

a beatbybeat play

BEFORE THE BELL

A PLAY ABOUT BULLYING

RESOURCE GUIDE

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The goal of this guide is to provide you with useful activities that will engage your students in an authentic conversation around the themes of the play. These activities will help you and your students explore the content further, revealing meaningful connections that can lead to positive change in your real-world environment.

The guide is divided into two main sections:

- 1: Classroom/Rehearsal Activities**
- 2: Audience Engagement Activities**

Section 1, the **Classroom/Rehearsal Activities**, were designed to be used as a teaching tool in the classroom or used while rehearsing the play with student actors. This section is broken into four smaller sections:

- 1.1 Building Community**
- 1.2 Before Reading the Play**
- 1.3 After Reading the Play (During the Rehearsal Process)**
- 1.4 Ending the Unit**

You, the teacher/director, should choose which strategies best fit the needs and maturity of your students. However, it is highly recommended you explore the “Building Community” section before diving into the serious issues of the play. This will create an environment in which students will feel comfortable to honestly share their thoughts and feelings. Every activity ends with sample reflection questions to allow space for open (and sometimes unexpected) exploration and connection.

Section 2, the **Audience Engagement Activities**, are designed to be used with audiences either before or after viewing the play. They are broken up into two smaller sections:

- 2.1 Pre-Show**
- 2.2 Post-Show**

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1.1

BUILDING COMMUNITY

BUILDING COMMUNITY /

CHECK-IN

Objective: Participants have the opportunity to “check-in” with each other before beginning the work.

Materials Needed: None

Time Needed: 5 minutes

Gather in a standing circle.

Before we begin our work today, let's do a check-in. A check-in allows us to individually express how we are feeling today. It can be either physical or emotional.

Choose a way to check-in:

1) Fill in the prompt:

Today I'm feeling... because...

Today I'm excited to... because...

One thing I'm hoping to accomplish today is...

One thing I'm wondering about is...

2) Using your thumb (thumb up, thumb down, or anywhere in between):

How are you feeling today?

3) Using your body/voice:

Create a sound and gesture to match how you are feeling today.

The facilitator should model the selected check-in strategy each time.

Remain in a standing circle to reflect.

Reflection Questions:

- *What types of things did we hear?*
- *How is our group feeling overall today?*
- *What is our group most excited about?*
- *What larger things are shaping how we feel today as a group?*
- *How might this information inform how we work together today?*

Note: This activity can be done daily.

BUILDING COMMUNITY / COMMUNITY CONTRACT

Objective: The class will create a set of community guidelines that will facilitate a comfortable sharing environment.

Materials Needed: Poster Paper and Markers

Time Needed: 10 minutes

As we start working together, I want us to think about how we can create an environment in which everyone feels comfortable to participate. Let's think about some guidelines that we all can follow that would allow us to do that. For example, "respect opinions that differ from your own". Or, "include all individuals in group activities and conversations".

Write down the students' responses up on the poster paper. Ask follow-up questions that get to the "why" behind each response. *What would this guideline specifically look like in action?*

Take a picture of the contract or save the poster paper so you can return to it throughout the unit.

Reflection Questions:

- *On a scale of 1 to 10, how is our group doing following the community contract? Why?*
- *Are there any other guidelines that we feel would be useful to add to this list?*
- *Why is building a comfortable environment important in our classroom/rehearsal space?*

BUILDING COMMUNITY / THE TRUTH ABOUT ME

Objective: Participants share truths about themselves in order to find commonalities amongst the group.

Materials Needed: Painter's Tape or Post-It Notes

Time Needed: 15 minutes

We are going to play a game called "The Truth About Me". Give each student a small piece of painter's tape or a post-it note. To start, each person must stand at a specific spot in the circle. Take the tape or post-it note and place it between your feet.

The facilitator stands in the middle of the circle.

As you notice I do not have a spot. The objective of the game will be for me to take one of your spots. How I will do that is by saying something that is true for me. I will say "My name is _____, and the truth about me is _____." If that is also true for you, you will move and find a new spot in the circle (kind of like musical chairs). Then the person that no longer has a spot will move to the middle and share a truth. The goal of the game is to get multiple people to move, so you should share a fact with that in mind.

