



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PROJECT  
CORNERSTONE**  
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

## ABC YEAR 1 LESSON #2

### *Simon's Hook*

*A Story About Teases and Put-Downs*

By Karen G. Burnett

#### MESSAGE TO ABC READERS

The focus of this book is to help students recognize the choices they have in responding to teasing. It empowers them to avoid perceiving themselves as a powerless victim of hurtful behaviors like name calling. Children can get so involved with their own emotional reaction to a tease that they react impulsively, rewarding the teaser with entertaining reactions that accentuates their feelings of loss of control and power. This book introduces five specific skills to use in response to teasing. These five responses allow youth to choose from a variety of techniques to help them stay in control. *Simon's Hook* compares teases to fishing hooks and promotes the idea of *swimming free* of those *hooks* by choosing a response that will keep youth feeling free from the teases.

#### Asset Information:

This book builds assets from 7 of the 8 categories:

- **Positive Identity**
- Empowerment
- Commitment to Learning
- Social Competencies
- Support
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Positive Values

It focuses especially on assets #33 Interpersonal Competence, #36 Peaceful Conflict Resolution, and #37 Personal Power.

**In our lesson today, our goals are** to help students feel empowered and in control of their responses to hurtful teases and *put-downs*. They will learn and practice specific language and techniques to allow them to *swim free*.

#### Types of Bullying Addressed:

Simon, the main character, is the victim of name calling and teasing by his friends. Grandma Rose, a caring adult in Simon's life, explains to him how to avoid these verbal bullying behaviors by employing her five strategies. Simon learns that he has power and control over his choice of responses to teasing. This book demonstrates the third law of *bucket filling*: *Use your lid when needed*. The powerful message of *Simon's Hook* is "Don't focus on the bully behavior; focus on the fact that you have the power to choose how to react!" By focusing on their own actions, children can begin to recognize the power they have - their own personal power. Personal power is not about power over someone else or the situation, but power over our own response: our attitude, our actions, and our outlook. An empowered attitude is instrumental in a person's ability to solve problems throughout life. Encourage children to view themselves as strong, *free fish* with many choices, no matter what *hooks* maybe thrown in their path.

# LESSON

## Conversation Starter:

- Read the title and show the cover of the book.
- Ask them to think about the title and what they think “a story about teases and *put-downs*” means.
- Tell your students about a time you have been teased and how it made you feel. Ask them: Have you ever been teased? How did it make you feel? Teases are *bucket-dipping* and *cold pricklies* that make somebody feel bad with words or actions that hurt.
- Refer to last month’s book, *Have You Filled Your Bucket Today*. The second rule of bucket filling is: *Don’t dip*. Try not to say or do anything that will remove good thoughts and feelings from the bucket of others. Don’t use your *invisible dipper to dip*, even when you are tired, sad, or angry. Remember when you *dip* into someone else’s bucket, you are emptying your own bucket too. The more you *dip*, the emptier your bucket becomes.
- As the students relate their experiences, validate their experiences by writing them on the board.
  - a. Use these experiences as a role-play ideas or on your fish cutouts if “Going Fishing” is your activity for the lesson.
- Kindergarten and First Grade—familiarize the students with the book, its key phrases, and pull out the color printed “Don’t Take the Bait” and “Rules for being a Free Fish” signs.

Upper Grades –Make a *digital citizenship* connection! Write the words, “Did you see Simon’s hair? He looks like a lawnmower head!” on a piece of paper. Hand that paper to a partner and tell them to pretend that they just received this text message. Have them read it out loud and react. How did that feel for the sender and the receiver? Now say those words to your partner in a light-hearted tone with a smile. How did you and your partner feel with a face-to-face conversation? Why would you feel differently if you received this message verbally versus a message delivered by a text?

For more information go to Common Sense Media:

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/lesson/power-words-4-5>

## Read the Book:

Grandma Rose tells Simon a story about fish. There is a lot of dialogue between the fish in the form of speech bubbles. The children love to hear the dialogue and will laugh at the fish’s discussion. Read as many bubbles as you can or set a limit right at the beginning that you can only read 4 and will leave the book for them to read more at a later time.

