



More about the Classroom

by Barbara Gilmour

Nicole, Carmen, Rudy, Steven, Tanner and Truman the Dragon dragged themselves into class. Ms. Gilmour looked at them and asked, "Why the long faces today?" Everyone tried to speak at once.

Tanner looked sad as he told the kids that some kids in his class were being disrespectful to the teacher. Nicole commented that kids in her class were showing up late and not coming prepared.

Ms. Gilmour asked, "What does that tell us?"

Truman responded, "The things we decided to put on the poster Tanner suggested last time are really happening."

"What other ideas do you have for classroom challenges for your posters?" asked Ms. Gilmour.

Rudy said, "I was mad coming in today because so many kids in my class are rude. A lot of them think being mean and using bad words are cool."

Nicole added, "I don't get it. Why do some kids think that being unkind and mean is cool?"

Carmen was thoughtful as she said, "What about kids who don't do their part in class projects? That may not be bullying, but it isn't doing your best,

helping where you can or being cool."

Truman added, "If we think about challenging kids to do their best, to help, share and be respectful, I bet

there will be less bullying." The kids all agreed with Truman.

Ms. Gilmour asked, "What holiday do we have this month?" The kids all looked at her kind of funny. She added, "I know I changed the subject of our topic, but think about the holiday and how it fits our classroom challenge discussion."

Tanner was first to respond, "I know. Flag Day."

"And where do you see a flag in your school?" Ms. Gilmour asked.

Nicole jumped up and said, "We have one in my classroom." Rudy and Steven both said their classrooms had flags, too.

Truman then stood, put his right hand over his heart and began marching around the room pretending to hold a flag. The kids all laughed at him, but he didn't mind. Everyone realized that their classrooms had flags also.

Ms. Gilmour then asked, "What is the most important thing that you can challenge other kids about the flag?"

Nicole and Carmen both spoke at the same time, "Show respect for the flag!"

Tanner added, "Don't let it touch the ground."

Rudy said, "We must keep it clean and be sure it isn't ripped or torn."

"Who knows the proper way to dispose of a torn flag?" asked Ms. Gilmour.

Most hands went up as the kids responded with the right answer, "It must be burned."

Truman was still standing, so he demonstrated how to say the Pledge of Allegiance,

"Stand straight and tall, with your right hand over your heart." The kids practiced, then followed him around the room waving pretend flags with their hands over their hearts.

Ms. Gilmour then said, "You have lots of ideas for your classroom challenge posters. Let's include a flag in a classroom, too. I can't wait to see your finished posters."

Why do some kids think that being unkind and mean is COOL?



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Barbara Gilmour, Tanner's grandmother, 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, offering tips for teaching your children manners and social skills. www.CoolKindKid.com.