

STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE

These songs and activities reflect a collective aspiration for a more equitable society and highlight actions we can take to achieve this ideal.

“1492” *CD track 3*

“Courage” *CD track 6*

“What Can One Little Person Do?” *CD track 7*

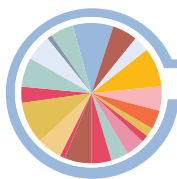
“Every Burden” *CD track 8*

“Eyes on the Prize” *CD track 10*

“It Could Be a Wonderful World” *CD track 13*

“Paz y Libertad” (Spanish: “Peace and Liberty”) *CD track 22*

“Freedom, Oh Freedom” *CD track 25*



I WILL BE YOUR FRIEND

Take a Stand

As the narrator of the song “Courage” conveys, standing up for what you believe in — for what you think is just and fair — can be a difficult, even lonely act. Ask students to put themselves in the position of the song’s narrator. What would they do in the same situation? Have they ever witnessed someone being treated unfairly? How did they react? Do we have a responsibility to stand up for those who are being treated unfairly? Why or why not?

The role-playing cards on the facing page describe some challenging situations that require difficult choices, similar to the one the narrator in “Courage” had to make. Divide students into small groups and provide each group with a card. Have group members take on the roles of the individuals involved in each situation, then act out the scene. Each situation includes a perpetrator (or perpetrators) of an act of teasing or exclusion, a victim of the act and a witness to the act. Explain to students that the task of the witness in the role-play is to find a way to stand up for the victim. After students perform their scenes, invite the class to discuss

their experiences. What was it like to play the different roles (perpetrator, victim, witness)? What feelings came up? Why is it so difficult to go against the crowd? Ask students to suggest other ways that they could respond to each situation. Which approach do they think would work best? Why?

As you prepare for this role-playing activity, be sensitive to the social dynamics of your class. If you feel any of the scenarios on the cards might make a child uncomfortable, adapt the situation described as necessary. You may also want to change any names that are the same as those of students in your class.



www.teachingtolerance.org

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TAKE A STAND
SITUATION TWO

After a soccer game, the mother of one of your teammates takes a group of kids to a nearby fast food restaurant. She asks everyone what kind of burger they want. Zach says he can't have a burger because his family keeps kosher. That means foods have to be prepared in a special way and that there are some foods he can't eat. He asks for just a salad. Some of the kids begin to tease Zach. The parent tells him not to worry, it's okay if he has a burger just this once, but you can see that Zach looks very nervous and uncomfortable. What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION ONE

You like to go swimming at the "Y" with your friends. You often see a girl named Tammy there who is in a different class at your school. Tammy is a big kid, and sometimes you hear other kids tease her. Today, you see Tammy about to dive into the water, and you hear someone call out, "Watch out! Tidal wave's coming!" Later, when Tammy is drying off, you hear some kids make "mooring" sounds when they walk past her. What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION FOUR

A new student named Kayla has joined your class. She seems very nice, but one of your friends passes you a note saying that she thinks the new girl is weird. Another friend whispers that she dresses funny. At lunch time, you notice Kayla carrying a cafeteria tray, looking for a place to eat. She comes up to your table and asks if she can sit down. One of your friends says, "We don't have any room," even though there's plenty of space. What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION THREE

A group of older students are putting on a play, and you go to the tryouts one day after school. A boy named Miguel shows up for the tryouts, too. Miguel is a bilingual student in your class. His family moved to the United States from Honduras last year. He can read and speak English pretty well already, but he still has trouble pronouncing words sometimes, and he speaks with a heavy Spanish accent. You overhear one of the kids organizing the play tell him that only people who can speak English are allowed to try out. What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION SIX

Your new friend Anthony invites some classmates to play at his house after school one day. When you get there, his father is doing housework. Later, Anthony's dad offers a snack while he starts to make dinner. One of the kids asks, "Doesn't your father have a job?" When Anthony explains that his mother sells insurance and his father stays home to take care of him and his sister, the other kids start laughing and calling his dad "Mr. Mom" and other names. What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION FIVE

Your class is having a bake sale to raise money for a trip. Most kids have brought in cookies, cupcakes and brownies. Nikhil has brought rasgulla, Indian sweet dumplings that his grandmother made. You overhear some kids say — loud enough for Nikhil to hear — "Yuck, those look gross! What are they?" and "Who's going to buy those?" What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION EIGHT

You're playing baseball with a group of kids during gym class. One of your classmates, a boy named Theo, isn't as athletic as the other kids playing. When he comes up to bat, some of the kids start teasing him, shouting "Easy out! Easy out!"; "He can't hit!"; and "He swings like a girl." What do you do?

TAKE A STAND
SITUATION SEVEN

A girl named Thérèse rides your bus to school every day. Her vision is impaired, and she needs to wear very thick glasses to help her see. Sometimes, you hear other kids on the bus making fun of her glasses. One day, someone grabs her glasses and starts tossing them around to other kids on the bus in a game of keep-away. Thérèse is very upset and stumbles in the aisle of the bus as she tries to grab her glasses back without success. What do you do?

