

# KEEPING YOU SAFE

A KIDS' GUIDE

**BUL-LY (noun) >>** a person who is habitually cruel or overbearing, especially to smaller or weaker people

**How do you know if you are, or have ever been, a bully?**

- Does it make you feel better to hurt other people or take their things?
- Do you sometimes use your size and strength to get your way?
- Have you been bullied by someone in the past and feel like you have to make up for it by doing the same thing to others?
- Do you avoid thinking about how other people might feel if you say or do hurtful things to them?

Many bullies grow up into adults who bully their families, friends and co-workers, causing all sorts of problems with relationships and careers. It's hard to think about the future when you're feeling something here and now, but take a moment to see how your behavior may be laying down some pretty negative groundwork.

Source: [pbskids.org/parents](http://pbskids.org/parents)

## Bullying 101

Jesus tells us to “Love your neighbor.” Who does he mean by “neighbor”? He means more than the person living next to your home. Your neighbor is everyone that you encounter every day. Your family, friends, and classmates are your neighbors. Jesus wants us to love and respect them all the time. What if your neighbor does not show you the same respect or love? Then that person is not following Jesus' instructions. A bully is someone who does not show you respect or love by his or her actions.



**Does someone call you names or take personal belongings away from you or post insulting messages on the internet or physically hit, punch or shove you?** Then you are being bullied. Bullies can make you too scared to want to go to school.

**What if you know someone who is being bullied?** Maybe the bully is spreading rumors, threatening a friend or classmate over offensive phone texts or making things up to get your friend or classmate in trouble. You are a bystander. If you witness any bullying against a friend or classmate and do nothing about it, then you are helping the bully. As a bystander, you need to help your friend defeat the bully.

**So do you know what to do if someone is bullying you or a friend or a classmate?** The most important thing you can do is INFORM your parents, a teacher, a school counselor, a coach or a trusted adult. Bullying will keep happening unless you take action and tell. You have the power to stop bullying and even prevent it. Follow Jesus and “love your neighbor” by reporting any bullying behavior no matter if it happens to you or to another friend or classmate.

Learn more about the Archdiocese of Washington's commitment to protecting children  
[www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org) • Office of Child and Youth Protection • 301-853-5328



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## What YOU can do

### Treat Everyone with Respect

Nobody should be mean to others.

- Stop and think before you say or do something that could hurt someone.
- If you feel like being mean to someone, find something else to do. Play a game, watch TV or talk to a friend.
- Talk to an adult you trust. They can help you find ways to be nicer to others.
- Keep in mind that everyone is different. Not better or worse. Just different.
- If you think you have bullied someone in the past, apologize. Everyone feels better.



### What to Do If You're Bullied

There are things you can do if you are being bullied.

- Look at the kid bullying you and tell him or her to stop in a calm, clear voice. You can also try to laugh it off. This works best if joking is easy for you. It could catch the kid bullying you off guard.
- If speaking up seems too hard or not safe, walk away and stay away. Don't fight back. Find an adult to stop the bullying on the spot.

There are things you can do to stay safe in the future too.

- Talk to an adult you trust. Don't keep your feelings inside. Telling someone can help you feel less alone. They can help you make a plan to stop the bullying.
- Stay away from places where bullying happens.
- Stay near adults and other kids. Most bullying happens when adults aren't around.

### Stand Up for Others

When you see bullying, there are safe things you can do to make it stop.

- Talk to a parent, teacher, school counselor or another adult you trust. Adults need to know when bad things happen so they can help.
- Be kind to the kid being bullied. Show them that you care by trying to include them. Sit with them at lunch or on the bus, talk to them at school or invite them to do something. Just hanging out with them will help them know they aren't alone. Not saying anything could make it worse for everyone. The kid who is bullying will think it is ok to keep treating others that way.

### Get Involved

You can be a leader in preventing bullying in your community.

- Find out more about where and when bullying happens at your school. Think about what could help. Then, share your ideas. There is a good chance that adults don't know all of what happens. Your friends can go with you to talk to a teacher, counselor, coach or parent and can add what they think.
- Talk to the principal about getting involved at school. Schools sometimes give students a voice in programs to stop bullying. Be on a school safety committee. Create posters for your school about bullying. Be a role model for younger kids.
- Write a blog, letter to the editor of your local newspaper or tweet about bullying.