

Session 23: Standing Up for Those Who Are Mistreated

kindness • compassion • respect • personal responsibility • decency

Session 23 helps students think of ways they can support peers who are called names or teased in other ways and practice being upstanders.

Students will

- be guided to choose kind actions, particularly when others are being unkind
- role-play being upstanders in situations where someone is being treated with meanness or intolerance

Materials

- chart paper and marker
- handouts: “8 Ways to Be an Upstander” (page 65); “Kindness Worksheet” (page 67)

Preparation. On chart paper, write: *“I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”* —Helen Keller

Introduction and Discussion. Ask students if they’ve ever chosen to be kind to someone everyone else was being mean to. Ask if they’ve ever been an upstander for someone who was being mistreated. Discuss, acknowledging how hard this can be.

Show the Helen Keller quote and invite a student to read it. Ask: **What is “something we can do” when someone’s being called names or made fun of by others? Why does it take courage to choose to be kind when others aren’t or to stick up for someone when no one else does?**

Activity. Present the following scenarios, or scenarios students suggest, and ask for volunteers to act them out. After each scenario, ask: **What kind choice could you make? What would an upstander do?**

- Brian gives the wrong answer to a question the teacher asks. Other kids start to snicker and make faces.
- Mindy comes to school wearing a shirt with a big stain on it. Her hair is all tangled and looks like it hasn’t been washed in a while. A few kids hold their noses as she walks by.

- Jason has trouble reading. He stumbles over some simple words that most of the class can easily read. Someone makes a joke about Jason’s reading. A few kids start to laugh.
- Jessie tends to be awkward around other kids. Sometimes she talks too loud. People find her annoying. She always ends up sitting alone at lunch.

Ask kids to list kind, caring choices that were demonstrated during the role plays. List responses on a piece of chart paper entitled, “Kind Choices We Can Make When People Are Unkind.”

Distribute the “8 Ways to Be an Upstander” handout and review the ways to help people who are picked on. Encourage students to come up with other upstander actions to add to the handout.

Wrap-Up. Affirm students for acts of kindness, compassion, and good listening you observed during this session. Ask whether anyone would also like to acknowledge a classmate for any positive actions or attitudes.

Follow-Up. Have students complete the “Kindness Worksheet.” Note that the worksheet will be used in Session 24.

8 ways to Be an upstander

1. Choose not to join in when people are picking on or laughing at someone.
2. Speak out against unkind words or actions.
3. Say something helpful to the person who's being picked on or laughed at.
4. Ask people who are teasing how it would feel if they were the ones being teased.
5. Ask the person who's being left out or picked on to join you in an activity.
6. Let an adult know what's going on.

7. _____



8. _____