Before we begin, how might we play safely? Any other rules you think we should add to the game to help us stay committed to our community contract?

Play multiple rounds.

Gather in a standing circle to reflect.

Reflection Questions:

- *How did this game make you feel?*
- *What did you notice about the group?*
- *What were statements that made a lot of people move?*
- *What were statements that made only a few people to move?*
- *What was it like to be in the middle of the circle?*
- *How do you think we worked as an ensemble?*
- *This game asked us to share something that was true about ourselves. Why is that important?*

BUILDING COMMUNITY / IDENTITY ICEBERG

Objective: Explore what identity means, consider which identities can and can't be seen, and name identity markers that the group is interested in sharing/discussing.

Materials Needed: Paper, Pencils, Poster/Chart Paper, Markers and Post-It Notes

Time Needed: 20 minutes

In “Before the Bell”, characters wrestle with their identity. In this activity, we’re going to explore what identity means.

Let’s begin by brainstorming a list of identity categories. Ask the class to provide a list of things in which one can identify by. Write them on the board. Possible responses could be: gender, religion, familial relationship, profession, etc.

Based on these categories, we have various identity markers that someone may use to describe themselves (such as Indian, male, gay, brother, adopted, etc).

Ask the class to take out a notepad, and give them one minute to create a list of identity markers about themselves.

From this list, they must pick five they are comfortable sharing. They should write each one on a different post-it note.

On a large piece of poster/chart paper (or dry erase board) draw a horizontal line across the page to represent a “water line”. Then draw a curved vertical “mountain” across the page to represent an “iceberg”, which starts below the “water line” where a large formation sits below the water and small portion sticks out above the water.

Look at your post-it notes. Decide which identity markers can be seen and which are hidden. Place your post-it notes on the iceberg. If the identity marker can be seen, place it above the water line. If it is hidden, place it below the water line. There’s no right or wrong answer, it’s up to you to choose where it goes.

Reflection Questions:

- *How did it feel to write down your identity markers?*
- *What types of identity markers did we as a group choose to include/exclude?*
- *What do you notice about where identity markers are placed on the poster? Why do you think that happened?*
- *How does the metaphor of an iceberg relate to how others perceive us?*
- *Were any identity markers surprising to see either above or below the water line?*

1.2

BEFORE READING THE PLAY

BEFORE READING THE PLAY / POSTER DIALOGUE

Objective: Students will share thoughts related to bullying before extensive work on the play.

Materials Needed: 4 Blank Posters (Chart Paper) and Markers

Time Needed: 25 minutes

Hang up four posters in different areas of the room. Each poster has a prompt at the top:

- Bullying looks like...
- Bullying happens most when...
- Bullying is a problem because...
- I can be an upstander by...

In a moment, you will get a marker and walk around the room to visit the posters. Each poster has a prompt. You must write down a word or phrase to answer the prompt. If you agree with something that is already written there, please add a checkmark. Revisit each poster so that you can see what has been added and add new ideas. This is a silent activity.

Review each prompt before passing out markers and beginning the activity.

Give the students at least 10 minutes to wander and write. They should not feel rushed. Consider playing some calming instrumental music. Encourage them to keep revisiting the posters as new comments are written.

Reflection Questions for each Individual Poster:

- *Which words or responses got the most check marks?*
- *Based on the responses, what does it seem this group feels is most important regarding this topic?*

General Reflection Questions:

- *Are there any specific words, phrases, or ideas that appear on more than one poster? Why do you think this is?*
- *What do all of these posters have to do with our school?*
- *What do these posters say about the environment of our school?*

BEFORE READING THE PLAY / EXPLODING ATOM

Objective: Share opinions and create a dialogue as a group before extensive work on the play.

Materials Needed: Water Bottle

Time Needed: 25 Minutes

Gather the class into a large standing circle.

We're about to play a game called "Exploding Atom". This game will require us to share our own opinions with others. Remember to consider the community contract that we made together.

I am going to place a water bottle in the middle of the circle. Imagine that each of you are standing on your own line between you and the water bottle, like spokes on a wagon wheel.

I am going to read a statement, then give you some time to think about it. You will then decide for yourself if you strongly agree or strongly disagree or are anywhere in between. If you move close to the water bottle you strongly agree (demonstrate this), if you move father away from the bottle you strongly disagree (demonstrate this).

