

CONDUCTING an ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM for CLASSROOM-SIZED GROUPS

The Anti-Bullying Program was introduced successfully to classroom-sized groups (30-60 students each) of third and fourth graders at Courthouse Road Elementary School, Spotsylvania, Virginia.

Working with the school counselor and the school librarian, each class participated during their regularly scheduled Library periods.

Prior to the beginning of each session, the librarian advised the students that they would be meeting a surprise guest. They were also reminded to use good manners and show proper respect. At this point, the librarian held up *You Are Too a Bully!* and introduced me as the author of the book.

Students sat around tables for six; however, for the larger groups, in addition to the tables, many sat in rows on the floor directly in front of where I spoke.

SESSIONS – MY EXPERIENCE

I began each session by “proving” to the students that I was the author of the book by showing them my photo on the inside flap of *You Are Too a Bully!* They liked this. I told them that I would be reading the first chapter of the book, and then asking them the questions listed in the back. If they were able to answer these questions, it would show they were ready to make a *Pledge* to follow an *Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct* and become a *Warrior Against Bullying*. Those making the pledge would receive a *Warriors Against Bullying* sticker and be able to sign the *Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct Pledge* banner mounted in the hallway.

In every class, the students stayed involved and focused as I read the chapter. When finished, I held up the book to show that it was the end of Chapter One. There were a few groans; however, once I held up the list of thirty-four questions, they were anxious to show me that they knew what bullying was and were ready to become *warriors against bullying*. (NOTE: I modified the questions from those shown in the book so that all had yes/no responses – see copy attached.)

The students were conscientious and focused as I asked the questions. At the end, I asked them if they were ready to follow an Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct, and was met with a resounding “YES.”

We said the Pledge together, with the students repeating each line after me.

I told them I was happy they wanted to become *Warriors Against Bullying*, and thanked them for participating. They clapped, and swarmed me as I passed out the stickers.

The librarian provided multi-colored pens for the students to sign the banner—and the students were intent on putting their names on it. Other students seeing the activity in the hallway asked if they could sign the banner and were told they had to wait until they attended an Anti-Bullying session.

NOTES:

If I saw any confusion about a question, e.g., “Is it wrong to call someone a nickname?” I would clarify the question—as in this instance—saying that if an individual did not want to be called that nickname, and said so, then it was wrong to continue calling them by that name. However, we did not have general discussions about the questions until the end.

It is important to stress that bullying is *repeated* incidents of behavior that make a student feel afraid, anxious, or threatened, and NOT a one-time or accidental bump or trip.

I ended the questioning by reminding the students that their teachers want them to be happy in school so that they can concentrate on their schoolwork and be good learners. Also, that their counselor had a special box mounted outside his office door, and anytime a student needed help or saw something they felt was wrong, they could drop a note in this box.

Prior to the beginning of a reading, it would be good for a library to have copies of *You Are Too a Bully!* available—since after the sessions a number of students expressed interest in checking out the book to find out what happened to Michael and Chuck. I gave out flyers to others who indicated an interest in purchasing *You Are Too a Bully*.

The guidance counselor addressed each class to remind the students that he was available at all times to help them with issues, problems, or even to hear about good news—but if he wasn’t in his office, to drop a note in the message box.