



CHARACTER BUILDING ACTIVITIES

SPIKE THE REBEL!

Story Description



Spike proudly boasted, "I'm Spike the rebel, the troublemaker!" He loved to see kids get into trouble. All the kids were afraid of him, except Mary. Mary warned him that one day he would get into big trouble because of his meanness. Spike continued to be mean at school, on the school bus, camping, and in the park. He thought that being tough and mean would make him happy. Instead, it made him unhappy and got him into all sorts of trouble.

Spike went over a dangerous waterfall with a stolen canoe and survived. One day while riding his bike, he hit one of his traps that he had placed on a bike trail. He broke his leg and bled badly. Debbie, a girl he laughed at for falling off her bike in one of his traps, came with her mother and saved him. Spike's life was transformed. He said to Debbie, "I thought being tough and mean would make me happy, but I've discovered I'm much, much happier having friends and helping others."

Major Objective

To define and present the following virtues so they can be integrated into the life of each student:

- Tolerance: being willing to let other people hold opinions or follow practices different from your own
- Friendship: being a companion by listening, recognizing, and valuing others
- Cooperation: working or acting together for a common purpose

Story Time Interaction

Read the story, **Spike the Rebel!** After reading the story write these three virtues on a board: tolerance, friendship, and cooperation. Define and discuss these virtues.

Discuss the main characters:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|--------|
| Debbie | Mary | Philip |
| Bus Driver | Classmates | Billy |
| Billy's Dad | Park Ranger | Spike |
| Spike's Dad and Mom | | |



Respect for Others

Have students look closely at Spike's actions and responses he received. Ask students their reactions to Spike concerning respect for others.

List the bad traits Spike exhibited in the book along with the response from others:

Spike

When Debbie introduced herself to Spike, he stuck out his chest, folded his arms, and growled, "I'm Spike the rebel! I don't care about anyone but myself!"

After Spike had chased a group of kids, he told Mary, "I like to get kids into trouble."

Spike snapped back, "The only one I care about is myself!"

One day during playtime, Spike stuck out his foot as a boy named Steve ran past him. Steve fell and cut his arm.

"I didn't trip him," snapped Spike. "Steve doesn't know how to run."

Spike saw a bird in the tree and shot at it.

Others

"Okay," whispered Debbie as she got on her bike and rode away.

Mary pointed her finger in Spike's face and said, "You're mean!"

"You better watch out," warned Mary. "One day you'll get into a big trouble acting like that."

Mary walked up to Spike, looked him in the eye, and asked, "Why are you so mean? I saw you trip Steve!"

"Yes, you did!" insisted Mary. "I warn you, Spike. One day all the mean things you're doing will come back to you."

"Don't shoot at birds!" insisted Billy.

Discuss the Consequences of Spike's Behavior

Discuss the consequences of Spike's behavior. Spike never wanted to get his hair cut. He felt his long hair made him look mean and tough. Spike was mean and tough, but Spike wasn't happy living this way. There are unpleasant consequences when others are not respected.

Reaction to Spike's behavior: All the kids were afraid of him
Think of the girls on the school bus who had their hair pulled and the younger kids who were tripped by Spike. How did they feel?
Often the bus driver reported Spike for his bad behavior.
Think of the kids in his class when Spike would tattletale on them.
Think about Billy when he was kind and let Spike shoot his BB gun. Then Spike tried to kill a bird. Billy told Spike not to shoot at birds. Do you think that Billy would want Spike to shoot his BB gun again?
Notice Spike had no friends—he lived a lonely life.

Bad Manners

Discuss Spike's bad manners, and then have students do a skit. One student shows bad manners, the other good manners. When you see someone with bad manners, what do you think of that person?

Spike's bad manners:

He reached across the table for food.

He didn't say, "Please," if he wanted something.

He ate with his fingers instead of using his fork.

He didn't cover his mouth when he coughed.

He never said, "Thank you," when he received a gift.

Ask: What are some other bad manners?

Making noise when eating. Slouching in the chair. Licking a knife.
(Also dangerous.)

Golden Rule and Being a Bully

Discuss the Golden Rule: Do to others as you would want them to do to you.

Role-play being a bully.

Examples: Have a bigger or stronger student pick on a smaller or weaker student. (Ex. pushing, knocking books out the hand, pulling on the hair, etc.)

Ask: What is the basic problem with bullying?

Bullies are selfish; they care only about THEMSELVES! So long as they are happy, it doesn't matter what happens to others.

Being Kind to Enemies

Discuss the reaction of Mary and Ruth to Spike's plea for help. Showing kindness to an enemy is one of the most difficult things to do. Our natural tendency is to say, "They deserve what they are getting." But notice the end result of Ruth's kindness to Spike.

Mary's Reaction

Mary frowned and sighed, "I know who that is. That's Spike. I can always tell his mean voice."

Mary sneered and said, "I wouldn't help that guy. He's a big bully, and he's cruel. Besides, you know how he laughed at you when you fell and got hurt."

Ruth's Reaction

"We've got to help him," insisted Ruth.

"I know he's a big bully," argued Ruth. "But we've got to help him. He sounds like he's really hurt."

Meanwhile, Ruth quickly rode home. She burst through the door and said, "Mom, I hear someone in the park screaming for help. I think it's Spike."

Ruth and her mother rushed to the park. The paramedics came and saved Spike's life. Spike became transformed.