There is no right or wrong answer, only what is true for you. It's OK if you're a bit unsure. We will move silently, and after we have established our positions we will have an opportunity to discuss.

We're going to practice with an easy statement, "I love school." I will read it a second time and then we will move silently. "I love school."

Allow the students to move. Make a comment on what you notice (Nate, I would have never expected!) Tell them at this point we would engage in a short discussion.

Let's reset and try with a different statement.

Statement #1: "Bullying is easy to spot."

All the students should move to a new position.

Discussion:

Choose one of the following exploration strategies:

- Ask a few individuals to share and explain their choice with the class.
- Ask the students to pair with someone else who placed themselves on a very similar spot on the continuum. Have them discuss as a pair, then share with the class.
- Ask the students to pair with someone else located on an extreme different part of the continuum. Have them discuss as a pair then share with the class. (If you feel the

students are not capable of choosing a partner, feel free to quickly assign the partners based on what you see.)

- Group the students into four groups based on where they stand: 1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Disagree 4) Strongly Disagree. Have them discuss as a group, then share with the class

Reset back into the default position.

Repeat this activity several more times with the following statements:

Statement #2: “Kids will be bullied no matter who they are.”

Statement #3: “I have the ability to stop bullying.”

Feel free to add your own statements based on aspects of bullying you’d like your students to explore.

3.3

AFTER READING THE PLAY (DURING THE REHEARSAL PROCESS)

AFTER READING THE PLAY / ROLE ON THE WALL

Objective: Analyze characters from the play and connect how their internal feelings are affected by external forces.

Materials Needed: Poster Paper and Markers

Time Needed: 25 minutes

Let's analyze two of our main characters from the play, Mike and Trevor.

Draw an outline of a head and shoulders on poster paper in black marker. Label one Mike and label the other Trevor.

Let's begin with Mike. What are his internal thoughts and feelings? Why?

Write responses in red marker on the inside of the body. Get multiple responses. Note how characters can have a range of emotions at the same time.

What are the forces on the outside that are causing him to feel this way?

Write responses in blue marker on the outside of the body. Ask the class to connect the internal traits to the external traits using an arrow. Get multiple responses, note how characters can have different forces that cause a single feeling or thought.

Now, let's repeat the process for Trevor. What are his internal thoughts and feelings? Why?

Write responses in red marker on the inside of the body.

What are the forces on the outside that are causing him to feel this way?

Write responses in blue marker on the outside of the body. Ask the class to connect the internal traits to the external traits using an arrow.

Reflection Questions:

- *How did this strategy help you understand a character's feelings?*
- *How are Mike and Trevor the same? How are they different?*
- *What single event, person, or action, do you think impacts Mike the most? What single event, person, or action, do you think impacts Trevor the most? Why?*
- *What could make this character change? What has to happen in order for change to occur? What would that process look like for this character?*
- *Do you think this is a realistic portrait of a bully? Why or why not?*

In the same way that we explored Mike and Trevor, we will now look at Ethan. This time, consider how Mike and Trevor impact Ethan. This time let's start on the outside.

Draw an outline of a head and shoulders on poster paper in black marker. Label it Ethan.

How is Ethan impacted by Mike and Trevor? Write responses in blue marker on the outside of the body. Get multiple responses, noting how characters can have multiple forces. *What are any other external pressures that Ethan feels?* Get multiple responses.

What are Ethan's internal feelings? Write responses in red marker on the inside of the body. Get multiple responses, demonstrating characters can have a range of emotions at the same time. Ask the class to connect the internal traits to the external traits using an arrow.

Discuss as a class.

How does this connect with the Identity Iceberg activity?

AFTER READING THE PLAY / VISUAL MAPPING

Objective: List the characters from the play (seen and unseen) and visually connect the relationships with string.

Materials Needed: Half Sheets of Paper, Markers (two different colors) and String

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Pass out red markers and sheets of paper to small groups of students.

As a group, we are going to list the characters that we see in the play. Who are the characters that we see in the play? Create a slip of paper with each character name in red marker.

Now let's take all of these characters and create a relational map on the ground. This map should show us who is connected in the play.

