



I Am Jack

By Susanne Gervay

Educator's Notes:

Bullying is insidious. It is not one great dramatic incident. It is a gradual process of victimization where the child becomes more and more isolated and afraid and the bully gets more and more aggressive, strengthened through group support and lack of adult action. Children aged 9 to 13 years old are at the highest risk.

How Bullying Hurts Kids:

- Low self esteem
- Depression
- Failure at schoolwork
- Kids experience fear
- Isolation and loneliness
- The bullied learns to become a victim
- The bully learns the success of aggression

Recent studies show that the negative effects of bullying continue into adult years damaging both the bullied and the bully.

I Am Jack is based on real incidents. Jack is a real kid and he's in trouble: Following are lesson suggestions which are a starting point for reading, discussion and follow-up activities:

Name Calling:

Read pages 27-30 - Jack is called "Butt Head."

- Do you know anyone who was called names? Why? How?
- What do bullies pick on? (Anything - being fat or thin, red hair or black, freckles, divorced family, Italian father, dumb brother .. anything is an excuse. There isn't a real reason.)
- When does name calling/teasing become more than that?
 - When other kids join in the name calling
 - When the kid is the scapegoat
 - When friends leave you
- How does Jack react?
 - He feels sick
 - Scared
 - Angry
 - Tries to stand up
 - Powerless
- What can he do when he's outnumbered?
 - Ignore them
 - Run away
 - Hide
 - Fight - but he'll be killed
 - Where are the teachers?
 - Mum can help, but she's too busy



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- His family.

How Far Can Bullying Go?

Spitting: Read pages 58-60 - Kids spit at Jack.

- Why do they do it?
 - They forget who Jack is.
 - Jack isn't a person anymore
 - It is just a game
 - Peer pressure
 - Kids don't really understand their actions
 - Kids follows the bully sometimes because of fear of the bully
 - Don't have the courage to oppose the bully

Follow-up Activities:

- Posters
 - Create slogans against Bullying. See pages 108-109 for examples.
 - Anti-bullying posters
- Small groups work together to answer the following questions and report back to the class (The answers can become the basis for more anti-bullying posters and further discussion:
 - If you are frightened of a group of children who are teasing you, what would/can you do?
 - If you saw a boy being bullied on the bus what would you do?
 - Why is the library a safe place?
 - Would you report bullying to the Principal or your parent? Why?

Kids are Special:

What is special about kids in the class?

- Read pages 20-21. Jack is a great joke maker.
- Read pages 7-8 Jack is a photographer and experiments with plants. Areas where kids are special:
 - Sports
 - Art/ dancing/music/writing/drawing
 - Helping your family
 - Reader
 - Inventor
 - Cooking
 - Anything they do
- Everyone says what they like doing, what makes them special. List the talents of the kids on the board.