Kindergartners and first graders may have a hard time following all of the action, so pick some of the more important bubbles to read. As you read the bubbles, try using different comical voices. Also ask questions as you read to keep the students engaged. Be prepared for the younger students to be more literal. Before you ask the questions talk a bit about the phrases, *don’t take the bait*, swim free etc. and what they mean in the context of the story.

Upper Grade students can act out this story!

- Prepare in advance by supplying sets of *hooks* and responses from each pages in the book. Ask for pairs of volunteers to read the *hook* and their response. Encourage use of silly voices and body language to convey the strong attitudes and confidence in

choosing a response to the hook. Each page can offer a chance to participate for several pairs of volunteers.

- You can divide the class into groups and assign them a page to act out.
- They can have a follow-up discussion at small groups with a focus on teases they hear and *ways to avoid taking the bait*.

### **Discussion:**

With this book, it is recommended that you take your time with the discussion. Please adapt the length of the discussion to the needs of your students.

- Why was Simon having a bad day?
- What did Simon's friends do? Why did they act this way?
- What should you do if you see your friend with a crazy haircut? What would be the appropriate thing to *say or do*?
  - *Bucket fillers* using their lids need to *stop, think and understand* what is happening with *bucket dippers*.
- Who was Grandma Rose? How did she help Simon?
- Who is your Grandma Rose?
- What is one of the 5 ways Grandma Rose tells Simon he can refuse to *take the bait*?
- How did Simon *use his lid* the next time he sees his friends?
- What is a *free fish*?
- How do you become a *free fish*?
  - Use the 3 bucket laws:
    - *Be a bucket filler.*
    - *Don't dip.*
    - *Use your lid.*
- How can you help others *swim free*?
- How does *swimming free* online work? How can you avoid *long-handled dipping*?
  - *Use your lid to stop, think and visualize* what is happening. Remain cool and calm. Take a deep breath and count to 10 backwards while you think what to do.
  - Ignore and deprive the bully your reaction. This is in your power of control. You have the power to decide how you react.
- If you chose to use these techniques, you can deprive the bully of gaining pleasure in your loss of control. You have the power to decide how you react. Choose to react by staying in control of your response to teases!
- If you receive inappropriate messages or pictures—What should you do?
  - Don't forward, don't reply or delete them.
  - *Make a report* to a caring adult-teacher, friend, or family member.
- Think: Who is your Grandma Rose in this situation? Who would you talk to about an online cyberbullying situation?
  - This person should be someone who wants to hear what you have to say and will help you work on a solution.
  - Be persistent. You may have to ask for help again, or from another trusted adult.
  - Save the communication, so you can show exactly what was said.
- ABC Reader: Identify yourself as a caring adult who will help.

## **GROUP ACTIVITIES:**

Choose one activity that you feel will work best with the students in your class. \*Activities marked with an \* may be especially suitable for students in grades 1-3.

### **Fish Quiz:**

Tell the students that you have a quiz for them to see if they are ready to be *free fish*. Use the Fish Quiz worksheet and some examples from your list created in the Conversation Starter. If an overhead projector is available, arrange in advance to use it for a large group activity. Cover up the answers and show just the first scene. Ask the students each of the questions on the quiz.

- Have them brainstorm ways to react to each *hook* according to Simon's "Rules for Being a Free Fish."
- All the answers are correct. Different personalities and different situations will call for a variety of different and correct responses. Encourage the students to practice using all of the techniques. Most will use the ones they are most comfortable with, most of the time.
- Adapt the quiz situations as role-plays.
  - Do one question at a time. Pair students up. Assign roles for each partner in the pair. The oldest member of the pair can start as the bully/*bucket dipper*. The youngest can be the responder. The rest of class decides which technique was used. Ask the audience if they could use the same technique or would they choose to do a different one.

### **\*Going Fishing**

Materials: fishing pole, fishing line with magnet tied on end, fish cut out with teases written on them and paperclips, "Don't Take the Bait" worksheet for each student

Tell the students that they are going to practice how to *swim free* from teases. Prepare the teases attached to this lesson plan and/or ask the students for teases they hear. If you have an older class, you can add some teases that say text, email, gaming and provide digital examples of put-downs, teases and other forms of verbal or relational bullying. Post the "Rules for Being a Free Fish".

