Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month: This collection of featured books is from our Recommended Multicultural and Anti-Bias Books for Children. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute, ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of early childhood and elementary aged children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction is an excellent way to talk about these important concepts in your classroom.

Confessions of a Former Bully

Trudy Ludwig (Author), Beth Adams (Illustrator)

After Katie gets caught teasing a schoolmate, she's told to meet with Mrs. Petrowski, the school counselor, so she can make right her wrong and learn to be a better friend. Bothered at first, it doesn't take long before Katie realizes that bullying has hurt not only the people around her, but her as well. Told from the unusual point of view of the child engaging in the bullying rather than the target, the book provides children with real life tools they can use to understand, identify and do something about bullying.

ISBN: 978-0307931139

Publisher: Dragonfly Books

Year Published: 2012

Age Range: 8–12
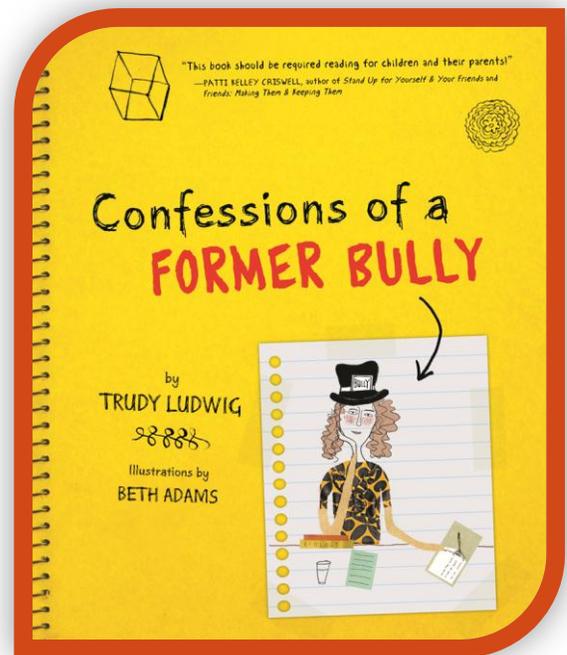
Book Themes
Bullying, Friendship

Key Words
Discuss and define these words and phrases with students prior to reading the book and remind students of their meanings as they come up in the book. See ADL's Definitions Related to Name-Calling, Bullying and Bias. (For words with an asterisk, definitions for younger children are provided below.)

- aggressor*
- ally*
- bullying*
- bystander*
- invisible
- rumor

- consequences
- cyberbullying
- distract
- embarrassing
- emotional bullying
- ignore

- journal
- neutral
- physical
- powerful
- put-downs
- reputation

- self-defense
- silent treatment
- stuttered
- target*
- tools

Ally: Someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied.

Bullying: When one person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.

Bystander: Someone who sees bullying happening and does not say or do anything.

Aggressor: Someone who says or does hurtful things to another person on purpose and over and over.

Target: Someone who is bullied or treated in a hurtful way by an individual or a group on purpose and over and over.

Discussion Questions

This book can be read aloud to the whole class (it may take more than one session) or students can read the book individually and then discuss in small groups or as a whole class. When the read aloud is over or when students have finished reading the book, choose from these questions to guide a group discussion:

- What is the book about?

- How did you feel as you were listening to the story?

- What did you think about the style (the way the book was written) of the book?

- Why did Katie write a book about bullying?

- Did your impression of Katie change throughout the book? How so?

- What were the ways in which Katie bullied her friends and others? Have you seen bullying like that in our classroom or school?

- Why do you think Katie bullied others? What does she say about why she bullied others?

- What didn't Katie know about bullying but learned as she wrote her book?

- What did you not know about bullying before you read the book but learned by reading the book?

- What did Katie learn when she rolled her eyes at her classmate who stuttered when the teacher had her write a "Who Am I?" list?

- In thinking about Mrs. Petrowski's "Totally Awesome Empower Tools," which of the eight tools do you think would work for you? Which ones would not work? How so?

- What are some of Katie's ideas to be an ally?

- What did Katie learn about friendship? How do you feel about the list she created "Good Friends, Bad Friends?"

- Are there any parts of the story or characters you can relate to? How so?

