POWER TOOLS

TAKING A STAND AGAINST BULLYING
INTRODUCTION

In the *Kids Corner* episode “There’s an Ape for That,” Skink and his gang are bullying Scooter, Morrie, and their new friend Kenan. The three boys feel embarrassed, angry, and afraid of what might happen next time. Unsure of how to make the bullying stop, the boys decide to try to take revenge. Have you ever witnessed or been a part of a bullying situation like this? You may have opened this booklet because you or someone you know has been bullied. And because of the bullying, you too may feel afraid, sad, angry, confused, or embarrassed.

**WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is not part of God’s good design. God intended human beings to live in community with him and with other people, but when sin entered the world, people started to seek power over each other. According to experts, bullying is the unwanted use of force, threat, exclusion, or ridicule, to abuse, intimidate, or dominate others. The aggressive behavior is based on the perception of an imbalance in social or physical power between the bully and those being bullied. It is often repeated and habitual.

What can we do?

We live in a society that values power. When Scooter, Morrie, and Kenan were bullied, their first thought was to use their power to seek revenge on Skink. *Leviticus 19:18* (NIV) says, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.” Loving our neighbor as ourselves means loving our neighbor AND ourselves. God gives us his power to stand up to injustice when others are victims, and when we are victims. In the following pages, you will find stories and advice about bullying from many different angles:

**POWER TOOL #1: GOD AND ME**

**POWER TOOL #2: FRIENDS HELPING OUT**

**POWER TOOL #3: AM I A BULLY?**

**POWER TOOL #4: EVERYONE’S CONNECTED**

As you listen to and read the following stories, watch for power: Who has it? Who needs it? Who helps to balance it out? Look for ways that you can help restore God's vision of community. You could do everything in this booklet by yourself, but it was designed to be shared in community with your friends and family. **We invite you to talk about these Power Tools with those you trust.**
POWER TOOL #1: GOD AND ME

The king will answer, “Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me” (Matthew 25:40 CEV).

HOW GOD CREATED IT TO BE:
How does God want people to treat each other? God created all people in his image. Matthew 25:31-40 says that when you care for others, no matter how unimportant they seem, it is like you are helping God himself! Imagine if we treated each person we encountered like they were just as important as God. No one would ever feel unworthy or left out. And that includes you too. You are created in God’s image. God values you as special and unique.

HOW IT IS:
LISTEN:
In Kids Corner’s “What a Friend We Have” episode, Scooter is having a terrible time at school and decides he wants to get back at the kids who are bullying him. But before he gets a chance, Grandpa introduces him to a friend who will never let him down.

Talk About The Power
1. When Scooter tried to tell someone what was happening, why didn’t people seem to listen?
2. In what ways did Skink steal power from Scooter?
3. How did the community fail Scooter?
4. How did Grandpa give power back to Scooter?

READ: MARCO’S STORY
Marco had been friends with Emmett since they were small. This year, Emmett started hanging out with a different group of friends, and things changed. It started with little things: a playful shove in the hall, “accidently” knocking Marco’s books off his desk, and Emmett joking to his friends about Marco’s clothes. Marco didn’t like the teasing, but he laughed along. He didn’t want to seem overly sensitive. After all, they were “just kidding.” He wondered if he had done something wrong to make Emmett become so mean.

Gradually things got worse. The pushing got less playful. Marco would get bruises or his clothes would rip when he was pushed. A couple of times teachers stepped in, but Marco always told them that things were fine; they were just horsing around. He started missing things from his lunch or desk. He was getting in trouble at home for losing things and ripping his clothes, but he always came up with an excuse.
Emmett told his friends that Marco used to be afraid of dogs. They started calling him “Bark-o.” Marco still laughed along sometimes, but tried to avoid Emmett. He began to think he needed help, but how could he ask for help when had played along for so long? He started to wonder what was wrong with him. Why couldn’t he stand up for himself? He imagined himself punching Emmett like he saw in movies, but he knew he’d only get in trouble.

Soon, Marco was afraid to go to school. He pretended he was sick so he could stay at home. When he did go to school, he kept to himself. Emmett and his friends put garbage in Marco’s desk, passed ugly drawings of “Bark-o” around class, and smashed his new calculator on the playground. Marco was not laughing any more, but he still didn’t tell anyone because he was embarrassed. In the back of his mind, he was sure he must have done something to turn Emmett against him in the first place.

Think About the Power

1. Why did Marco’s relationship with Emmett change?
2. How did the bullying start? What did Marco do?
3. How did Emmett’s friends give Emmett power to keep bullying?
4. How did the bullying get worse? In what ways did Emmett steal power from Marco? Why didn’t Marco tell someone what was happening?