As students suggest who goes where on the map, facilitate a dialogue as to the “why” behind each choice. Dig deeply into what we know from other characters and what the characters reveal about themselves, and what is inferred using the string to show the connections that multiple characters have to others.

Now, let's switch to using blue markers. Who are characters that we hear about, but do not see in the play? Create a slip of paper with each character's name in blue marker.

Where would they go on our map?

Now, we are going to look at the characters on the map we created. Is the character a victim, bully, bystander, or upstander? A character may be more than one.

Label the characters:

- Write a V for Victim
- Write a BL for Bully
- Write a BS for Bystander
- Write a US for Upstander

Let's discuss a few characters. Why did you label _____ as _____? What dialogue or action in the play informed your choice to label them this way.

Gather in a standing around the map to discuss.

Reflection Questions:

- What did you discover about the play from this process?
- What new insights does this map give you about school culture?

- *From this map, do you think there is a clear protagonist and antagonist in the play, why or why not?*
- *Based on the map, what characters do you think hold the most power? Why?*
- *What did you discover about the characters through labeling them as victim, bully, bystander, or upstander?*

AFTER READING THE PLAY / THE TRUTH ABOUT ME

Objective: Consider the inner truth of characters from the play and find commonalities/differences between characters.

Materials Needed: Index Cards (each with character names from the play), Painter's Tape or Post-it Note

Time Needed: 20 minutes

If students did not play "The Truth About Me" game as *themselves* in the Building Community section 1.1 before exploring the play, do that first. Then play this version from a *character's perspective*.

Make a standing circle.

We are going to play a game called "The Truth About Me". This time when we play the game, we are going to think from the perspective of one of the characters from the play. Take a piece of painter's tape or a post-it note and place it between your feet.

You will think from the perspective of a specific character. Pass out index cards with different character names from the play (it is okay if there are repeats).

As you notice I do not have a spot. The objective of the game will be for me to take one of your spots. How I will do that is by saying something that is true for my character. I will say "I am _____, and the truth about me is _____." If that is also true for your character, you will move out of your current spot and find a new spot in the circle. For example, "I am Kevin, and the truth about me is I witness violence." If your character also witnesses violence, then you would find a new spot in the circle. We may find statements that are true for multiple characters, where as, some may only be true for one or two characters.

Before we play, how might we play safely? Any other rules you think we should add to the game to help us stay committed to our community contract?

Play multiple rounds. Gather in a standing circle to reflect.

Reflection Questions:

- How was it different to play as a character, rather than yourself?
- What did you discover about the characters?
- What were statements that lots of characters moved on?
- What were statements that only a few characters moved on?
- Why is understanding the "truth" of a character important in this play?

AFTER READING THE PLAY /

DEFENDER

Objective: Explore the idea of *protection* and connect this theme to the play.

Materials Needed: None

Time Needed: 20 minutes

Spread out in the space so that you are equidistant from one another. When I clap my hands twice you will silently move around the room at a normal pace. If I clap my hands twice again you will stop. This is a silent activity.

Clap hands twice to start. Clap hands twice to stop. Continue until you feel the group is fully aware and focused.

I am going to ask you to select someone in the room. Do not indicate who you have selected. In a moment when we begin walking again, you will stay as far away from this person as possible.

Clap hands twice to start. Coach as needed to help participants with body awareness and focus. Clap hands twice to stop.

Without indicating who you are staying far away from, you will secretly select a different individual that you always want between you and the person you are staying far away from, the new person is your defender.

Clap hands twice to start. Coach as needed to help participants with body awareness and focus. Clap hands twice to stop.

Play with the following layers:

- Adjust the tempo so that students move at different speeds, from 0 (no movement) to 10 (fast-paced walking).
- Adjust the space size. For example, only use half of the room. Or, alter the playing space so that there are slight obstacles, like a few folding chairs throughout the space.

Gather in a standing circle to reflect.

Reflection Questions:

- *What was challenging about this game? What was easy?*
- *What strategies did you use to keep your defender between you and your enemy?*
- *How did it feel to protect someone else in this game?*
- *What characters in the play feel the need to protect someone else? Who needed protection? What factors might make this feeling more urgent?*
- *If this game is a metaphor for the setting of the play, what might the chairs represent for the characters?*

AFTER READING THE PLAY / FALLING

Objective: Explore the feeling of *falling* and connect this theme to the play.