- How did you feel about how the story ended?

- What was your favorite part of the book?

Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with children in order to extend the learning from the book.

1. **Write and Illustrate Scenarios Based on Mrs. Petrowski's "Totally Awesome Empower Tools"**
    Ask students if they remember Mrs. Petrowski's eight "empower tools." On the board/smartboard, record the ones that students recall. Then re-read the section on pages 26–30 and have students name the missing ones from their list. Engage students in a discussion by asking: *Have you used any of these "empower tools" and if so, how did it work? What other ones do you think would be useful? Which ones might work best in certain situations? Are there any of the tools that you think wouldn't work for you, and why?* After discussing the tools, divide students into eight groups and give each group one of the tools to explore in greater depth. First have students talk with each other about their assigned tool and brainstorm the "pros" and "cons" of their tool, recording that on chart paper. Then, as Katie did in her book (within the book), have them write a realistic scenario about how to use that tool and then put it into a storyboard format with dialogue and pictures. When completed, each group can present their storyboards and pros/cons to the class and the storyboards can be compiled into a book for the class.

2. **Act Out the Book as a Play**
    Turn the book into a play by having students work in small groups to act out different parts of the story. There are 40 pages of content in the book. Divide the book into five sections as follows: (1) Katie in the principal's office (pages 1–5); (2) My very important book about bullying (pages 6–14); (3) Not all kids who bully look like bad guys (pages 15–23); (4) Mrs. Petrowski's totally awesome empower tools (pages 24–32); and (5) What else can you do to help kids (pages 33–40). Working in five small groups, have students re-read their section and then discuss how they would like to "perform" their assigned pages. Have students decide what dialogue and narration to use from the book and what dialogue and narration they will create new. They will also need to decide how to convey the factual information Katie shared in her book, role assignments and what props and costumes are needed. They will write a script together and rehearse several times before doing a performance all together so that each part of the book will be turned into a full play that covers the entire book. The play can be performed for the whole school or individual classes in the school. They might also want to perform individual sections for classes in the school with younger students (i.e. PreK and Kindergarten).

3. **Research and Learn More About Bullying and Cyberbullying**
    There are several sections in Katie's book where she provides factual information about bullying that includes statistics, quick facts, background information and definitions. Point those sections out to students and read some of the information aloud. Create a KWL ("Know, Want to Know, Learn") Chart by asking students: *What do you already know about bullying?* Record those under the "Know" column*. What do you want to know? What questions do you have about bullying and cyberbullying?* Record those under "Want to Know." After their research projects are completed,

you will record some information they learned in the process in the "Learned" column. Have students do a research project using one of the quick facts charts as a jumping off point to learn more. They can use ADL's resources on bullying and cyberbullying, Stop Bullying.Gov or one of the organizations in the Recommended Resources section in the back of the book. Students can work in small groups on specific research projects or each student can pursue an individual question they want to answer about bullying. After the research projects are completed, students can create power point presentations and share with the rest of the class.

ADL Resources
The following are curriculum and resources on bullying and cyberbullying.

Curriculum and Print Resources
"Identity-Based Bullying," *Current Events Classroom,* www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/identity-based-bullying.pdf

Statistics on Bullying Infographic, www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Bullying-Cyberbullying-Statistics-Overview-One-Sheet.pdf

"What Can I Do About Bullying Among Young Children?," Question Corner, www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/What-Can-I-Do-About-Bullying-Among-Young-Children.pdf

 "Words That Heal: Using Children's Literature to Address Bullying," *Current Connections* Winter 2005, http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/curriculum-connections-winter-2005.pdf

Websites
Anti-Bias Education
www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

Building Respectful School Climates: Webinar Series
www.adl.org/education-outreach/education-webinars

Free webinar series on practical strategies and tips for addressing bias and bullying and creating a positive school climate from the leading provider of anti-bias education programs and resources.

Bullying/Cyberbullying
www.adl.org/education-outreach/bullying-cyberbullying

Anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying training program offerings, curriculum and resources for youth, educators, youth providers and adult family members.

The Question Corner
www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Bullying and Name-Calling, http://archive.adl.org/bibliography/defaultf0e2.html