

10-PART VIOLENCE PREVENTION SERIES

LEADER'S GUIDE

# *PeaceTalks*™



**PROGRAM #5**

## **RESPECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS**

Distributed by:

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## ***PeaceTalks: Series Overview***

Violence is a choice, and each and every one of us can reduce violence and make our lives safer by choosing peace. Choosing peace means understanding that violence is not random, universal, or inevitable. We can prevent and reduce violence by choosing to avoid or deescalate conflicts and avoid risk factors for violence such as alcohol, drugs, guns, and gang membership. This is the underlying message of the 10-part *PeaceTalks* video series featuring humorist and youth counselor Michael Pritchard.

Filmed across America, in real schools with real students, each *PeaceTalks* video program turns its attention to one aspect of the spectrum of violence that young people face in their everyday lives: managing anger, resolving conflicts, dealing with bullies and troublemakers, the issue of respect, sexual harassment and dating pressures, racial conflicts, peer pressure, gangs, and triggers to violence such as drugs, alcohol and guns.

In these programs, Michael and the young people take a long and honest look at kids' lives today and how the violence in our society affects them. Michael uses his special talents of humor, warmth, empathy and understanding to help the teens discover for themselves the choices they have and the answers to living together peacefully. Together, they look at the basic changes teens need to make in their attitudes and beliefs, and the skills they must learn in order to step up to peace.

*PeaceTalks* offers a three step program for choosing peace which is the unifying theme for all ten programs. These steps are:

1. Predict Consequences
2. Cool Down
3. Walk Away

Throughout the videos, Michael encourages young people to have the maturity, confidence, and composure to walk away from insults and confrontations, and channel peer pressure into a positive force for peace in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities.

## **How To Use This Video**

This video is designed for use in classrooms, community centers, youth organizations, camps, teen groups, libraries, or for children at home. Although teenagers are the target audience, parents, teachers, school administrators, school support staff, counselors, social workers, youth workers, peer counseling trainers, and anyone else who has regular contact with and a commitment to young people would benefit from the video as well. This Leader's Guide is aimed at the classroom teacher, but it can be used by any group leader or parent who wants to get the most out of RESPECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

As with the other videos in the *PeaceTalks* series, RESPECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS is intended to be used as part of a learning experience that begins before viewing the program, and ends beyond the classroom walls. The discussion questions, activities, projects and events suggested in the guide are intended to focus and enhance this learning experience.

Before showing RESPECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS to your students, the following steps would be useful preparation:

- Screen the video at least once, and note areas where you might want to stop the tape to probe an issue more fully.
- Read this guide to get a sense of how the video might be used, what discussion questions would work best with your students, and what follow-up activities or projects would be most appropriate and beneficial.
- Ask the students questions to get them thinking about some of the key issues presented in this program. You might want to distribute copies of the discussion questions on pages 5 and 6 of this guide. Be sure to go over these questions in advance to make sure they are understood and that they are appropriate to your students. They can be used to spark discussion after the screening.

The teaching technique underlying the entire *PeaceTalks* series is peer education. Because we believe that teen viewers will more easily learn the skills and attitudinal changes proposed if they are taught by their peers, the programs are structured around discussions where real kids grapple with tough situations and model positive solutions and attitudes.

### **Respecting Yourself and Others: Objectives**

- To stimulate discussion about the issue of respect
- To look at the connection between self-respect and respecting others
- To examine the differences between teasing and disrespect
- To consider how the different expressions of disrespect act as triggers to anger and violence
- To realize the value of self-control and self-esteem
- To explore how encouragement and positive communication are foundations for peace

### **Respecting Yourself and Others: Synopsis**

Whether they call it dissing, capping, snapping, busting or cracking, teens can be very disrespectful of one another. Used carelessly or intentionally, words can be used as weapons that start a fight as easily as a punch. With the increasing levels of violence in our society - especially the proliferation of guns - we need to find new strategies for dealing with insults and other disrespectful behaviors.