Materials Needed: None

Time Needed: 20 minutes

Spread out in the space so that you fill the whole area and are equidistant from one another.

When I clap my hands twice you will silently move around the room at a normal pace trying to remain equidistant from one another. If I clap my hands twice again you will stop. This is a silent activity.

Clap hands twice to start. Coach as needed to help participants with body awareness and focus. Clap hands twice to stop. Continue until you feel the group is fully aware and focused.

In a moment when we begin again, anyone can stop and shout “falling” and slowly begin to fall backwards with a straight, stiff body. If you hear falling, others around should rush over and catch the person. Generally, many people rush to one person so there are many hands helping them up. Once they are back up, the game continues. Once again filling the space and remaining equidistant from one another.

What are some guidelines that we might put in place for this game? (For example, only one “falling” at a time. Falling should happen in slow motion, etc.)

Note: You can adjust the game to crumbling if it is not safe for participants.

Play multiple rounds.

Gather in a standing circle to reflect.

Reflection Questions:

- *What was challenging about this game? What was easy?*
- *What strategies did you use to keep yourself or others safe?*
- *How did it feel to fall? How did it feel to be caught? Or to support/catch someone else?*
- *What characters in the play “fall” and why? Do they get help up? Who is helping them?*

AFTER READING THE PLAY /

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

Objective: Research on bullying and creation of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to share facts and point-of-view with an audience.

Materials Needed: PSA Examples, Poster Paper and Markers

Time Needed: 45 minutes

In the play, there are many issues that impact and underpin why bullying is happening, either inferred or directly addressed. What are they? Make a list on the board.

What are some statistics about bullying? Allow students to do some online research to share with the class. Make a list of the statistics found. (Or, you can share statistics you've prepared in advance from the "Resources" link at the back of this guide.

What are some common terms that are associated with bullying or terms that are used in bully prevention? Make a list of the terms used.

In a moment, you will devise a short piece in a small group. Your group will create a Public Service Announcement, or a PSA. What is a PSA? What examples have you seen? How and why are PSA's effective?

Show an example of an actual PSA. Facilitate a dialogue around elements of persuasion used in the form (message, slogan, celebrity endorsement, music, anti-model/model, etc). Discuss how PSA's are different in various media forms, YouTube, radio, TV, etc.

Using the lists we created as source material, your group will create a 30 second PSA on bullying. Keep in mind the audience (your peers) and the need to carefully construct the piece to create work that aligns to our community contract. Consider a PSA that that would really connect with your peers, what is something that would grab your attention on TV? All group members should be involved in the performance.

Allow groups to devise and rehearse their PSA's.

Provide the group with a simultaneous dress rehearsal, where all groups are practicing their 30 second PSA at the same time before sharing with the rest of the class.

Have the groups share. Reflect with the audience:

Reflection Questions:

- *What stood out to you as an audience member?*
- *What PSA element did the group choose to use to communicate their message?*
- *What similarities or differences did you see across all the PSA's that we created today?*

AFTER READING THE PLAY /

WRITING IN ROLE & PAIRED IMPROVISATION

Objective: Explore the experiences and point of view of a character at the end of the play.

Materials Needed: Paper & Pencil

Time Needed: 25 minutes

Let's look at the final lines of the play.

MIKE

Maybe it's about listening.

TREVOR

To the other person's story.

ETHAN

To their pain.

MIKE

Frustrations.

TREVOR

Insecurities.

ETHAN

But also their hopes.

MIKE

Goals.

TREVOR

Likes.

I would like you to select a main character from the play that you feel you know well. For the next few minutes you will silently write from that character's perspective. What do they wish others knew about them? What are their "pains, frustrations, insecurities, hopes, goals, and likes"?

Allow students to silently write "in role".

In a moment, you will do paired improvisation. This means that you will improvise (make-up) a dialogue between two characters. For this activity, the focus is on dialogue only. You can play across age and gender.

Each person will focus on telling their character's story, their "pains, frustrations, insecurities, hopes, goals, and likes". You can use some of the ideas that you just wrote down to inspire your dialogue.

Facilitate pairing of students so that different characters are paired together.

Once you have your partner, sit in a chair with them face-to-face. Decide who might share their story first. When I clap my hands twice you will begin.

