

You may not think of yourself as a bully, but maybe you should think again. A few years ago, the University of Michigan posted a story on the Internet titled “A new bullying: social exclusion.” The story talks about how kids can hurt others when they ignore or deliberately leave others out of social interactions. Since the story was posted, more than 100 people have written comments, sharing their own experiences of pain and embarrassment from being excluded. One girl told that when she befriended a lonely girl who has a medical condition and learning disability, her other friends began to ridicule and exclude her. The girl confessed that she abandoned her new friend so she could be accepted back with the cool kids. Other kids talked about being excluded in school, clubs, sports, and even church youth groups. Experts say that even though social exclusion is not as obvious as other bullying, it can be even worse. In addition to hurting people’s feelings, social exclusion often affects the excluded person’s health and ability to do well throughout life.

Think About It . . .

- Why do you think social exclusion can be even more harmful than regular bullying?
- When was a time it was hard for you to love and accept (include) others?

THE BEAT

April 29, 2018
Lesson 9



Article and activity by Rebecca Haynes Mott

Photo by iStock/Thinkstock

A PreTeen Resource by HeartShaper® Curriculum. Permission is granted to reproduce this page for ministry purposes only—not for resale.

Excluded Excuses

Brainstorm and list on the board reasons that might cause kids to exclude others. (Examples: race, clothing, different interests, smell, annoying habit) Ask kids to close their eyes. Read the first item on the list and ask kids to raise a hand if they have ever excluded or been excluded for that reason. For each hand raised, draw a sad emoji beside the reason. Continue through the list in this way; then have kids open their eyes. Count the sad emojis beside each reason and determine the top five reasons why people might be excluded by others. Ask the kids to suggest what they could do to help someone who has been excluded. SAY: **Let's dig into the Bible and see what it says about how we should love and accept everyone.**

In what situation this week will you choose to love and accept everyone?