

As we go through the Holiday Season, there is no better time to help bring out the best in our kids! I saw this article on line, and felt it would be perfect to share! What a wonderful, easy, way to get the point across to our kids that bullying HURTS!

Take a few moments to read this and, hopefully, some of you will actually do this with your kids- to share this powerful, simple lesson!

Happy Holidays! Your School Psych- Cheri Rigdon- M.A., NCSP, BICM

The Bruised and the Beautiful Apple – A Powerful Lesson in Bullying

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I have this good friend named Jaime. She teaches fifth grade, and she genuinely loves her students. Lately she's been struggling with bullying problems with some of her students, and she did something pretty amazing with them that she shared with me and I now want to pass along to all of you.

I thought it was a pretty fantastic lesson that we could all teach our own kids pretty easily.

So, I read [your bullying post](#) last night, and it made my just heart ache. Ache in a way that really made me stop and look at my babies in an entirely new way.

But it also made me want to try and find a way to somehow make the bullying a truly tangible problem because sometimes as a teacher you get so wrapped up in the “stuff” you have to get through that you sometimes forget there are very real heartaches going on behind the scenes...

Stick with me for a minute: I decided to stop by the store this morning and buy a couple apples. During our morning meeting (where we sit in a circle and do spiral lessons), I told my class we were going to try something different and I showed them my two apples and asked them to list the differences and similarities between the two apples. They were both exactly the same color and shape...one was a little brighter and bigger, but that literally the only difference.

I then held up the other apple that was only slightly discolored and smaller and I said, “Gross. This apple looks disgusting!” and dropped it on the ground. My kids all looked at me like I was INSANE! A couple laughed uncomfortably, but for the most part they thought I had lost my mind.

I then picked it up and passed it to the student sitting beside me and said, “isn’t this apple just stupid?! You should say something mean to it and do this!” Again I modeled dropping it in front of me. “Now pass it to the person next to you so they can say something mean to the apple, too!”

Long story short, my kids got very into saying mean and hurtful things to this apple and dropping it in front of them. “I hate your skin.” “You’re an ugly color of red” “Your stem isn’t very long” “You’re probably full of worms” on and on and on....

So by the time this little apple made it back to me everyone had had a chance to really rip this little guy apart. I seriously started feeling sympathetic towards an inanimate object... but moving on...

I then held both of the apples up for my kids to look at and asked them to now list the similarities and differences of the apples again... It came back the same... There really was no difference. Even after they had repeatedly dropped this apple you couldn’t really tell that it had any damage.

I then asked my students who wanted a piece of the apple... of course... FOOOOOOOD.... and ALL my students raised their hands because they wanted some.

I took out a cutting board, knife and proceeded to cut the shiny apple open. It was perfect. And all my kids “ooooohhh and ahhhh’ed”...

Then I cut open the second one and when I opened it, it was covered in mushy brown spots and bruised all inside from where we dropped it. When I held it up my kids were like, “EWWWWW. I don’t want to eat THAT apple!” “Yuck!” “That looks disgusting...”

That’s when I just looked at them and said, “But didn’t we all contribute to the apple looking this way?! We did this... why shouldn’t we eat it?” They all just kind of stopped and got really quiet and I was like, “See guys... this is what we do to other people when we say mean and hurtful things. When we gossip or call someone ugly or fat or tell them they aren’t good enough or that they can’t be friends with you... we are just dropping them and causing ONE MORE bruise... a bruise that while we can’t see on the outside is VERY REAL and very destructive inside of them! It doesn’t just go away, the bruises just keep getting worse and deeper... THIS!” I said as I held up the bruised apple, “is what we do to each other. We have to stop dropping each other.”

I’ve never seen my kids “get” something so fast before. It was so real to them... some cried and laughed and it was very emotional but absolutely amazing and they got to then journal about everything and some of the responses I got... well, I sobbed all the way through lunch. I had so many kids come up and hug me later and tell me that they were so happy that a teacher “got it”.

I’m so thankful for good school teachers.

I’m thankful for Jaime and her lesson with the apples. So succinct. So powerfully visual.

Dan Pearce, Single Dad Laughing