Allow both students in the group to share. As the sharing is happening listen in on the dialogue. Select a few groups to share with the rest of the class.

Gather in a seated circle to reflect.

Reflection Questions:

- *How did it feel to embody a character through dialogue?*
- *What did you discover about your character? What did you discover about the other character?*
- *What external forces, ideas, or people shape your character's specific situation or conflict?*
- *How did it feel to authentically listen?*

AFTER READING THE PLAY / REAL & IDEAL IMAGES

Objective: Explore the role of bystanders and upstanders.

Materials Needed: None

Time Needed: 20 minutes

Gather in a standing circle.

In a moment, you will be divided into small groups. Each group will create a frozen image, a snapshot of action. Consider how in this frozen image you can play with levels, space, gesture, and expression. All group members should be involved. You will create two frozen pictures, a snapshot of 1) “bystanders” and a snapshot of 2) “upstanders”

Allow groups to devise and rehearse their real and ideal images.

Provide the group with a simultaneous dress rehearsal, where all group are practicing their 1) bystander (real) image and 2) upstander (ideal) image.

Here’s how sharing will work. When I say “blackout” the audience will close their eyes while the group prepares their first image. When I say “curtain up” the audience will open their eyes to reveal the image. Then I will say “blackout” again as the group transitions to their second image, then “curtain up”.

Each group shares the real and ideal images.

Reflection Questions:

- *How did it feel to embody a bystander and an upstander?*
- *What did you notice was similar across the groups in the images?*
- *What characters in the play were bystanders?*
- *What outside forces (societal or individual) shape real issue of bystanders?*
- *Who or what can help move from the real to the ideal, from bystanders to upstanders?*
- *Why is change hard?*
- *What makes change in the world?*
- *How can you become a personal agent for change?*

AFTER READING THE PLAY / WRITING IN ROLE & TALK SHOW

Objective: Explore the experiences of a character and consider the impact that the past can have on the future.

Materials Needed: Paper and Pencil

Time Needed: 25 minutes

Of the main characters in the play, who do you want to hear more from ten years later? Now that high school has passed for many of our characters, they can talk about what they are doing now and what they learned from their high school experiences. I would like you to select one main character, and write about what they are doing in life now and how their high school experience impacted their life.

Allow students five minutes of silent writing time.

Now we are going to hear from some of these characters. In a moment, I will go into the role as a “talk show host” and ask your characters to share some thoughts about your high school experience now that you have graduated and been out in the world for about ten years. The goal is not to physically embody the character, but share through dialogue. It is okay if we have more than one of the same character, they might have gone off to do different things or their experience may have impacted them differently. You can use your writing as support for the dialogue.

Stay in the semi-circle and choose students to come up and be interviewed by you “in character”. They should introduce themselves and share what they are doing. As the facilitator, ask questions to deepen and probe the responses and reflect on how the high school events impacted their lives.

Gather in a seated circle.

Reflection Questions:

- *How did it feel to think through the perspective of a character ten years later? What was easy about that? What was challenging?*
- *What new insight did you gain about the impact of the character’s high school experience?*
- *Where you surprised to hear what any of our characters went on to do?*
- *What might make it challenging to move on from events like those depicted in the play?*
- *What resources exist to support individuals dealing with such challenges?*

1.4

ENDING THE UNIT (AFTER CLOSING THE SHOW)

ENDING THE UNIT / SNOWBALL

Objective: Set specific intentions in order to move from dialogue and reflection to action.

Materials Needed: Half Sheets of Paper and Markers

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Gather in a seated circle.

Pass out a slip of paper and marker to each participant.

On the slip of paper I would like you to write the following prompt: “In my school I will prevent bullying by...” Then, think about how you would like to finish that sentence and complete it.

Once you have completed the prompt, crumple up your paper and throw it into the middle of the circle.

When all the papers have been crumpled and thrown in, mix them all up. Then, randomly pass out a “snowball” to each student.

Go around the circle and have each student read his/her “snowball”.

