

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Make two class booklets, one realistic and one imaginary, both titled "If I Were King of the Playground." For the realistic booklet write and illustrate fair rules, such as "I would make everyone take turns on the slide." For the second booklet write and illustrate ideas for an imaginary playground, such as "Water fountains would have lemonade instead of water."

2. Turn the story into a play. In groups of three, choose parts (one parent, a child like Kevin, and a child like Sammy). Perform plays for another class. Try changing the story's ending to demonstrate other strategies for dealing with bullies such as those discussed in Activity #1.

ART

Make a sand art Heartwood paperweight.*

MATH

In pairs, make up playground word problems for the class to solve. Think about distances to the playground from home or school, number of steps on the slide, number of children on monkey bars or in the sandbox, and times swinging on the swings. Present your word problems orally and/or make copies for the class to solve.

*Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Activities, Primary, for sand art Heartwood paperweight and links to bullying prevention sites.

King of the Playground

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
1991
New York: Alladin

JUSTICE
U.S.A.
Realistic Fiction
Reading Time: 5 minutes

CONCEPTS

Justice
Courage
Loyalty
Self-reliance

SUMMARY

Kevin learns that it takes courage to stand up to a bully. Each time he goes to the playground he meets Sammy, who declares, "You can't play here! I'm king of the playground." Kevin goes back home, discusses the problem with his father, and finally musters the courage to confront Sammy. Justice prevails when Kevin stands up for himself, and makes a new friend in the process. Nola Malone's watercolor and black line illustrations give clarity to the text.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss justice, courage, loyalty, and self-reliance as they apply to the story and will explore ways to deal with bullying.

After the Story

King of the Playground

DISCUSSION

1. What problem does Kevin face each time he goes to the playground? At first, how does Kevin handle being treated unfairly? Who helps Kevin with his problem? Why doesn't Kevin's dad go to the playground and tell Sammy to stop bullying his son?
2. How does Kevin show courage?
3. What do you think Kevin will do the next time someone tries to bully him? What would you do if you saw another child being bullied?
4. Kevin shows self-reliance when he stands up for himself. How do you show self-reliance? Talk about why you need to tell an adult if you or someone else is being bullied.

ACTIVITIES

1. Locate your city and state on the world map.
2. In small groups think of other ways Kevin might have solved his problem, such as bringing a friend with him or ignoring Sammy's threats. Talk about strategies to deal with bullies.* Report to the class. Record strategies on a chart.
3. Invite the principal or school counselor to talk to the class about how to deal with bullies. Ask what your school does to prevent bullying.
4. Role-play what would have happened if Kevin had brought a friend to the playground.

WRAP-UP

1. In *My Heartwood Journal* draw a picture of yourself talking over a problem with a parent, friend, teacher, or other adult. Write a sentence about your picture.
2. Take photographs of children showing self-reliance and loyalty. Post on a bulletin board under the title "We help ourselves and others."

EXTENSION

1. Complete the Home Connection pages and take home to share with families.
2. Talk with your family about ways to deal with bullies. With permission, share with the class. Add new ideas to the chart from Activity #2.

VOCABULARY

drawbridge
ditch
bellow