



ACTIVITY 1 Being a Friend

Chrissa (page 5)

Three girls sauntered in and sat down at my cluster. I glanced up and smiled. "Hi," I said. "I'm Chrissa."

No response, but the girl with long dark-brown hair offered me a halfhearted smile.

As more students arrived, whispers fluttered around the room.

"Uh-oh."

"The new girl's stuck with the Queen Bees!"

"You mean the *Mean Bees*," someone else whispered. "Bzzz!"

This didn't sound good, but I remembered my grandmother's advice. *If you want a friend, be a friend. Don't wait for others to say hi. Just introduce yourself.*

I tried again. "Hi, I'm Chrissa Maxwell."



Talk About It

- How does it feel to be the new student in class?
- What are some ways Chrissa reaches out in friendship to the other girls in her cluster?
- How do Chrissa's classmates respond to her?
- What could they do to make Chrissa feel welcome? What would *you* do if you were there?

Think About It

List one way that you can be friendly and show respect to each of the following people:

A classmate _____

A teammate _____

A younger kid on the playground _____

A sibling _____

A new student at school _____





ACTIVITY 2

The Ways People Bully

Chrissa (page 12)

“Ohhh,” Tara said in a voice just quiet enough not to draw attention from Mr. Beck, who was on the other side of the room. “Gwen Thompson is the Loser Girl. Yeah, you two could have your own club. You certainly aren’t in ours.” Jadyn and Sonali cracked up.

I’d seen older girls like this before. On the playground, they whispered and giggled about others and on the bus they refused to give up saved seats. They treated other kids as if they were invisible—or worse, lowly as worms. I ached to be around my old friends instead of these girls.

Talk About It

There are several ways that people bully: (1) *physically*, such as harming someone’s body or their property; (2) *verbally*, such as teasing or name-calling; and (3) *relationally*, such as excluding someone or spreading rumors that might hurt someone’s reputation.

PASS IT ON!

- In what ways are Tara, Jadyn, and Sonali bullying Chrissa? How do you think Chrissa feels?
- Brainstorm more examples of each type of bullying: physical, verbal, and relational.
- Could you ever bully someone by accident?

Think About It

1. Think about a time when someone intentionally tried to hurt you. How did you feel? What did you do?

2. Think about a time when you may have mistreated or bullied a sibling, classmate, or friend. What were you thinking or feeling? How did you feel afterward?





ACTIVITY 3

We All Play a Part

Chrissa (page 9)

“Oh, wait,” Tara whispered, waving Jadyn, Sonali, and me closer as she scribbled on the back of a heart-shaped piece of construction paper. “I totally forgot about one for Gwen!” Then she showed us. It read:

*Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
You’re the Loser Girl
And no one likes you!
Ha ha—just kidding!
Happy Valentine’s Day
from Guess Who?*

The other girls all laughed and for a second, I giggled, too, feeling part of an inside joke. This must be a joke between Tara and this Gwen girl. At least I hoped so. Because if I got that card, I sure wouldn’t like it.

Talk About It

There are three roles that people play when it comes to bullying: the bully, the *target* (the person being bullied), and the *bystander* (a person who sees someone else being bullied).

PASS IT ON!

- In the story excerpt above, which girls are playing the role of bully? Who is the target? What role does Chrissa play?
- Does joining in the laughter mean joining in the bullying?
- If Chrissa isn’t sure whether Gwen is being bullied, how could Chrissa check it out?

Think About It

Think about a time when you saw someone being bullied. How did you feel? What were you thinking? What did you do?



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ACTIVITY 4

Standing Up to Bullying



Chrissa (page 41)

When I approached my desk, Tara pinched her nose. "Whoa! Something stinks."

Jadyn clamped her nose with her thumb and forefinger. "P.U.!"

"Hey, today's taco day, Chrissa. Are you going to have some *llama beans* with your taco?" Tara asked.

Though Sonali hadn't seen the llamas, she pinched her nose, too.

I set my backpack beside my desk, sat down, and lifted my desktop, pretending to organize my boxes. This was going to be another awful day.

Talk About It

In this scene, Chrissa chooses to ignore the Mean Bees. Ignoring is one way to deal with bullying, but there are many other options. The key is to stand up for yourself in a way that's *assertive*, or gets your needs met without hurting other people or keeping the fight going.

- How do you think Chrissa is feeling?
- Do you think ignoring a bully works? Why or why not?
- What else could Chrissa try?

Think About It

Imagine that two of your classmates are looking at you, whispering and laughing. You know they're making fun of you. List two ways that you could respond assertively. On a separate piece of paper, draw a picture of yourself responding in one of those ways.

1. _____

2. _____





ACTIVITY 5 Being a Good Bystander

Chrissa (pages 63–64)

Minutes before the end of art class, Gwen returned. She sat on her stool and hid behind her bangs. I leaned closer. “Are you feeling any better?” I asked.

From the nearby art table, Tara cleared her throat and, as always, spoke in a voice that was just below the teacher’s radar. “She was probably just faking it to get out of class.”

I spun around to Tara and the Mean Bees. It was one thing for *me* to get picked on, but it burned me to see her pick on Gwen again.