Michael asks the group what areas they focus on when they make fun of one another. Clothing, physical characteristics, that you're too nerdy, too short or too tall are some of the answers. Michael asks the group if this is just to have fun or to show disrespect. Some young people agree that they can get carried away and don't realize that making fun of someone has gone too far.

The students share ways they've been shown disrespect and how that has made them feel. They see that they may laugh when someone is made fun of, but they don't really look at what that person might be feeling.

Michael asks one group of students if they know anyone at school who gets isolated because of being picked on and what they think life is like for that person. The students share stories about peers who are made fun of, and that some students like to laugh at someone else's expense.

One girl shares a story about a close friend. They used to kid around all the time calling each other names. Then the friend stepped over the line of harmless teasing and called her a name she found very insulting. She completely stopped talking with him as a result.

“Are some types of disrespect more likely to lead to a fight? How do you know what triggers are most likely to set off a fight?” Michael asks the group.

Some examples of triggers the students share are insults about family members, certain insulting words, and racial slurs. The students agree that these kinds of insults are ones that provoke a strong, immediate, and often physically violent response. Michael says that these kinds of trigger words are intended to show disrespect, hurt the recipient, and make that person feel “less than.”

Students share stories of being shown disrespect through racial insults and how it made them feel. Many of the incidents resulted in a fight or the feeling that fighting is the only option.

“I understand your anger, but is violence the only course? When you get pushed in by disrespect, is it more likely that you’ll fight or less likely?” Michael asks. Everyone agrees it is more likely. Michael acknowledges the pain and anger people feel when they are attacked in that way, but emphasizes that there are other ways to respond.

Finding ways to let go of and move beyond anger and hate is not easy but it’s something we have to learn to do to break the chain of violence.

Michael shares a hypothetical situation with the group in which a student and some friends have just come out of a basketball game. The other team is gloating about their win. “When you get to the parking lot, fans of the winning team are sitting all over your car and blocking the driver’s door. There are four of them and four of you. What would you do?”

The students share how they would respond to this show of disrespect, and Michael adds other ways the teens blocking the car might provoke a fight. Almost all the students say that they would fight if they asked the group of kids to move and were refused.

Michael tries to get the teens to consider choices other than fighting. He adds the possibility of a gun, trying to show students that they shouldn’t wait for the presence of a weapon to consider nonviolent alternatives. The students suggest that they could get the police or other adults in authority to help.

One student brings up the possibility of just walking away, no matter what has happened. Even though the impulse is to “teach them not to do it again,” there are always other choices available.

“They make you feel weak,” is the response Michael gets when he asks the group how the disrespect would make them feel if they didn’t stand up to it.

“If your concern is how you look to them, whose opinion are you most worried about? Everybody else’s opinion. And who is in control when we can walk away without worrying about other people’s opinions?” Michael asks.

“We are,” the students respond in unison.

Some of the students conclude that you can get respect from your peers as a result of fighting, but it’s not the same level of respect you get if you don’t fight. You can stand up in a nonviolent way to disrespect and keep your self-respect. Self-respect is the most important kind of respect, and it can only be taken away from you if you let someone take it. People with self-confidence are not quick to fight because they think about the future and the kind of person they want to be.

Being tough doesn’t mean always being ready to fight. It means having the confidence to ignore people who show you disrespect and walk away from situations that could cause you harm.

Treating others with respect, whether they entirely deserve it or not, gets better results than responding with more disrespect or by fighting. You not only make others feel better by treating them with respect, you make yourself feel better too.

Self-respect comes from inside you. It flows from a positive sense of self and a confidence in who you are. If you are looking to find this from other people, you are looking in the wrong place. You can build your self-respect by learning how to handle tough situations in a nonviolent way. And when you respect yourself, you can make the world a little safer by breaking the cycle of disrespect, anger and violence.

