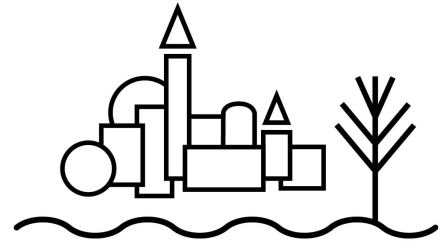


Connecting with My Neighbor Who is A Bully

Luke 10:29-37



One summer when I was a big sister through Big Brother Big Sister program we sent my “little sister” to church camp. Since my husband was the lifeguard I was in and out of the camp most of the week. I didn’t work the camp but I was there if “Lydia” needed me. Lydia was emotionally fragile and this was her first time away from home. The girls in her cabin all knew each other from previous camps. The girls quickly became a clique and were excluding Lydia from their activities. Worse than that they were making hurtful nicknames and making fun of her. Lydia came to me and I intervened explaining to the girls their behavior was bullying.

Bullying comes in many different forms. One form is one we might not even realize we are doing. Social exclusion is one form of bullying. My first time at convention I had trouble finding a table during the luncheon. I asked many different tables if I could sit with them and was told politely no. I had a friend with me as well and this moment has really stuck with her.

An episode of bullying hit close to home and my heart. My husband and I have an adopted son, Benjamin, who is African American and the love of our lives. Brent and I are Caucasian, so I have always known that at some point we would encounter people whose beliefs system does not match ours. I had no idea this would occur before my son turned 3.

One beautiful fall day Benjamin and I were at a local farm playing in a pit filled with kernels of corn. One older boy laid his body in the corn and asked the children around him to cover him in the corn. The children happily obliged including my son. The boys younger sister kept staring at Benjamin. Finally she said, “You can’t play with us”. Benjamin kept dumping kernels of corn on the boy not realizing the girl was talking to him. “Why can’t he play with you?” I asked with dread. “Because he’s..” she began but before she finished her brother, who was covered in corn, took his head and knocked it into her head stopping her from finishing her sentence. He looked at me and said “He can play with us”. The girl said “but he’s” and the brother told her to be quiet. I let my son play there until he was ready to go but my heart was broken for my precious boy and the world he is growing up in.

Reflections

1. Can you remember a time you felt bullied? How did that make you feel?
2. Have you seen a situation where bullying was occurring? Did you step in? Why or why not?

3. Discuss Matthew 5:43-48. How difficult is it to “love our enemies”? What do you think will happen when we pray for those who persecute you? If you done this, share your story.

A Call to Action

1. When you are at a regional meeting, camp, convention or other large gathering introduce yourself to at least three people you have not meet before.
2. When you are at a church and visitors come in, introduce yourself and make them feel welcome. You might even invite them to sit with you during worship.
3. Invite women to your local CP Women’s Ministry meetings that have not been before. Maybe you could offer to pick them up for the meeting so they won’t have to walk in alone.

Resources

1. www.stopbullying.gov
2. www.pacer.org/bullying/resources
3. <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/all>
4. https://www.aacap.org/.../Bullying_Resource_Center/Home.aspx
5. www.safekids.com/bullying-cyberbullying-resources
- 6.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, please help those people who are being bullied. Send people to help them. Please help the people who are doing the bullying, to get help so that they will not continue to hurt people. Lord, give those being bullied the courage to tell someone. I pray for all of us that if we see someone being bullied we will stand up and stop it. May I become, a protector for all those without protection. In your Holy name we pray, Amen.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Robin Wills is a School Psychologist with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools in Nashville, TN. She serves children from the ages of 3-15. She attends the Jerusalem CP church where her husband Brent pastors. Robin and Brent have one son Benjamin who is 4.