State University.

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