



SAMANTHA'S CHOICE TEACHING TIPS

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Before viewing “Samantha’s Choice” with your students, engage them in a guided conversation about bullying. Open-ended questions to elicit relevant responses might include

- What is bullying? Do you ever see bullying take place? Where?
- If you’ve seen someone being bullied, what did you do? Why did you decide to do that? Have you ever wished you did something different?
- Why do you think some kids get bullied or picked on? Why do you think some kids act like bullies?
- Have you ever seen a kid who kept someone who was bullying from getting what he or she wanted? What do you think you should do if someone tries to bully you?
- Have you ever been bullied? What did you do?
- Have you ever done anything that might seem like bullying? Why did you do it?

VIEWING OF VIDEO

Show the video to the students twice—once for them to absorb the story, the second time for them to begin to consider its implications. Let them know that you are showing it a second time in order to let them think more about its message.

The full five-minute video can be viewed on YouTube through the following link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNZdc_1Cbyc

POST-VIDEO CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Encourage students to think back on the answers they gave to questions before watching the video and ask them if they would answer any of them differently based on viewing “Samantha’s Choice.” If students need more guidance, the following questions might bring home key points:

- Sometimes people—like Scruff in the video—don’t stand up to kids who bully right away. Why do you think that is?
- What is self-respect? Do you think it plays a role in standing up to kids who bully?
- How does the “Stop-Talk-Walk” strategy work for Samantha?
- Why is it important to “see the good about people”?

- Near the end of the video, McGruff speaks with the two girls who bullied Samantha. What lessons do the girls learn?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Circle of Respect

Explain the concept of the **Circle of Respect Zone** to students—it is a place where people respect themselves and others—and tell students that the classroom and the school are part of the Circle of Respect Zone. In that context, present the following possible bullying scenarios and ask students how they would handle them in the Circle of Respect Zone:

- One student has something in his or her back pack that other students want.
- One student is not as good at sports as the others.
- One student is new to the school and doesn't know as much about it as the others.
- Unlike Samantha, one student really is a little overweight, or short, or otherwise “different.”
- One student has trouble answering questions in class.
- One student is not allowed by others to join them in a game on the playground.
- Three students will not let a fourth student join their conversation.

How would students handle these situations in a way that respects themselves and the community? What other potential bullying situations can students think of?

Small Groups

Students form small groups (about four people) to write and act out bullying scenarios of their own invention. Perhaps they can create one skit in which a situation degenerates into bullying—and another in which the situation is handled in a way that respects all individuals involved and the community. Encourage students to invent and act out a scenario in which one student uses the “Stop-Talk-Walk” strategy to avoid a bullying situation in which the student has been insulted by someone who bullies.

LANGUAGE ARTS CONNECTION

- Why is “Stop-Talk-Walk” a good phrase to remember when you have to deal with someone who bullies you? (Elicit that brief slogans are easy to remember and call to mind when they are needed.)
- What did Samantha say to the girls who were bullying her? How did Scruff help? What words were the most helpful in stopping the bullying? What words showed the most respect?

- Activity for Younger Students: Write a song that uses “Stop-Talk-Walk” in its words, or a brief skit where someone uses “Stop-Talk-Walk” to deal with someone who is bullying them.
- Activity for Older Students: Write a short story where a child is bullied after school, and other children help him or her by saying that everyone should be treated with respect.

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION

Visual literacy and geography:

- Does the story take place in the city, a small town, or the country? How do you know?
- What scenes in the video make you feel that the place where the story happens is a safe place, or not such a safe place?
- Activity: Divide students into groups and have them make two lists: One with things that make a place feel safe, and one with things that make a place feel unsafe. Compare the different groups’ lists as a class and discuss what safe and unsafe places might have in common.

Psychology:

- McGruff nods to Scruff twice in the video and explains what each nod means. What do the two nods mean? How can the same gesture, a nod, mean two different things?
- Can you think of any other “body language” that can mean different things at different times? Can a shake of the head mean different things? Can clapping hands or tapping your feet mean different things? Give some examples.
- Have you ever misunderstood what someone’s body language meant? What happened? Has anyone ever misunderstood your body language? Were you surprised?
- How can people use body language to show that they respect one another? How can they show, for instance, that they are good listeners, or respect what other people have to say, or care about other people’s feelings—without saying even one word?
- Activity for Younger Students: Have students act out different body language while the rest of the class guesses what they are acting out.
- Activity for Older Students: Write and act out a skit in which someone misunderstands someone else’s body language. Maybe the person thinks a head shake means the other person is saying no, when it really means the other person is sad. Write one skit in which the misunderstanding leads to bad feelings—which are eased by people showing respect. Write another in which the misunderstanding is funny.

Community:

- What role does community play in the video?
- Do you belong to more than one community? What are the different communities you belong to?
- How can you show respect for your community?
- Is bullying bad just for the bullied person? Or is it bad also for the whole class, or the whole school?
- How can bullying create problems for the school community? How can it create problems for the wider community, such as your neighborhood, town, or city?

CALL TO ACTION

Learn more at www.circleofrespect.org and appeal for student commitment and involvement by directing them to the Circle of Respect's Get Involved website:

<http://www.ncpc.org/programs/circle-of-respect/get-involved>