



Lesson Plan #2: Standing Up to Bullying – The Power of the Bystander

(For classrooms, after-school programs, and youth groups)

Grade Level:

Upper Elementary – High School (adaptable)

Time Needed:

45–60 minutes

Objectives:

Students will:

- Recognize the role of the bystander in bullying situations.
 - Learn safe and effective strategies to intervene or seek help.
 - Practice empathy through roleplay and reflection.
 - Commit to creating a positive, bully-free environment.
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Lesson Outline

1. Warm-Up Activity (5 minutes)

- Write this question on the board:
“If you saw someone being bullied, what would you do?”
 - Students write their thoughts anonymously on slips of paper.
 - Collect and read a few aloud to start discussion.
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2. Mini-Lesson: Understanding Bystanders (10 minutes)

Key Teaching Points:

- Bullying doesn't just involve the bully and victim—bystanders play a huge role.
 - Bystanders can:
 - **Join in** (makes bullying worse).
 - **Ignore/Stay silent** (gives power to the bully).
 - **Speak up/Help** (can stop bullying or reduce harm).
 - Research shows when just **one person stands up**, bullying often stops within 10 seconds.
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3. Activity: Roleplay Scenarios (20 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups.
- Give each group a bullying scenario (examples below).
- Ask them to act it out twice:
 1. First as *silent bystanders*.
 2. Then as *empowered bystanders* using safe strategies.

Sample Scenarios:

- A student being teased in the cafeteria for their clothes.
- A classmate being excluded from a group project.
- A student being cyberbullied in a group chat.

Discussion after each roleplay:

- How did it feel to be the victim? The bystander? The bully?
 - What made the situation better when bystanders acted?
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4. Reflection & Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Questions to ask:

1. Why is it sometimes hard to stand up to bullying?
 2. What are some safe ways to help?
 - o Speaking up calmly.
 - o Supporting the victim afterward.
 - o Getting help from an adult.
 - o Refusing to laugh or join in.
 3. How can we make our school/community a safer place?
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5. Wrap-Up & Commitment (5 minutes)

- Each student writes one action they will take if they witness bullying.
 - Create a classroom “Bystander Pledge” poster with their commitments.
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Q & A Section (for handouts or discussion)

Q1: Why is staying silent during bullying harmful?

A1: Silence can make the bully feel supported and the victim feel alone.

Q2: What is one safe way to intervene if you don't feel comfortable speaking up?

A2: Support the victim afterward or get help from a trusted adult.

Q3: Why does empathy matter in preventing bullying?

A3: Empathy helps us understand others' feelings and motivates us to act kindly instead of ignoring harm.

Q4: What can one person's actions do in a bullying situation?

A4: One person standing up can change the whole outcome and encourage others to join.

Materials Needed

- Paper slips for warm-up activity
 - Printed scenarios for roleplay
 - Large poster paper/markers for "Bystander Pledge"
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