HOW IT COULD BE: What do I do if I am being bullied?

LET’S TALK:
God made you unique and special (Psalm 113:13-14). It breaks God’s heart to see someone hurting you. You may feel ashamed or embarrassed, but remember, it’s not your fault. No one deserves to be bullied.

Do you ever feel like fighting your bully or taking revenge? That usually only works in movies, and Jesus calls us to another way. What did Jesus say? Check out Matt. 5:44, Matt. 7:12, and Matt. 5:39.

Bullies want power, but there are ways you can take that power away. What are some of the ways?
WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Tell an adult that you trust about what’s been happening! God puts you in community with adults for a reason. They can use their power to take the bully’s power away. If the first adult doesn’t listen to you, tell another one until someone helps you.

• **Appear confident**, walk away and don’t look back. Try your best to control your own reactions.

• **Know that none of the bullying is your fault.** You are created in the image of God and are special.

• **Talk to friends who can support you** and talk to classmates that you trust. Don’t let bullying be a secret.

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PRAYER

Dear God, sometimes I’m afraid. Sometimes I wish I had more power or that I had my own personal superhero so that no one could hurt me. But God, you are more powerful than any superhero, and you are always by my side. Help me to remember that the next time I am afraid. Help me to call on your power to walk away from the bully. Give me courage to tell someone what is going on. You have told me, “Don’t be afraid. I am with you. Don’t tremble with fear. I am your God. I will make you strong. ...I am holding your hand, so don’t be afraid. I am here to help you” (Isaiah 41:10-13). Thank you for keeping your promises. Amen.
When preparing to tell an adult about bullying, it may help to write down what you would say—like a script. If you were Marco or Scooter, what would you write down? Look back at their stories. Use the storyboards below to help you. Use specific words. “Emmett has been bullying me” or “Skink has been really mean to me lately” is better than “Emmett has been acting weird.” Give some examples of words or actions that hurt. Say how long it has been going on. If you are being bullied, write your own script, just like you did for Marco and Scooter.
Power Tool #2: Friends Helping Out

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Philippians 2:3-4).

How God Created It To Be:
Think of how a team should work together. I Corinthians 12:14-26 describes how the Body of Christ fits together, but it could also describe how a great sports team works together. Every member has a different job, and no member is more important than any other when the team is working all together. Each part needs and supports the others. When one part hurts, the whole body hurts; and when one part succeeds, everyone rejoices! However, teams of people don’t always work the way God intended.

How It Is:
LISTEN:
In Kids Corner’s “All for One” episode, a new kid joins Liz’s class. His name is Lucas and he has red skin. Skink uses this as an excuse for bullying because he is different. But Liz and the rest of the gang decide to frustrate Skink’s plans.

Talk About The Power

1. What did Liz and Lucille do when they saw Lucas being bullied?
2. How did this action take power away from Skink and his friends?

Read: Isabel and Maria’s Story
Isabel and her sister, Maria, were excited to join their district’s travel soccer team. Their new teammates included Robert, the superstar; J’Nae, the joker; and Sophia, the hard worker. Sophia did everything she could to improve her skills. She was the first one to every practice and the last to come in at the whistle. But, Robert was not impressed. He called Sophia “Slow-phia.” He would snatch the snacks from her hand after practice. “Slowphia, I think all those chips are heading right to your heavy feet!” The rest of the team would laugh. Robert would keep going, “No trail mix either! Too many peanuts for the elephant!” Sophia would just smile slightly and grab her snacks back. Then J’Nae did her best elephant impersonation, while the rest of the team chuckled.

At first, Isabel and Maria laughed along. They were new and Robert seemed to like them. They wanted to get along with everybody, especially the team’s star player. Yet, Robert always found ways to get to Sophia. He’d sit behind her on bus trips and whisper
everything she had done wrong in the game. He’d sing insulting songs about her. He once spilled sports drink on her shin guards. Isabel started to feel bad for Sophia. She was being hurt, but everyone else just kept laughing at Robert’s taunts. It seemed easier to laugh along than to stand up for Sophia all alone. One night, as they were getting ready for bed, Isabel got up the nerve to talk to Maria about how Robert was treating Sophia. To her relief, Maria agreed! Maria felt concerned for Sophia too, but had been afraid to say something. They decided to tell their coach what was going on and to make a new rule for themselves: no more playing along, no more laughing at Sophia.

For the next week, every time they saw Robert talking to Sophia, they would call her over to do drills or tell her the Coach wanted to see her. Frustrated, Robert started talking about Sophia since he couldn’t tease her to her face. Isabel and Maria never laughed at his gossip or put-downs. Soon the other members of the team started walking away when he talked about Sophia too. Playing soccer was more fun than listening to insults.