Reflection Questions:

- *What were some of the most common responses to the prompt? Why do you think this was?*
- *How many agreed with someone else’s opinion? Share a personal connection you made to someone else’s opinion.*
- *Do you think this will be challenging to implement in your/our school? Why or why not?*
- *How might we hold ourselves accountable for these actions?*

ENDING THE UNIT / IT MADE ME THINK

Objective: Reflect on the work done together in order to provide a closing ritual after exploring challenging topics.

Materials Needed: None

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Gather in a standing circle.

I would like you to reflect on our work together today/during this exploration. Think about what ideas you are walking away with. This could be a question or an idea that you are wrestling with, something you learned or was surprising to you, or an opinion or idea that really shifted your perspective. Think about how you can distill that down to a word or short phrase. You don't have to justify why you selected the word or phrase.

Give participants time to think.

Go around the circle allowing each student to share their response.

Reflection Questions:

- *What ideas did you hear more than once in our reflection? Why do you think this was?*
- *If we had to title our thoughts, based on all the our responses, what would a creative title be?*

ENDING THE UNIT / PERSPECTIVE WEB:

Objective: Reflect on the experience and the connectedness that an artistic process provides for a group of individuals.

Materials Needed: Yarn

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Gather in a seated circle with chairs touching each other.

Select a prompt:

- One thing I learned in our process was...
- One thing I am taking away is...
- One thing I will do to prevent bullying is...
- Something I appreciated about our work together is...
- Something I will always remember from this process is...
- The topic of bullying is important because...
- One way I will be an upstander is...

I am going to ask you to think about the following prompt. (Say the selected prompt.) Think about how you can finish the statement. Allow a few silent moments for the kids to think.

Explain that everyone is going to share their response and then toss a ball of yarn. Model by answering the prompt.

Unravel a few feet of the ball of yarn, keeping hold of the end, make eye contact with someone across the circle, and gently toss the ball to them. They will then share the prompt and their answer, then toss to someone else.

At the end the yarn should come back to you. Hold onto the web of yarn as you reflect:

Reflection Questions:

- *What ideas did you hear more than once in our reflection? Why do you think this was?*
- *What kinds of things did our group learn/appreciate the most?*
- *If we had to title our perspective web based on all the our responses, what would a creative title be?*
- *How is the web a symbol for bully prevention?*
- *How is the web a symbol for the artistic process we engaging in (reading, analyzing, and/or performing the play)?*

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

PRE-SHOW / EXPLODING ATOM

Objective: Share opinions and create a dialogue as a group before seeing the play.

Materials Needed: Water Bottle

Time Needed: 25 Minutes

Gather the class into a large standing circle.

We're about to play a game called "Exploding Atom". This game will require us to share our own opinions with others. Remember to consider the community contract that we made together.

I am going to place a water bottle in the middle of the circle. Imagine that each of you are standing on your own line between you and the water bottle, like spokes on a wagon wheel.

I am going to read a statement, then give you some time to think about it. You will then decide for yourself if you strongly agree or strongly disagree or are anywhere in between. If you move close to the water bottle you strongly agree (demonstrate this), if you move father away from the bottle you strongly disagree (demonstrate this).

There is no right or wrong answer, only what is true for you. It's OK if you're a bit unsure. We will move silently, and after we have established our positions we will have an opportunity to discuss.

We're going to practice with an easy statement, "I love school." I will read it a second time and then we will move silently. "I love school."

Allow the students to move. Make a comment on what you notice (Nate, I would have never expected!) Tell them at this point we would engage in a short discussion.

Let's reset and try with a different statement.

Statement #1: "Bullying is easy to spot."

All the students should move to a new position.

Discussion:

Choose one of the following exploration strategies:

- Ask a few individuals to share and explain their choice with the class.
- Ask the students to pair with someone else who placed themselves on a very similar spot on the continuum. Have them discuss as a pair, then share with the class.
- Ask the students to pair with someone else located on an extreme different part of the continuum. Have them discuss as a pair then share with the class. (If you feel the

students are not capable of choosing a partner, feel free to quickly assign the partners based on what you see.)

- Group the students into four groups based on where they stand: 1) Strongly Agree 2) Agree 3) Disagree 4) Strongly Disagree. Have them discuss as a group, then share with the class

Reset back into the default position.

Repeat this activity several more times with the following statements:

Statement #2: “Kids will be bullied no matter who they are.”

Statement #3: “I have the ability to stop bullying.”

