



The Real Consequences of Bullying

Psalm 61:1-5

Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I call to you,
when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock
that is higher than I;
for you are my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.
Let me abide in your tent forever,
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.
For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who
fear your name.

Did You Know?

The phrase "passing the buck," which means to shift the blame for an incident or action to someone else, has its roots both in the Civil War era and in poker. According to www.phrases.org, the first mention of the phrase was in the *Weekly New Mexican* in July 1865. At the time, poker players were highly suspicious of cheating, which led to the infamous gunslinger shootouts that fill our country's folklore. The Web site says that, in order to avoid unfairness, the deal changed hands during card-playing sessions, and the person next in line to deal would be given a marker. That marker was usually a knife with a handle made from a buck's horn.*

Today, of course, "passing the buck" is seen as irresponsible, and when it comes to bullying, it can be downright dangerous. Even when it's hard, try to take responsibility for your actions, and don't give in to the temptation to tease or gossip about others. Do and say things that you can be proud of rather than embarrassed by if an adult calls you on them. Instead of "passing the buck" like those gunslingers of the Wild West, turn that phrase on its ear, just as U.S. President Harry Truman did. He kept a sign on his desk that said "The buck stops here," a reminder to take responsibility for his actions.

* Here's the link for the "passing the buck" information: <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/pass-the-buck.html>

Remember This One?

"Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." That's the old phrase adults taught us all in preschool, the phrase that's supposed to remind us that name calling and teasing don't really have the power to harm us. The older we get, however, the more we realize that words can cut deeper than even the sharpest stick or the hardest rock. Consider this phrase not as a security blanket, as you might have when you were young, but as a reminder to speak to others with kindness and respect, just as you'd like them to speak to you.

Think about It

What would you do if:

- Someone shoved you into a locker in the hall at school?
- Your best friend started saying not-so-nice things about you behind your back?
- You saw a friend or someone popular making fun of someone else in the lunchroom?

If you're not sure how to answer these questions, check out <http://www.bullyfreekids.com> for some tips on how to stay bully free.

About Bullying

Bullying is a pretty tough subject to talk about, and so it might be difficult to be honest about your experiences in front of your whole youth group. So here's your chance to come clean: in the space below, write a paragraph about a bullying experience, either one you were the victim of or an instance when you bullied someone else. Be honest, and tell the whole story. Don't worry—it's just between you and God. When you've finished, repeat this sentence a few times: No matter what I've done, God forgives me and loves me just the same.