**Think About the Power**

1. Why do you think Robert bullied Sophia?
2. When the rest of the team laughed along, who were they giving their power to?
3. Even when Isabel started to feel bad about laughing, she still did it. Why?
4. What do you think the coach should do?

**HOW IT COULD BE:** How can I help someone being bullied?

**LET’S TALK:**
Remember, bystanders can add to a bully’s power.
How do bystanders give power to a bully?
Why do bystanders give power to a bully?
WHAT YOU CAN DO

Simply doing nothing gives power to a bully. Below are ways you can take power from a bully and even give it to the person being harmed.

• **Help someone being bullied get away.** If it is safe, go up to the person being bullied and make an excuse for them to get away. Don’t talk to the bully, just the person being harassed. Even take them by the arm and lead them away if you can. If the bully has no one to pick on, the power goes away in the situation.

• **Don’t laugh along, and encourage others not to.** This can be hard if the bully is one of your friends or someone you admire. If you hear gossip or put-downs or see someone being mean, try looking puzzled or disgusted and say something to encourage others not to laugh. If bullies don’t get immediate positive encouragement, they may try another joke, but if their admiring audience fades away, so does their power.

• **Tell a trusted adult!** God puts us in communities to help each other. You are part of that helping community, and so are adults. Even if an adult may not be in a position to help the person being bullied, they can help you find another adult who can help, they can brainstorm ways to help, pray for you, and encourage you.

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PRAYER

Lord, Forgive me for the times I’ve looked away or laughed along when others are being hurt. Thank you for putting us in communities where everyone has value and purpose and everyone has the power to help each other. Give me the courage to stand up for those who need help, so that the whole community is strengthened. Amen
**Challenge**

Below is a brainstorming list with ideas for how you might help a victim of bullying. Read over these examples and then brainstorm your own!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help the Victim Get Away</th>
<th>Encourage Others Not to Laugh</th>
<th>Tell Adults You Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Hey, time to go to class, will you go with me?”</td>
<td>“Wow, that’s harsh. Don’t you agree?”</td>
<td>One of your parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think Mr. So-in-so needs to see you. We better go.”</td>
<td>“Ugh! Not cool! Come on guys, let’s go.”</td>
<td>A teacher or school counselor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Power Tool #3: Am I A Bully?**

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

**How God Created It To Be:**

How should we treat others? God gave us specific instructions about how we are to live together in community. Colossians 3:12-14 says, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” This is God’s perfect plan for us. However, we don’t always do the right thing and we may not even realize when our actions hurt others.

**How It Is:**

**Listen:**

In Kids Corner’s “Closer than a Brother” episode, an extended absence from school puts Lucille on the outside of the circle of girls in her class who decide to exclude her and bully her with mean words. Where does Lucille go for encouragement?

**Talk About The Power**

1. List the ways that Lacey and her friends bullied Lucille.
2. At the end of the story, what reason did Lacey give for bullying Lucille?
3. How did Lacey and Lucille help each other restore their relationship?

**Read: Jackie’s Story**

Jackie had lots of friends, went to church, and was at the top of her class. When a new girl, Holly, joined the class, Jackie welcomed her. Holly was smart too, and they liked similar books and TV shows. Holly hung out with Jackie and her friends some, but later preferred to be with Anna, who shared her love of making up stories. Anna wasn’t very popular, but she and Holly became inseparable.

As the months went by, Jackie noticed that Holly often got better grades on tests than she did. Teachers even started pointing to Holly’s assignments as good examples instead of Jackie’s like they always had before. The principal chose Holly to be the reader for the school assembly. Holly didn’t seem to notice that she was getting special attention. She and Anna just went on living in their own imaginary world.
Annoyed, Jackie rolled her eyes whenever Holly answered a question in class. The other girls giggled. One day, Jackie and her friends overheard Holly and Anna talking in the bathroom about one of their stories, in which they imagined they were superheroes fighting off an evil alien invasion. Jackie snorted with laughter. Holly and Anna stopped talking and quietly left the bathroom. Then, Jackie imitated Holly, “...when all hope is lost, we hold up the crystal of BoogieWoogie and the Heebie Jeebies flee in terror!” Jackie’s friends roared with laughter.

