

Stand Up! Speak Out!

PREJUDICE IS THE ENEMY: *Let's join hands and block out the enemy* *Guide for Discussion, Reflection or Role Play*

Bullies often choose targets who are different in some way. That's why we need to shine a light on the *bias behind* the bullying. Bullies did not invent prejudice: They learned it well, as we all have, to some degree. But as we become more aware of it, we can *unlearn* it, know it when we see it, and speak out against it.

Vocabulary

bias: dislike of a person or group because of their personal characteristics, based on prejudice and stereotypes about people outside our *own* group (e.g. *bias* based on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc)
bigot: one with strong feelings of prejudice and hate towards members of groups different from one's own
discrimination: prejudice put into action; *thinking* I don't like a certain group of people is prejudice; *acting* on that (by refusing to serve certain groups of people in my restaurant, for instance) is discrimination
dominant group: the social group that enjoys the most power, privilege, visibility, access, etc.
prejudice: the act of judging someone before we know them, based on superficial characteristics (how they look, dress, speak, etc.) or to which group they belong (racial, ethnic, religious, national origin, etc.)
racism: hatred towards a race or ethnic group different from one's own; such speech or behavior is *racist*
scapegoat: to blame or punish a person or group for something they did not do; often a majority or *dominant group* scapegoats a minority or less powerful group
slur: a word or expression intended to insult someone's identity (i.e. racist slurs, anti-gay slurs, etc.)
stereotype: a false belief, based on prejudice, that all people in one group are alike, not seeing each person in the group as an individual (ie. assuming that *all* Asians, all Muslims, all women, etc. *are alike*)

Prejudice is the enemy of us all.

1. NBA basketball star Jeremy Lin was subjected to anti-Asian *slurs* in college (Harvard!) Was he "overlooked" for so long because he is Asian and didn't *look* like a basketball star? When we pre-judge people, we form an opinion based on how they look, sound, dress. Prejudice fuels stereotypes that limit how we see others *and* how we see ourselves. Consider:
 - A tall African American who *looks like a basketball player* but loves science, ballet, or chess
 - A female student who's a math whiz but only hears comments about how she looks. Quick:
 - What does a scientist look like? A pilot? A surgeon? A President? Who do you picture? Why?
 - When someone looks at you for the first time, how might they pre-judge you?
2. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." We could also say, "Prejudice against *anyone* threatens the equality of *everyone*." Explain why.

So don't let it into your heart or into your mind / Even if your own friends and family tell you That one kind of person is better than one other kind

3. Where does prejudice come from? At a young age we (hopefully) learn from our families to have pride in our own religious/ethnic/cultural group. And that is important. But do we also learn that people in *different* groups are *less* good or valuable? What's the difference between feeling *proud* of our own heritage and *better than* others? How can we celebrate "our own" *and* respect others?

Beware of stereotypes, the casting of blame

4. In the past 10 years, there has been a significant increase in *Islamophobia*: hate and fear of Muslims. Why? How is this *scapegoating*? If you witnessed this, would you speak out against it? Why or why not? Why is it important that *non-Muslims* speak out against Islamophobia, that *Straight Allies* speak out for LGBTQ people, that men speak out for women, etc? Why is it important that we speak out for others, and not just "our own"? What happens if we don't?

Innocent jokes that secretly tell you / That most of the people of one group are really the same

5. Ethnic humor can be funny *when we are laughing at ourselves*. But no one wants to be the punchline of a put-down. **Scenario:** You're at a party. Someone tells a biased joke—one that puts down women, Muslims, LGBT, etc. You don't want to *make a big deal*, but you know you have to respond, especially if the joke puts down a group not represented there. What do you say?

In our hearts we're mostly the same

6. Most scholars believe that race has no biological basis, it's a myth that was invented. **Research** "the social construction of race." Would racism exist if we didn't "believe" in racial differences?