“I don’t think Gwen would fake being sick,” I snapped back. “But maybe you would.”



Talk About It

- Did Chrissa respond to Tara in an assertive way or an aggressive way?
- What are some other ways that Chrissa could have stood up for Gwen?
- Can it sometimes feel scary to stand up for someone else? Give some reasons why.
- How do you think Chrissa feels *after* she stands up for Gwen? How do Gwen and Tara feel?

Think About It

List three things you could do or say the next time you see someone else being hurt:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____





ACTIVITY 6 Telling vs. Tattling



Chrissa (pages 47–48)
I stepped into the hallway, uncertain if I should return to the classroom and tell Mr. Beck exactly what had happened. I turned this way, then that, circling slowly. They wouldn't really have flushed all the registration forms, would they?
If I were to tell Mr. Beck the truth, he'd know I had disobeyed his order to go straight to the office. *And* I would be tattling, wouldn't I?
I had enough troubles stacking up against me without adding *tattler* to the top of the heap.

Talk About It

Chrissa is afraid of being called a “tattler,” but there’s a big difference between tattling and telling. *Tattling* is what you do when you’re trying to get someone into trouble. *Telling* is what you do to help yourself or someone else who is being hurt.

- Why are kids sometimes afraid to tell parents or teachers about bullying?
- If you told an adult about bullying and someone called you a “tattler,” how would you respond?
- What are some ways to let adults know about bullying if you’re too afraid to talk face-to-face?

Think About It

If you or someone you knew were being bullied, whom could you tell?
List three adults you could talk with at school or at home.

_____ & _____ & _____

Then choose one of those adults, and write down the words you would use to start the conversation.





ACTIVITY 7

Apologies & Second Chances

Chrissa (pages 76–77)

Reluctantly, I took the phone from Tyler’s hand. “Hello?”

“Chrissa, it’s me. Sonali.”

I didn’t bother to say anything. She had no reason to call me. We weren’t friends.

“I want to apologize,” she said.

“Is your mom making you again?” I asked, my voice pinched as I remembered her delivering the red bag.

“No, this is different. It’s about what happened at the pool today. It was *supposed* to be this big joke, but . . . it really wasn’t funny.”

“No, it wasn’t.” My grip loosened on the phone. Sonali was so hard to figure out. How could I know if she was being sincere?



Talk About It

- Do you think Sonali is genuinely sorry? How can you tell?
- What else can Sonali do to make things right with Chrissa?
- If Chrissa accepts Sonali’s apology, does that mean Chrissa has to be friends with Sonali?
- Do you think everyone deserves a second chance?

Think About It

1. Think about a time when you apologized for hurting someone. Were you given a second chance? How did that feel?

2. Think of someone you know who might deserve a second chance. Write down one way you could be friendly to this person.





ACTIVITY 8 Working Together to Make a Difference

Chrissa Stands Strong (page 21)
Settled into our sleeping bags, we talked about school starting soon and swim-team tryouts tomorrow.
“You know, I’m not a strong enough swimmer yet to try out,” Gwen said, “but I’m happy to come watch.”
“That would be really nice,” Sonali said.
“Yeah,” I agreed. “Even if we don’t make it into the diving division, I’m sure we’ll be on the swim team.” I paused. “And Tara’s so good, she’ll be on the team, too. As a team, we’re going to have to work together if want to win.”



- ### Talk About It
- How is being a teammate different from being a friend? How is it similar?
 - How can you be friendly toward someone even if you’re not good friends?
 - How can teammates and classmates *become* friends?
 - What common goals are you and your classmates working toward?

Think About It

1. Write down something you could do today to make your school a kinder, safer place.

2. What is one way you could teach younger children at your school about kindness, working together, and standing up for others?





Dear Parents,

To empower students to fight back against the growing problem of peer aggression, our class will be participating in a special curriculum unit developed by American Girl, in partnership with The Ophelia Project. The curriculum introduces students to Chrissa, a girl who faces bullying at her new school and finds the courage to do something about it.

The curriculum educates students about the ways in which people bully, identifies the roles in aggression (the bully, the target, and the *bystander*, or the “kid in the middle”), and encourages students to stand up for one another and to report bullying to adults. Our goal is to use this curriculum to promote a safe, kind, and respectful environment for your child.

As a parent, you are still the most influential person in your child’s life. What can you do to protect him or her from peer aggression?

- Model kindness and inclusion in your home.
- Take your child’s friendship and bullying concerns seriously.
- Provide opportunities for your child to form friendships outside of school.
- Develop a relationship with your child’s teachers, coaches, and school officials (preferably *before* your child comes to you with concerns about bullying).
- Educate yourself about bullying and the strategies that work best to counter it. Then pass it on! Share what you’ve learned. Together, we *can* make school a safer place for all students.

For more information, visit www.opheliaproject.org and americangirl.com/girloftheyear, where children can take a pledge to stand together against bullying. And please feel free to contact me if you have questions about the curriculum or concerns about how peer aggression may be affecting your child. Thank you for your support of this important initiative.

PASS IT ON!

teacher's signature