After that, Jackie and her friends started calling Holly and Anna, “The Wonder Twins.” Jackie created a “Wonder Twin Weirdos” social media account to share embarrassing pictures and crazy memes about Holly and Anna. Soon, the whole class checked their phones after school every day to see Jackie’s latest put-down. Sometimes, Jackie felt bad about a particularly mean picture or comment she’d posted, but she told herself she wasn’t really doing anything to hurt Holly or Anna. Besides, neither of them ever said anything or seemed particularly upset. But, things did change...Holly became more closed-off, and she and Anna spent less time together. Holly seldom raised her hand in class anymore; teachers began calling on Jackie again. It pleased Jackie that she had a new group of social media followers.

When Jackie’s youth group started a series about bullying, however, kids would glance at her and mumble. Jackie felt confused. She wasn’t a bully. Was she?

Think About the Power

1. Why do you think Jackie started making fun of Holly and Anna?
2. How did Jackie’s friends empower her to keep harrassing the two girls?
3. Jackie didn’t think she was a bully because she never said or did anything directly to Holly or Anna. Do you agree? (Hint: Check out the definition of bullying from the introduction.)

How It Could Be: What if I am a bully?

Let’s Talk:
Can you identify with either Lacey or Jackie from the stories? Do you think you may bully other people sometimes? Think about your feelings and actions:

Feelings:
Do I feel better about myself when other people fail?
Do I like or need to feel tough or powerful?
Does picking on someone help me feel that way?

Actions:
Do I threaten or actually hurt people to get what I want?
Do I put things on social media that I would never say to someone’s face?
Have I singled out one person or a group of people and make fun of them publically?
WHAT YOU CAN DO

• If you think you bully others, it’s not too late to change!

• Just like King David, you can pray, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).

• If you feel like hurting someone else or feel like saying or posting something mean online, remember to stop, take a breath, and think before you act.

• It’s also a good idea to talk with a trusted adult about the reasons you think you might bully others.

• This is very important, if you have hurt someone by bullying them, ask that trusted adult how you might humbly ask that person to forgive you.

PRAYER

Creator God, you are the ultimate source of power. You made the whole creation and then shared your power with people for the good of all creation. Forgive me, Lord, when I use my power to control others and even hurt them. Help me to remember to treat all people the way I would want to be treated. Amen.
CHALLENGE

Do you use any social media? Look through some of your texts, snaps, posts, and comments. Are your words and images full of “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”? Are your words giving power to other people or to yourself? Sometimes it can be a little too easy to text, tweet, or post mean words and images online.

Write this verse on the notecards provided below:
“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29).

Tape one note on the edge of your computer screen to remind you how to treat others when you are online. Put notes on other devices you use like your tablet or video game console. Maybe even put one in your desk or locker. You can also write this verse directly on the wallpaper or homescreen of your cell phone!

Every time you read it, may this verse remind you to always use your power to build up and benefit other people!
**POWER TOOL #4: EVERYONE’S CONNECTED**

“My friends, we beg you to warn anyone who isn’t living right. Encourage anyone who feels left out, help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone. Don’t be hateful to people, just because they are hateful to you. Rather, be good to each other and to everyone else” (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 CEV).

**HOW GOD CREATED IT TO BE:**
God created us to live in community with others. In 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15, Paul, the writer, tells us how to live in community. He tells us first to keep each other accountable and that we should warn others who are not “living right.” One way for a community to do that is to call out anyone who bullies. If we see bullying happening, we need to step in and defend the weak and help change circumstances so that bullying is not repeated. Think about how being “good to each other” applies to being a community that fights against bullying.

**HOW IT IS:**
**LISTEN:**
In *Kids Corner’s “Tommy Twotoad”* episode, Miss Wattle asks Lucille and Liz to befriend a new kid at school. The problem is that Liz thinks the new kid might just be the most annoying lizard he has ever met. How can Liz help this obnoxious lizard make and keep friends?

**Talk About The Power**

1. At the beginning of the story, why are Liz and his friends trying to avoid Tommy Twotoad?
2. At the end of the story, what changed Liz’s opinion about Tommy?

**READ: JAMAL’S STORY**
No one really knew Jamal. Oh, they knew about him: he was the weird kid who always sat by himself at lunch, never raised his hand in class, and kept his head down as he walked through the halls. The few people who tried to talk to him only got mumbled responses. After a while, everyone gave up. During lunch time, everyone sat as far away from him as they could, and people would make faces if they were assigned to be his classroom partner. It was hard not to laugh.

Steve and his friend Malik started an animation club. To their surprise, Jamal showed up to the first meeting. He didn’t say anything as the rest of the students discussed their favorite shows and made plans to share their artwork.
Jamal quietly slunk out at the end of the meeting, but he showed up again the following weeks. Steve and Malik were puzzled. It was so weird. Why would Jamal come to a club and not participate? Malik wondered if other people would stop coming if Jamal kept showing up.