Transformed Lives

Discuss with students the subject of transformed lives. Just because you did many bad things, and you're surrounded with all kinds of evil, doesn't mean you have to continue to do wrong. Let's examine Spike's transformation.

Ask: What started Spike's transformation?

Spike's transformation came when he was lying in the woods with a broken leg and bleeding. Often it takes tragedy to wake people up before they will change. But a wise person listens and changes before tragedy strikes.

What role did Ruth play with Spike's transformation?

Without Ruth, Spike would have died from his wounds.

Also Ruth's kindness helped him to see how he should act. When Ruth and her mother came to visit him, Spike said, "Thank you Ruth, for saving my life. Never again will I be mean. I'm going to be just like you and help others."

How did Spike live his life after this?

Now, just as Spike was selfish and mean, Philip became helpful and kind. The first thing he did when he got out of the hospital was to get a haircut.

Then he went into the woods and filled up every trap he had made. He even removed stones from bike trails he thought could be dangerous, even if he did not put them there.

Helping Hands

Find several pictures of sets of hands—open, closed, holding another hand, reaching out, giving, etc. Mount them, and then display them at the beginning of the discussion. Ask students to share their thoughts as to what they think the hands are doing. Explain that helping hands can bring much happiness to the person who is helping, as well as to the one who is being helped. Discuss then ask students to list ways that hands can help.

1. In the classroom—help erase the board, help a student, pick up trash, water the plants, etc.

2. At home—put out the trash, do the dishes, feed the baby, vacuum the house, help repair the car, etc.

3. In the community—hospital, homeless shelter, senior home, place of worship, opening and holding a door, etc.

Chart: Prepare a chart with each of these headings and list ideas below each one. (Charts: Helping Hands In the Classroom, Helping Hands at Home, and Helping Hands in the Community.)

Divide students into small teams. Each team member chooses one of the actions to do within a designated time frame. When the tasks are completed, the students are awarded a sticker on the chart and their team receives points. Extra points may also be awarded for doing things not listed on the chart but are deemed appropriate by the teacher.

Observation of Others: Most importantly—instruct students to observe how the person receiving help responded and how the student himself felt after performing the deed. Designate time to share their results with the class and to reward the team with the most points.

Observation of Student: Students should discuss how they felt by helping others. There is a common saying, “Sorrows shared are halved, joys shared are doubled.” Write this on the board and have students discuss the saying.

Buddies Program, Hugs Program, Newcomer’s Club

Buddies Program: Students are to look out to help one another. If someone needs help with math, a buddy will offer help.

Hugs Program: Students are to look out for those who are sad or

discouraged. When they see someone sad or discouraged, they will offer encouragement.

Newcomer's Club: If a new student comes to class or to the school, everyone tries to make the newcomer feel welcomed.

Safety

Goal: Reinforce the importance of safety.

There are many things that children encounter that can be unsafe and result in serious consequences.

Classroom Scrapbook: Have students bring to class clippings from newspapers or magazines of unsafe incidents that occurred in homes.

Ask: What things did Spike do that were unsafe?

On the school bus he stuck out his foot to trip younger kids.

During playtime Spike stuck out his foot as a boy named Steve ran past him.

When Spike saw a cable with a sign hanging across the river, "STOP! Dangerous Waterfalls!" he kept paddling down the river.

Spike set many traps along the bike trails.

What are some unsafe activities that children can do?

Smoking, drinking, unnecessary pills, and drugs

At home: playing with matches, knives, guns, and gasoline

On the street: Not looking both ways when crossing the street

Riding a bike too fast down a hill

Not obeying signs and light signals

Listening to strangers

Climbing on objects that are unsafe

Not wearing appropriate safety devices

Special Guest: Invite a doctor, nurse, police officer, or firefighter to come to class and speak about safety.

Field Trip: Arrange a field trip to a hospital, police station, or fire station.

Checker Race

Divide the class into two teams, one is the red team, the other is the black team. Place the checkers on a table, and provide each side with a plastic knife. The students are to pick up a checker with the plastic knife and go as fast as they can to place the checker on the table at the opposite end of the room. If the student drops the checker, he or she may not use their hands to pick up the checker. Whichever team gets the checkers over first, wins the game.

Role-Playing the Checker Race with a Bully

Do the same race as above, but let someone role-play as a bully. The bully tries to hinder the other team from winning. The bully can bump the other person as he tries to pick up the checker or while he is walking.

Ask: What does the bully do to the game?

A bully ruins the game.

How would you feel playing with a bully?

It's no fun playing with a bully.

What are the characteristics of a bully?

Bullies are selfish—they think and care only about themselves. Bullies are proud and mean. Bullies pick on smaller children. Bullies like to fight those who are smaller and weaker.

Spike or Philip Test

Have students take the “Spike or Philip Test” that is in the back of the book. Go to www.AdvancePublishing.com and click on the book *Spike the Rebel*. There is a free copy to download and print.

Tying It All Together

Spike thought being tough would make him happy, but it did not. Spike thought only about himself. But after his tragedy where he nearly lost his life, he finally discovered that when he looked beyond himself and thought of others, he discovered happiness.

Learn to do kind acts to others. Remember the size of a kind act is unimportant—doing something is important. Happiness is found when you are outwardly focused. Only when Spike looked beyond himself and opened his eyes to see needs of others did he find true, fulfilling happiness. Looking into someone else's eyes and seeing that you have made a difference is one of life's greatest rewards.