Paperclip the teases to the hook of the fishing pole and then lower the tease over an individual student. Have the remaining students say, "*Don't take the bait, avoid the hook, swim free, fill a bucket etc.*"

- Discuss the tease with the students and ask for ideas on how to take control with your response to the tease. Have them look at the poster "Rules for Being a Free Fish". Write the chosen response on a speech bubble and put it on white board or bulletin board.
- Follow this activity with the "Don't Take the Bait" worksheet. Students can create their own teases and responses on this worksheet.

### **\*Fish Mobile/Bulletin Board**

Materials: Fish Hook handout, markers, fishing line, dowels or sticks to hang fish, cardboard hooks

Pass out the hooks. Have students write a *tease* on the hook. Give each child a copy of the large fish or have them draw one of their own. (Show them the pictures of fish in the book, as

Project Cornerstone, ABC Year 1, Lesson 2, *Simon's Hook: A Story About Teases and Put-Downs*

prompts.) In the middle of each fish, have them write a response to the *tease* they wrote on the hook. Have them cut out their fish and attach it to fishing line. String the fish up in the classroom so they are hanging from the ceiling, or from 2 sticks to make a mobile. The fish and their hooks can also be hung on a bulletin board in an underwater scene (like in the book).

### **Crossing the Line** (For Upper Grades in Looping Schools)

Materials: Tape or chalk or string

Draw, tape or string a long line down the middle of the room. Have the students stand on one side of the line. Then ask them to imagine that they are online and somebody has sent them a message. Pretend to read this message as a text or email. Tell the students to stay where they are if they think the message is ok; cross the line if they think the message is not okay; and to stand on the line if they think the message is a mixed message.

Read a message out loud and have students respond:

- You are an idiot.
- I'm having a birthday party and you are not invited.
- I like your new haircut.
- Did you finish your homework?
- Why is it taking you so long to finish it? I want to go ride bikes.
- Can you believe that backpack Suzy has?

Review with the students what it is like to go online and use cell phones to email, chat, watch videos, send messages, play games and do homework. Sometimes the language can get scary. Messages that make people feel badly, cross the line. Sometimes that meanness is unintentional, but when people use tools such as the Internet and cell phones to deliberately upset someone else over and over, that's cyberbullying. For more information click on this link:

<http://www.commonsemmedia.org/educators/lesson/power-words-4-5>

### **\*Role-play**

Materials: paper, fish in 4 colors see Fish in the Pond role-play, fish cards or index cards with pre-written teases, pencils, bucket

To accommodate the different grades, adjust the teases you write on the cards. All grades can role-play. You can also have the teacher ask the students a few days before you read to think of some situations or times when they have been teased. Ask them to describe the situation on an index card or piece of paper. Fill out a few cards in your bucket or with the following and some ideas of your own:

- "Look at Andy! He is still doing his homework. We're all done."
- "Look at Marissa! She always looks like a first grader with bows in her hair."
- "Look at Ryan! He throws like a girl."
- "I'm a better than you at wall ball."

Have students pair up. Give each pair a tease card. Have the pairs practice acting out how they would respond using one of the rules for being a *free fish* to avoid *taking the bait*. Ask for volunteers to share their role-play in front of the large group.

### **\*Fish Puppet** for Kindergarten to First Grade

Materials: "Fish Puppet" worksheet, make up puppets for each child or for 5 puppets that students will take turns using.

Give each child a fish. Have them decorate one side of the fish. Divide into groups of 5. Have them practice a simple scene with the “Five Ways to Swim Free”. The script goes:  
Five little fish swimming in a pool.

