

SCHOOL AS A PLACE OF PEACE

AIMS

- To understand the value of diversity in a group and the need to find common ground in order to build unity.
- To identify discrimination as a form of violence.
- To encourage empathy and the ability to put ourselves in the place of others.

NECESSARY MATERIAL

- Video: "Dreams", available at: www.unicef.es/educa/biblioteca/suenos-escuela-de-paz-video-actividad-educacion-primaria

EXTRA MATERIAL

- "Safe to learn. Learning in a protective environment": Education in Children's Rights and Global Citizenship. Available at: www.unicef.es/educa/biblioteca/a-salvo-en-la-escuela
- "The Class Bully", a story about bullying. Available in the appendix.
- "Lou", a short film by Pixar, available on YouTube.

We suggest you hold a classroom discussion on the responsibility each of us has in overcoming differences and ensuring that the classroom and school are violence-free environments.



Preparing the activity: warm-up

Show the video *Dreams* in the classroom. It deals briefly with some interesting issues on diversity and coexistence which can be used as a springboard for a class discussion on peace, non-violence and treating each other with kindness and respect. Here are some questions to help guide the conversation:

1. How many people are there in the world? What would the world be like if we were all identical and liked identical things?
2. Imagine we all wanted to work in the same jobs (we were all journalists or cooks) or that we all supported the same football team ... would football even exist if we all followed the same team?
3. How does a group benefit when its members have different skills, abilities, or interests?
4. In the video, there's a conflict between two characters. Is it a peaceful or violent conflict?
5. Another character witnesses the conflict and does something to help. Is he right to intervene?
6. Was the solution to the conflict peaceful or violent?
7. What would you have done?
8. What other forms of violence take place in the school environment?
Is there anything you can do about it?

#EndViolence

Join the international UNICEF campaign to end violence. Celebrate Universal Children's Day in your school by creating a pro-peace and kindness vaccine. Find out how at: www.unicef.es/educa/buentrato

If you need to deal with the subject of bullying in more depth with your class, you can use the story "The Class Bully" (see the annex) and Pixar's short "Lou", which address different aspects of the problem from a being-nice-to-each-other and understanding each other's emotions point of view.

The Class Bully

Nobody liked Susan. She was older than others in the class and she was a very big girl. She took people's pens and threatened to beat them after school if they told the teacher. She pushed people around in the playground and hit them if they would not let her join their games; but when she did join the game she would destroy the game, running away with the rope if they were skipping, or scuffing the ground for any of the games where things were drawn on the ground. Really, nobody like Susan.

One day a new girl came to the class. She was very small but seemed very clever because she could answer the teacher's questions every time. The rest of the class thought she was just proud and because she was new they didn't bother to make friends with her. She sat by herself at lunch time eating some food that had been wrapped in paper. Susan came rushing by and grabbed the food. Some she took but the rest spilled on the ground. Everybody watched to see if the new girl would cry.

Instead she stood up and went after Susan. *'If you were hungry, why didn't you ask to share the food, I would have given you some. Now most of it is spoiled and neither of us has had enough food.'* Susan stared and then cramming the food in her mouth she laughed and said: *'I took your food because I am bigger than you and I can. I'm not so hungry that I need to ask for your food.'*

The small girl shook her head *'It's true, you are much bigger than me, but that doesn't mean you can do whatever you like. What you did was wrong and no matter how big or strong you are, it doesn't make you right.'* Susan was shocked; nobody ever spoke to her like this. Susan pushed the small girl so that she sprawled in the dirt. She stood up, brushed down her clothes and walked away. The other children watched quietly, but some were ashamed that they had not helped and even more ashamed that they had not said such things to Susan all the times she had bullied them.

