

Study Guide for Teachers

“I’m Just a Superhero”

Dexter Singleton, Director



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning
Connecticut

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This theatre piece, written and directed by Dexter J. Singleton, Executive Director of Collective Consciousness Theatre, follows 5th grader Loni to a new school where she meets a good friend and... the school bully.

Through scenes and dream sequences, we learn that Loni is not the only one who harbors insecurities. Loni learns to stand up for herself, and the bully learns about the power of friendship.

Length: 45 minutes. Grades: 7 - 12

Bullying Behavior

Can you identify bullying behavior?

Can you recognize these three types of bullying behaviors?

Physical: An action that harms some one or threatens physical harm to some one (hitting, pushing ...)

Verbal: Saying hurtful words (taunting, teasing, threats, spreading rumors...)

Excluding: Not accepting, ignoring or isolating a person (“You can’t play here”)

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

- Do you think most students want to be popular?
- What are 6 things students do to try to be popular?
- Do you think students every try to change how they feel, look or act in order to be popular?
- How do most people feel when someone makes fun of them/puts down how they look or act?
- What is a bully?
- What are 4 things students often say or do when other students put them down/make fun of them?
- Why do you think some students make fun of other students?
- Have you ever heard a student try to scare, threaten or make fun of another student at school?
- Have you ever seen anyone stand up to a bully? If yes, what did they do?

OBJECTIVES

- To evoke discussion on issues of bullying, popularity and assertiveness.
- To provide children with the tools to stand up for themselves and others in an assertive way.
- To demonstrate the negative consequences of trying to hide whom you really are by pretending and covering up.
- To help children view bullies in a more human way
- To provide a springboard for teaching about diversity and perspective taking.

Bullying is not restricted by gender or personality style. A bullying relationship is characterized by an unequal distribution of power between participants.

Bullying behavior may be loud, demanding and aggressive or a more covert and subtle, but just as painful method, of coercing the victim to achieve desired results.

Girls are the victims as well as the perpetrators as often as are boys, however, girls more frequently use more discreet strategies involving words or social pressures. Bullying also can happen between genders i.e. girls can bully boys.

What can you do in your school to stop or prevent bullying?

What can you do to help students who are bullied?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

- Introduction: What were some of Loni and Phil's personal qualities and interests? (try to have imagination and courage among those listed)
- Make a collage about yourself which includes things you like to do, things you like about yourself, personal interests and qualities. Try to include 1 or 2 things that might surprise people in your class.
- Self-descriptive writing exercise:
- Describe yourself as:
 - a kind of weather
 - a kind of car or vehicle
 - a kind of plant or tree
 - a color or combination of colors
 - a place in nature
 - instrument in a band or orchestra
 - an animal
- These are most interesting if elaborated on and not just named e.g. I'm the kind of car that isn't the latest, fancy model but that never breaks down. These images can then be expanded on and combined into poems.
- Write a story or poem about a student who tries to change him/herself in order to become popular. Be sure to include how the student feels during this process.
- Write a story about someone who is being made fun of, who eventually gets the courage to stand up for him/herself.
- Study people in history, like Martin Luther King Jr., who have used non-violence to stand up to those who were threatening them and putting them down.
- "Find Someone Who" activity. (see enclosed sheet) This activity is useful in gathering information about student interests and dynamics as well as in being a springboard for discussion. Distribute copies to students and have them mingle to find and fill in the names of peers who fit the various categories. Challenge them to not use anyone's name more than once.

CURRICULAR LINKS

Connecticut State Department of Education

Source: The Arts - A Guide to K-12 Program Development

- ✚ Goal 3: Responding in Theater
Students should select, observe, describe, analyze, evaluate and explain works of theater, film, television and video (content standard 7)

Source: The CT Framework – K-12 Goals and Standards

- ✚ Standard 4: Responsible Behavior
Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings..
- ✚ Standard 5: Respect for Differences
Students will exhibit an understanding of and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Commissioned author Dexter J. Singleton began his professional theatre career as a company member with the world-renowned Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. He is the former artistic director of the critically acclaimed Kalamazoo Youth Theatre and has worked with many schools and colleges. He currently is lead theater instructor at Regional Center for the Arts in Trumbull, CT.

RESOURCES

State of Connecticut Commission on Children,
<http://www.cga.state.ct.us>
For CT research data and specific program recommendations.

Educators for Social Responsibility
1-800-370-2515, www.esrnational.org

Safe Schools and Communities Coalition
30 Arbor Street, Hartford, CT 06106
860-523-8042 ext. 36

Responsive Classroom
Northeast Foundation for Children
71 Montague City Road
Greenfield, MA 01301
1-800-360-6332

MORE RESOURCES

BOOKS

THE SECRET'S OUT by Jason Ellis
ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS by Al;den D. Morris
BULLYING PREVENTION HANDBOOK by John H. Hoover

WEB

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/bullying.htm>
http://www.bullypolice.org/ct_law.html
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=321940>
<http://www.freewebs.com/agpcabinc/legislativeeffort.htm>
<http://childrensbooks.about.com/od/bulliesandbullying/>

YOUNG AUDIENCE ARTS FOR LEARNING CONNECTICUT
3074 WHITNEY AVENUE
BUILDING 2, 2ND FLOOR
HAMDEN, CT 06518
203-230-8101 telephone 203-230-8131 fax
info@vaconn.org