### **Respecting Yourself and Others: Discussion Questions**

1. This video opens with Michael Pritchard asking a group of teens if a lot of “dissing” goes on. In what ways are people “dissed”?
2. Have you ever personally experienced disrespect? How did that make you feel? How did you react? Could you have reacted differently? How?
3. One of the students relates a story in which a friend called her an insulting name jokingly and that ruined their friendship. What do you feel is the difference between teasing and disrespect? How do you know when to draw the line? What are some signals people send out to let you know you are crossing over that line?
4. It’s agreed in the video that teasing is usually meant just for fun. Are teens more apt to mock one another?
5. In the video, Michael Pritchard makes up a hypothetical situation about a group of kids provoking a confrontation after a basketball game. What would you do in a similar situation and why?
6. The responses to this hypothetical confrontation change dramatically when a gun becomes part of the situation. Are you ever able to know how far a confrontation will escalate?
7. Some students in this video claim that they absolutely have to defend themselves when they are attacked in certain ways. Are some types of insults worse than others? What types of insults do you consider the worst?
8. Michael quotes a Native American saying, *Our bodies may be flesh, but our spirits should be*

*puncture-proof*. What do you think he means by that?

9. Michael points out that when we are afraid to appear weak, our concern is about what everyone else thinks. Do you agree? When you react to someone's provocation, who is in control of the situation?

10. What are some options available to you when you experience disrespect? What should your priorities be?

11. How would you define self-esteem? What are some ways you can develop self-esteem?

12. Michael encourages the group to break the cycle of "dissing." What are some ways you can encourage others rather than show them disrespect? What are some benefits of doing this?

### **Respecting Yourself and Others: Classroom Activities, Projects and Events**

1. Ask the students to write these three words on a piece of paper: respect, choice, self-esteem. Have them define each word and the role each plays in their life. You may request that this activity be written up and turned in for your evaluation or you may invite students to share their essays with the class.

2. Brainstorm with the class about what triggers anger. Write all the "triggers" shared by students on the board. Divide students into groups of five, asking each group to write a "mini-play" exploring one of the triggers listed. Once the scripts have been developed, have each group perform their play for the class. Ask student viewers to evaluate the behaviors represented in the play and other behaviors that might have produced a more positive outcome.

3. Ask students to write a report on a historical personage who stood up against society in the name of peace.

4. Ask each student to keep a "trigger log." For one week, have students write down situations that have caused them to become angry: at home, at school, with their friends. At the end of the week, ask students to develop strategies to more positively cope with the situations they experienced and share one with the class.

5. Ask students to write an essay about something they have accomplished or hope to accomplish.

6. Ask students to write an essay about an individual they respect. What qualities does that individual have that are worthy of our respect?

## **A Few Words About Michael Pritchard**

Michael is a humorist, actor, youth activist, former probation officer and PBS host who is known to audiences across the United States for his ability to help young people gain insight into themselves and the choices they make. He gained national attention when *The Power of Choice*, his popular PBS series for teens on values and choices, first aired in 1987. His fans have grown with the release of his two subsequent series, *You Can Choose!* and *Big Changes, Big Choices*. Mr. Pritchard serves on the boards of directors for Special Olympics, The California Association of Peer Programs, and the Chinese-American Educational Institute. He also acts as a consultant to the California Consortium on Child Abuse and the Department of Pediatrics at San Francisco General Hospital.



## ***PeaceTalks Program Titles***

- Program #1 Preventing Violence
- Program #2 Resolving Conflicts
- Program #3 Managing Your Anger
- Program #4 Dealing with Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations
- Program #5 Respecting Yourself and Others
- Program #6 Handling Dating Pressures and Harassment
- Program #7 Bridging Racial Divisions
- Program #8 Handling Peer Pressure and Gangs
- Program #9 Drugs, Alcohol and Guns: Triggers to Violence
- Program #10 Stepping Up to Peace

Each program is approximately 30 minutes long.