



Befriending the Bullied (and the Bully)

by Barbara Gilmour

Ms. Gilmour greeted each of the kids as they arrived for the "Cool Kind Kid" class. Tanner, Nicole, Rudy, Carmen, Stephen and Truman the dragon all greeted her and were excited to share what they had been doing since the last meeting. Each one wanted to talk about how they were being friends to kids who bully at their schools.

"Last time, we talked about how the "Cool Kind Kid" Challenge could help kids who bully learn how to be kinder and nicer," said Ms. Gilmour. "Did you find that being friends with them helped?" she asked.

The kids all wanted to share. Tanner was first and said, "I learned some things about one kid in my class that I didn't know before. I don't want to tell what they were, but he was glad that I talked to him."

Nicole added, "I had the same situation with a girl, who I found out, had been teased and picked on at another school. She thought that if she started bullying in her new school, then no one would bully her."

Rudy looked confused and said, "So she was the one bullied and then became a girl who bullied?"

Ms. Gilmour explained, "Some kids are so hurt by the way they're treated, that they try to do the same to other kids."

Truman spoke up and said, "That's not The Golden Rule. That's 'Do to others what they do to you.'"

Stephen added, "We really need kids to be challenged to live The Golden Rule: 'To treat others the way we want to be treated.'" Everyone agreed.

"I think you are on the right track with being friends with kids who bully," said Ms. Gilmour. "How do you think that will work with the kids who have been

bullied or who are being bullied?"

Carmen waved her hand. "They are the ones who really need a friend."

Rudy added, "We can let them know that we will be their friends."

Truman said, "I'll be their friend and protect them. We can all do that."

Nicole added, "A friend is someone who sticks up for someone who is being bullied!"

Tanner added to that, "A friend tells someone who is being bullied that no one believes what a bully says."

Stephen said, "A tough friend gets help for a kid who is being bullied. He knows it isn't tattling to tell that someone needs help."

Ms. Gilmour added, "A good friend doesn't get help for just physical bullying. It's just as important to get help for someone who is being picked on or excluded. That hurts just as much as physical bullying."

Truman finally said, "I became friends with a younger kid who was bullied. Soon he was able to stand up to the kid who bullied him. And then the bully wanted to be his friend."

Nicole added, "See? Being cool, kind friends works!"



Barbara Gilmour, Tanner's grandmom, is the creator and developer of the "Cool Kind Kid" Social Skills, Character Values and Anti-Bullying educational materials and the award-winning "Cool Kind Kid" Audio CD. She also writes the Children's Manners Blog, offeringtipsforteachingyourchildrenmanners.com and social skills. www.CoolKindKid.com.