One week, as they all watched a show together, Steve noticed that Jamal was laughing along with everyone else. Afterwards, Steve asked Jamal a direct question about the show. When Jamal tried to answer, his words came out in stuttering spurts. A couple of the club members chuckled. Jamal fell silent again.

Steve and Malik decided to add a feature to the club. They set up an online discussion board where they posted a weekly question about a favorite animator. Jamal was one of the first people to respond. He amazed everyone with his knowledge. He answered any question the others asked! At the next meeting, Jamal took part in the discussion. He didn’t always answer out loud, but he smiled and nodded his responses. The club started a group chat to keep in contact during the week.

Soon other students noticed that Jamal wasn’t always alone at lunch any more. Kids would smile and give him high fives as he walked through the halls. He still didn’t talk much, but it seemed that he might like other people after all.

**Think About the Power**

1. How did the kids in the school feel about Jamal in the beginning of the story?
2. What happened in the club that may have hurt Jamal’s feelings when he tried to connect with animation club?
3. How did Steve and Malik use their power to help Jamal?

**HOW IT COULD BE:** How can I include others in community?

**LET’S TALK:**
• Why might kids like Tommy and Jamal be easy targets for bullying?
• In both stories, it took determined people to reach out to Tommy and Jamal, and invite them into their community.
• Do you have that kind of determination to help others?
• If you struggle with loneliness, do you have the courage to open yourself up to community?
• **Look beyond first impressions.** First impressions are quick, and often uninformed decisions we make about other people. Strive to withhold judgement, especially when all you know about someone is what another person has told you.

• **Reach out.** Invite people to participate in particular activities, groups, or projects.

• **Be patient.** Don’t be discouraged if he or she declines your 1st, 2nd, or even 3rd invitation.

• **Be compassionate.** Try to look at the situation from the point of view of the person who has been hurt or has no power.

• **Be creative.** You may have to be creative to think of ways to include people, but making the effort to thoughtfully build community will produce exciting results.

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**Prayer**

Dear Jesus, you know what it is like to be an outsider, hated, and rejected. You have told us that when we reach out to the powerless, it is like we are serving you directly. Give me eyes to see you when I see someone who is lonely. Give me the courage and creativity to reach out and include them as part of my community. Amen.
**Challenge Part 1**

Think about the different communities you belong to (a classroom, an extended family, a neighborhood, a choir, a sports team, a church, a club, a drama cast, a praise team, etc.)

Choose one community. Make a list of different people who make up that community. For each person, write what makes that person important to the group. What does each person contribute? Make sure you have at least one thing for each person.

My Community is: ____________________________________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Name of Person</th>
<th>That Person’s Contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Name of Person</td>
<td>That Person’s Contribution</td>
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<td>3. Name of Person</td>
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<td>7. Name of Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Name of Person</td>
<td>That Person’s Contribution</td>
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</table>
Now, write the names of each person from your community on one of the lines below. You can even draw and color the faces to represent your community members. Then draw a line from each name connecting people to each other. For example, you would draw line between the drama director and the music director because they are working together to create the show.

Look at the connections and ask if there are people in the web who need to be connected better. Are there people who don’t seem to have much power? What can you do to share your power with them?
BULLYING CONCLUSION

God used his power to create the world for human beings. In the Garden of Eden, he would walk and talk with Adam and Eve. But the serpent tricked Adam and Eve into questioning God’s goodness and wanting God’s power for themselves: they wanted to be like God. This sin broke the community they had with God and each other, and we are still paying the price today. Relationships and communities are broken. People hurt each other by trying to gain power over each other. What can we do? God’s power is still at work restoring his world, and he shares that power with us through his Holy Spirit, so that we can use it for others.

The power you have comes from God. And he wants you to give it freely to others. You don’t need to worry about it running out because it is power that will never end. Thank God for this:

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

RESOURCES:

For Kids and Parents:
• **Common Sense Media** ([commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)): Search under Parent Concerns for Cyberbullying. Good videos, articles, games, and advice.
• **Stop Bullying** ([stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)): Interactive videos, articles, and questions for children, parents and educators. From the US Department of Health and Human Services.
• **Erase Bullying** ([erasebullying.ca](http://erasebullying.ca)): More student-centered, but information for parents too. From British Columbia Ministry of Education.

For Parents:

**Family Fire**
- Bullying: A Christian Perspective and Response
- Friends and Bullies: What Must Parents Do?

**Ministry to Children**
- Part One: Bullying: Establishing Awareness
- Part Two: Bullying: Practical Intervention
- Part Three: Bullying: 10 Ways Your Ministry Can Help

**Focus on the Family**
- Mean Kids series