



I AM JACK by SUSANNE GERVAY

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TEACHING NOTES

Educators' 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 9-13 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:

Pages 27-30. Jack is called a bum 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 brotheranything 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 re-act? He feels

- sick
- scared
- angry
- tries to stand up
- powerless

What can he do when he is outnumbered?

- ignore them

- run away
- hide
- fight – but he'll be killed
- where are the teachers?
- Mum can help but she's too busy
- 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 follow 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 108-9 for examples)
- Anti bullying posters
- Group work – small groups work together to answer the following questions and report back to class:
 - if you are frightened of a group of children who are teasing you, what can you do?
 - If you saw someone 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?

The answers can become the basis for Anti Bullying Posters and further discussion.

Kids are special. What is special about the kids in your 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:

- sport
- 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.

Suggestion: a poster why everyone in this class is special.

Role Plays: Create your own play based on what happens in these scenes:

Fear in the Classroom: Read pages 35-56: Jack enters the classroom.

Victim when bullying out of control: Pages 56-57. Jack on the school bus.

It's okay to get a bit of help against bullying: Pages 101-102: Jack enters the schoolyard with Rob.

Understanding why someone is a bully: Pages 111-115: Jack and George Hamel meet in a class.