

Being bullied and teased

When others tease

Are you being called names? Are you being teased about something?

Kids at school often tease those who aren't like them or who won't do the things they want them to do. They may also tease others about the way they look, the way they speak or the way they dress. That is very rude and unkind, and is not something that is normal or acceptable! So what should you do when you are teased or bullied?

Don't let them get inside

When someone says something nasty over and over, or if something is said by a number of people, it not only hurts, it sticks in your mind. You start believing that it is true. You even start telling yourself the same things you've heard other say to you - believing and even 'proving' that everyone else is right. Bullies sound so sure of themselves and it is easy to be convinced that they are right, especially if no one else sticks up for you.

And so, while you're fighting off the jeers and jabs on the outside, your protection starts to crumble on the inside. Something inside tells you that it's not worth the fight - that you may as well give up and let others trample all over you. Don't ever let that happen. Be strong! You have a mighty God on your side - a God who loves you very, very much and has made you the way you are down to the smallest detail.

The 'BIG' bully: what to do and what not to do

- Try to stay away from places where you are likely to meet the bully. Don't challenge him when you are alone (especially if he is with others).
- Whenever possible, stick with friends or hang around with others. Don't become isolated and quiet. Go out of your way to make friends! This will make you more confident, and it will show the bullies that you are not bothered by their comments.

- If you are afraid or upset, try not to show your feelings. (A bully feels powerful when he can make others afraid of him.) If a bully gets little or no reaction from you, he will probably become bored and eventually leave you.
- In a firm, confident way and without being nasty, ask him/her to stop bullying you.
- Don't try to get back at others by becoming mean as well. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" Romans 12: 17-18.
- You might get a surprising reaction from your enemies by being kind to them. This is how the Bible puts it; "... If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" Romans 12: 20:21. (By the way, the 'burning coals' aren't real coals, but that's probably the way your kindness feels to someone who has been mean to you.)
- If you are being teased about a personal habit, try to be aware of what others find amusing or odd about you. Avoid doing things that irritate or amuse them.
- If you are being hurt or you feel scared, tell a teacher immediately and let your parents know too. It is not your fault that you are being picked on, and you have nothing to be ashamed of!
- Always remember what makes you special: the abilities you have that they don't, and the dreams you have that no one can mess with. These, coupled with a positive attitude, are things that no one can take away from you.
- Lastly, think about this: Jesus, your best friend, was mocked too. People laughed at Him, spat on Him, cursed Him and beat Him. Jesus sees and knows what you are going through, and He is taking note. The Bible says that God will repay those who are mean and abusive. A day is coming when they will stand before God and answer to Him for every single thing they did and said (Matthew 12:36).

Remember, you need to protect yourself on the outside and the inside, so ask for help. You have a right to feel safe and be free from fear of others!