Feel free to add your own statements based on aspects of bullying you’d like your students to explore.

PRE-SHOW / POSTER DIALOGUE

Objective: Share prior knowledge and thoughts on topics related to bullying before seeing the play.

Materials Needed: 4 Blank Posters (Chart Paper) and Markers

Time Needed: 25 minutes

Hang up four posters in different areas of the room. Each poster has a prompt at the top:

- Bullying looks like...
- Bullying happens most when...
- Bullying is a problem because...
- I can be an upstander by...

In a moment, you will get a marker and walk around the room to visit the posters. Each poster has a prompt. You must write down a word or phrase to answer the prompt. If you agree with something that is already written there, please add a checkmark. Revisit each poster so that you can see what has been added and add new ideas. This is a silent activity.

Review each prompt before passing out markers and beginning the activity.

Give the students at least 10 minutes to wander and write. They should not feel rushed. Consider playing some calming instrumental music. Encourage them to keep revisiting the posters as new comments are written.

Reflection Questions for each Individual Poster:

- *Which words or responses got the most check marks?*
- *Based on the responses, what does it seem this group feels is most important regarding this topic?*

General Reflection Questions:

- *Are there any specific words, phrases, or ideas that appear on more than one poster? Why do you think this is?*
- *What do all of these posters have to do with our school?*
- *What do these posters say about the environment at our school?*

POST-SHOW / POSTER DIALOGUE

Objective: Reflect on the play and its message through writing response.

Materials Needed: 4 Blank Posters (Chart Paper) and Markers

Time Needed: 25 minutes

Hang up four posters in different areas of the room. Each poster has a prompt at the top:

- Bullying looks like...
- Bullying happens most when...
- Bullying is a problem because...
- I can be an upstander by...

In a moment, you will get a marker and walk around the room to visit the posters. Each poster has a prompt. You must write down a word or phrase to answer the prompt. If you agree with something that is already written there, please add a checkmark. Revisit each poster so that you can see what has been added and add new ideas. This is a silent activity.

Review each prompt before passing out markers and beginning the activity.

Give the students at least 10 minutes to wander and write. They should not feel rushed. Consider playing some calming instrumental music. Encourage them to keep revisiting the posters as new comments are written.

Reflection Questions for each Individual Poster:

- *Which words or responses got the most check marks?*
- *Based on the responses, what does it seem this group feels is most important regarding this topic?*

General Reflection Questions:

- *Are there any specific words, phrases, or ideas that appear on more than one poster? Why do you think this is?*
- *What do all of these posters have to do with our school?*
- *What do these posters say about the environment at our school?*

POST-SHOW / IT MADE ME THINK

Objective: Share a personal connection to the play through verbal response.

Materials Needed: None

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Gather in a standing circle.

I would like you to reflect on the play you just saw. Think about what ideas you are walking away with. This could be a question or an idea that you are wrestling with, something you learned or was surprising to you, or an opinion or idea that really shifted your perspective. Think about how you can distill that down to a word or short phrase. You don't have to justify why you selected the word or phrase.

Give participants think time.

Go around the circle allowing each student to share their response.

Reflection Questions:

- *What ideas did you hear more than once in our reflection? Why do you think this was?*
- *Does anyone want to share why they said what they said?*
- *How does the play ask us to explore our own thoughts and actions?*

NATIONAL THEATRE STANDARDS

The *Before the Bell Resource Guide* meets state and national standards for theatre education. Most notably, the drama and theatre activities included in this resource guide focus on **responding** to and **connecting** with artistic work. *Before the Bell*, either theatre as performance or theatre as a teaching tool, engages students in dialogue on the topic of bullying to inspire change and develop action in local schools.

RESOURCES

<http://www.pbis.org/school/bully-prevention>
<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/>
<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources>
http://www.safeschools.info/docman/cat_view/16-bullying-prevention-resources
<http://www.upstand.org>

WORKS CITED

Before the Bell Resource Guide uses of Drama-Based Pedagogy in order to build community, facilitate dialogue, and explore the play. Drama-Based Pedagogy is a collection of strategies collected from the field of drama and theatre education to be use by facilitators, educator, and directors to explore a topic of study.

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For more theatre resources for young actors, visit us at

www.bbbpress.com