Several of them came to the new girl. *'What's your name?'* they asked. The new girl smiled and said *'My name's Anne, what's yours?'* Soon the small group were talking and laughing together. *'Why do you let Susan bully everybody?'* asked Anne. The others looked away. *'You see how big she is and she is much older than us; she can do anything she wants and nobody can stop her.'* Anne nodded and thought hard. She knew what it was like to be disliked by everybody; after all, it had happened to her in this class. It made you hot and angry inside, and all you wanted to do was to hit people, to punish them for hurting you. Susan must feel bad too because she was much older and in a class of younger children so she was probably angry all the time. Anne thought it would be awful to be so angry all the time.

The next day she sat next to Susan and handed her a pen. *'In case you don't have one. You know at my other school we have already done this work, do you want me to help you?'* asked Anne. Susan was even more shocked, nobody had offered to help her before. *'Why would you want to help me? Why do you think I need your help?'* she grumbled. *'Oh, just because here you are only starting this work and at my other school we finished this before I came here. Later there will be there things that I don't know and then you can help me.'* Susan looked at Anne and then leaned towards her. She showed the work she had done and whispered 'I don't know why this is so, it doesn't make sense to me. Anne explained quietly and drew little diagrams to show what she meant. Susan nodded and then, when the teacher asked a question, Susan put up her hand. Everybody was surprised, including the teacher as nobody had ever seen Susan with her hand up before. But Susan could answer the question and as the lesson went on she could see how it made sense and she answered several other questions as well.

Over the next few weeks Susan and Anne worked together and slowly Susan seemed to understand more and more. In the playground, Anne insisted that Susan be invited to join the games but she said softly to Susan before the games *'Playing together means just that, you cannot destroy the game if we invite you in.'* Susan wasn't very good at any of the games, but Anne frowned at those who wanted to laugh, instead Anne explained the games and how to practise.

ANNEX: Stories about bullying

After some time, people in the class noticed that Susan wasn't such a bully at school. There was no more stealing of pens and now she was part of a group playing, so there was no destruction of the games being played around her.

Some people asked Anne why Susan was not a bully any more. Anne asked what happened when people were excluded from a group. The others thought for a while. 'Well I suppose they try to fight back' said one boy. Anne nodded, 'Susan was fighting back the only way she could, by bullying. But once she is part of the group of this class, she has no need to bully anymore'. The others nodded thoughtfully. Anne went on 'Bullies are usually lonely people, sad and angry. All of you would be sad and angry if everybody ignored you and made fun of you in class when you don't know things'. Some of the group looked away and felt ashamed, but Anne continued 'It is how fights start, just by keeping people out and then laughing at them because they do not belong. It is not Susan's fault that she is behind in class; things have been very hard for her and her family, she told me. All she needed was a friend, somebody who would listen and help the way friends help each other. Now that she is one of us, she doesn't have to feel angry and so she doesn't bully any more.

Anne was only a small girl but she was very wise, and now she had the biggest girl in the class as one of her friends.

THE END

The story comes from Sara's Choice – A Collection of Stories and Poetry, from the Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme Skills for Constructive Living collection by UNESCO and INEE (Paris, 2005).

QUESTION ABOUT THE STORY "THE CLASS BULLY"

1. What sort of things did Susan do at the beginning of the story?
2. Why did Anne understand how Susan felt?
3. How did Anne become friends with Susan?
4. Why did Susan behave like a bully?
5. Have you ever felt that others don't like you?
6. How do you feel and what do you do when it happens?
7. Do you think that bullies might have problems themselves?
8. What can be done about it? What are you going to do?

ANNEX: Stories about bullying

Lou

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SHORT FILM "LOU"

1. What is the story about?
2. Who is J.J.? Who is Lou?
3. Why do you think J.J. behaves like that? Do you think he really wants the things he takes from others? Do you think he is looking for attention or that he wants to make friends?
4. What does Lou know about J.J.?
5. Why does Lou make J.J. return the toys in person? What does Lou expect to happen?
6. When does J.J. start to change?
7. What does J.J. learn thanks to Lou?