The First one says: Do little or nothing.  
The Second one says: Agree with the hook.  
The Third one says: Distract!  
The Fourth one says: Laugh at the hook.  
The Fifth one says: Stay away. Ignore

### **Fish in the Pond Role-Play**—For Mid to Upper grades

Divide the class into small groups of 4 people. Give each group a set of cards (one of each color.) Tell each group that they make up a pond. At their pond the following scenes are happening. Green fish is the pond. Blue is the situation. Red is the bully behavior. Yellow is the target of the *hook*. Have them create a skit based upon the teases discussed in the Conversation Starter. The blue fish chooses the situation. The red fish teases the yellow fish. The yellow fish must decide upon which technique they will choose to *swim free*. The green fish reports the decision to the large group.

### **Digital Citizenship Role-Play Ideas**

#### **Scenario 1:** Talk to your Grandma Rose!

Who is your grandma, your cheerleader, your *caring adult*? If something online upsets you (i.e. email, a text, a picture) who would you tell?

For this role-play:

- Create a scene that shows you figuring out who your “Grandma Roses” are from your friends or family. How would you find out? How can you be sure?
- Create a scene that shows you figuring out what to do if you don’t have one? What can you do to solve this problem?
- Create a scene where you receive negative email or texts and you try to talk to a caring adult. The first caring adult you talk to is busy and does not respond. What happens next? Show persistence and keep at it until you find an adult who can help.
- In addition to your own personal Grandma Rose, many websites (i.e. Games like Club Penguin) have areas to place complaints right on their site. Create a scene where you and your caring adult *make a report*. Pretend your adult doesn’t know how to do this. How do the two of you work together to solve this?

## **CLOSING**

### **Three Minute Huddle** (Led by ABC Volunteer)

Teach the students the Free Fish Gestures:

Do little or nothing.      *Use two fingers to make a zero.*  
Agree with the hook.      *Thumbs up!*  
Distract!      *Point off to distance.*  
Laugh at the hook.      *Trace a smile with one finger.*  
Stay away. Ignore.      *Use your palm and have your fingers walk away on top of palm.*

To sum up your discussion, ask students to choose one of the strategies they have learned in today’s lesson to put into action on the playground.

- At recess, how will you help your friends avoid *taking the bait*?
- What will you say if you hear a *hook*? Give examples.
- Remind students that they are in control of being *free fish* and they have the power to choose to *swim free* and *not take the bait*!

## SCHOOL WIDE EXTENSIONS

### School Communication

Think of ways to inform others about the message, language and goals of the ABC lesson. The more ways you can communicate with parents, students and staff the more they will internalize the tools.

- Use the parent letter to create an article for your school newsletter.
- Send home the letter in hard copy or via email as a classroom or school blast.
- Post information on the school website. Create a Cornerstone corner with asset building ideas for families using "Ideas for Parents".
- Use the school's all call system to communicate one key message.

Ask your principal the best way to get the information in the staff letter to teachers, yard duties, secretaries, school volunteers, media center staff, cafeteria, custodian etc. Some ideas are:

- Email the soft copy to all.
- Attend or have a representative at all meetings (staff, PTA, School Site Council, Chat with the Principal) talk about the message of the month
- Meet with individuals to pass on the message of the month

Transform the cafeteria into an underwater scene, complete with hooks, stuffed fish, fish bubbles and examples of *free fish*. During Art Vista or art time, each class can make large, stuffed fish and ocean plants and creatures to hang complete with hooks and responses in speech bubbles.

Use the book to create a Family Literacy Night tied in with Book Fair. Invite Karen Burnett to speak (see below). Have students and staff put on skits that illustrate *Have You Filled a Bucket Today* and *Simon's Hook*.

Karen Burnett, the author, is available to speak at schools. She will tailor her presentations to your needs. She can focus on *Simon's Hook*, do workshops on writing for older students, parent education nights and is also willing to discuss her other books. She lives in Northern California, and will travel to your school site. Contact her at [www.grneighborhood.org](http://www.grneighborhood.org) or call her at 831-335-5366.

Lanyards and bookmarks can be purchased at Grandma Rose's website. Each lanyard has the rules for being a *free fish* listed. Project Cornerstone has developed training for teachers, support staff and yard duties based on using the lanyards to support a more caring school climate. Contact Linda Silvuis at [Linda@projectcornerstone.org](mailto:Linda@projectcornerstone.org).

Create t-shirts with slogans from the book. One school had *Don't Bite the Hook* printed on the shirts. Have a school contest to design the shirt artwork.

Red Ribbon Week-Connect the idea of *not taking the bait* to Red Ribbon Week. Discuss famous people who make the news and their experiences with not taking the bait.

## EXTENSIONS FOR TEACHERS

### **Three Minute Huddle** (Led by Teacher)

When students return to the classroom following recess breaks, ask them about their experiences. Were they *free fish* or did they forget and *take the bait*?

- Be generous with your praise for *free fish* that used strategies in the book. Reinforce their new behaviors with an “I” statement (example, “I liked the way you swam in another part of the sea instead of *taking the bait!*”).
- Use an unresolved problem from your “bait-takers” as an opportunity for discussing the techniques used in the book. Look at the “Rules for a Free Fish” poster together. Ask the class to help brainstorm ways one could *swim free* and not *take the bait*.
- Ask students how being a *free fish* makes them feel? Remind them of the skills they learned in *Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?* (Lesson 1). *Bucket-dippers*, *cold pricklies* and *hooks* make people sad and worried. *Bucket-fillers*, *warm fuzzies* and *free-fish* fill our days with positive experiences that help make our hopes and dreams come true.

### **Classroom Enrichment**

#### **\*5 Rules for Being a Free Fish Poster**

Materials: poster or drawing paper, crayons or markers

Ask students to make posters (with a partner) that illustrate one of the “Free Fish Rules”. Brainstorm with the group different scenarios and locations that the posters could depict (such as troubles on the playground, cafeteria, hallways, bus, school, media center, etc.). Have them write the rule in large letters, somewhere on the poster or on the hook, and then illustrate it. Perhaps the posters could be put up around school to remind students and staff of the Free Fish Rules.

Hint: This can also be used as a Buddy activity with an older student pairing up with a younger student to make the posters.

#### **\*Favorite Page with Speech Bubbles**

Materials: large drawing paper, crayons, pencils

Go back and show the students the pages in the book. Have them look at the speech bubbles and talk a little about their shapes and how the author used them. Ask students to think of their favorite page in the book. Have them draw it. Have them include speech bubbles for the characters in their drawing. Younger children can write one word or a phrase in their drawing with a simple circle to make a speech bubble.

- Instead of a scene from the book, have them draw and write about their experiences at school, in the neighborhood, at the after school program, or on the playground.

### **Homework**

Attach the “Fish Quiz” to the parent letter. Send home for both, the students and parents, to complete together. Ask your students to circle the response that they would feel comfortable using in each situation. Have them choose one of the situations and role-play choosing a response using one of the 5 techniques with their family.



## RESOURCES

### Books:

- *The Bully Free Classroom* by Allan L. Beane PH.D. Free Spirit Press

### Websites:

- Check out Karen Burnett's website, [www.grandmarose.com](http://www.grandmarose.com), or [www.grneighborhood.org](http://www.grneighborhood.org) to find additional materials such as posters, diplomas and lanyards.
- For more in depth information regarding digital citizenship go to: <http://www.common sense media.org/educators/lesson/power-words-4-5>

### Video:

- Karen Burnett has a new website with videos and *Simon's Hook* Song: <http://www.grneighborhood.org/>

#### **Grandma Rose's Neighborhood #1 A Tease is a hook**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB6BnCYcG-4>

#### **Grandma Rose's Neighborhood #2 A story about how the fish learn to swim around the hooks.**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTMsbHz4xDY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTMsbHz4xDY)

#### **Grandma Rose's Neighborhood #3 More about how to handle teasing**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqvM1mFzspM>

### Training from Project Cornerstone:

- Staff Training  
Contact: [Linda@ProjectCornerstone.org](mailto:Linda@ProjectCornerstone.org)
- Parent Training  
Contact: [Lori@ProjectCornerstone.org](mailto:Lori@ProjectCornerstone.org)
- *Expect Respect* student training workshops  
Contact: [Kelly@ProjectCornerstone.org](mailto:Kelly@ProjectCornerstone.org)