

Stories of Us

Episode 5: Belonging

Teacher's Guide

Preview extracts of pages 12-15

It is highly recommended that teachers view the video before using it in class as it raises issues that may be sensitive to some students. It's also advisable to think about what back-up support is available – for example, coordinating with the Student Counsellor or Student Wellbeing Coordinator – as some students may wish to talk to someone after the class.

Before class, photocopy the centre page of the Teacher's Guide as a hand-out for the class. This page has photos of the dramatised characters with their names as a reference for the discussion. It also details where students can turn for support (teacher, Student Counsellor or Student Wellbeing Coordinator, parent, Kids Helpline, etc) and the *Stories of Us* website address (which contains further links for support, research links and so on). Looking ahead, some spare copies will be required for Class Two and Three, as students will be asked to hold onto their hand-out between classes – and invariably many will be forgotten or lost!

Because boys will be less likely to talk about the issues covered in the video they may require some patient prodding. Gently encouraging them to participate should avoid any embarrassment. Ideally, teachers will be familiar with the students and adapt the resource to the character of the class.

Lastly, teachers may wish to prepare in advance what they will cover in Briefing and Debriefing students in the following sessions.

Student Briefing

Before playing the video:

- Based upon past experience, students may be negatively predisposed to the prospect of watching 'yet another a video'. To help engender a more positive attitude, begin by emphasising that the *Stories of Us* video is unlike any they may have seen before. This program is Made with Students, For Students.
- Briefly summarise the types of issues touched upon in the video and explain the options should the students want private support with anything raised in the video (talking to teacher, Student Counsellor or Student Wellbeing Coordinator, parent or family member, another trusted adult or phoning Kids Helpline).
- Hand out the photocopied centre page of the Teacher's Guide with the characters' names, draw their attention to the Support & Research details on the hand-outs – and mention that they can take the sheets with them after class.
- Explain that the story does not come to a complete end – it is intentionally left unresolved so that they can explore possible endings themselves. In the second version (which they will see later) there are some additional scenes which provide a positive outcome to the stories.

Important Note: After playing the video, do not to ask students if they have been in similar situations, as the class is not the environment for personal disclosure. If some students have been (for example) the victim of bullying, it can be counterproductive to discuss it in front of the whole class.



PLAY THE VIDEO WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

(The *Play Version* duration is 26 minutes 40 seconds)



STOP THE VIDEO AT THE END PROMPT

- When the *Play Version* finishes there is a series of still photos with the characters' names (similar to the hand-outs), then a prompt where the following questions are used as discussion starters.



PLAY VERSION QUESTIONS

- How might Lily be feeling? [Sad; lonely; confused.]
- How might Lily be feeling about her friends? [A little distant from her usual friends; but a bit closer to Sam and Stacie.]
- How might Josh be feeling? [Alone; lonely; but hopeful of making new friends at camp.]
- How might Josh be feeling about his new school? [Scared; alone; no friends, etc.]
- What has happened to Lily in this story? [Break down the different stages of her story step by step.]
- What has happened to Josh in this story? [Break down the different stages of his story step by step.]



ADDITIONAL TEACHER SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR *PLAY VERSION*

- There are many issues raised in the video. In this *Play Version* students should be encouraged to look at the 'big picture' and avoid becoming unduly bogged down in detail. In *Class Two (Segmented Version)* they will look in more depth at specific issues as they happen, and in *Class Three* they will explore what the characters might do to improve their situation. There are also extensive support notes in those sections of the Teacher's Guide.

NOTE: Do not rewind the video as the *Segmented Version*, which will be used in the next class, immediately follows the *Play Version* on the tape.

Student Debriefing

At the end of the session:

- It is particularly important to re-emphasise that in the next version of the video there is additional footage in which they will see a positive outcome for the two main characters.
- It's important that they don't leave the class feeling unsupported if they want to talk about it some more, so teachers should emphasise that they are available if students want to talk privately about the video or any personal reactions they may have experienced to the issues raised. They can also talk to the Student Counsellor or Student Wellbeing Coordinator, parent or family member, or another trusted adult.
- Also, ask the students to hold onto the hand-out for re-use in later classes and remind them that the sheet contains contacts for additional support with the issues.

Optional Activity

Having discussed the video in class, if time allows there is an optional extension activity in which the students break into groups and create possible endings to the story. They could also explore possible endings with role-play.

Optional Homework

There is also an option to set homework in which students write an end to the story. Keep it brief so it doesn't become a chore, as it's very important to maintain student interest for *Class Two* in which they explore the story in more detail. This homework has the added benefit of helping to keep the story 'alive' until next class.

Note: Some students may see this assignment as an opportunity to make light of the issues, so they may need to be reminded that those types of responses are not acceptable.

Stories of Us

Episode 5: Belonging

Teacher's Guide

Preview extracts of pages 18-19

Segment A

PLAY SEGMENT A

(Duration 5 minutes 41 seconds)

PAUSE & SUMMARISE SEGMENT A

At the *End Segment A* prompt, summarise what we have learnt.

- Josh is new to the school.
- Lily's friends are Melissa, Chelsea, Rachel and Lindsay.

SEGMENT A QUESTIONS



- Being new to the school, what makes it hard for Josh? [Doesn't know anyone; afraid kids won't like him; his dad is away; none of the kids talk to him when he arrives; Jacob leaves him alone in the yard.]
- What is helping Josh? [His mum, who reassures him and goes with him into class; the teacher, who supports him and asks Jacob to look after him.]
- Lily is part of a group of friends – how do we know they are friends? [Play together; stick together in the yard and classroom; talk about their feelings; the girls are nice to Lily's brother Manny.]
- What things did you notice that weren't friendly? [The boys pretending to be friends to get lollies; Lily not letting her friends play with Sam and Stacie; also Lily not inviting Sam and Stacie to join their game; Jacob leaving Josh alone in the yard.]

ADDITIONAL TEACHER SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR SEGMENT A



- Josh's mother mentions that his father will be with them in a couple of weeks. Presumably he is away, and has possibly not yet moved with them from Darwin.
- Lily seems to be the boss of the group.
- Chelsea causes Rachel to bump into Ted in the corridor because Ted has a crush on her (which is referred to later when they stir Ted in the yard).

- Lily supports Chelsea when she is upset about being compared with her sister. This is a good sign of Lily's friendship. Also, the teacher's comment seems to undermine Chelsea's feeling of belonging in the class.

Segment B

PLAY SEGMENT B

(Duration 5 minutes 04 seconds)

SUMMARISE SEGMENT B

At the *End Segment B* prompt, summarise what we have learnt.

- Josh helps Jason when he's hit by the ball.
- Lily's parents seem to be arguing.
- Josh tries to make friends with Jason and Andre.
- He also tries to make friends with Luke and Ted.

SEGMENT B QUESTIONS



- How is Josh trying to make friends? [Helps Jason when hurt by the ball; tries to play soccer with Jason and Andre; talks to Luke and Ted.]
- Are the boys being friendly to Josh? [No: the boys don't give him many kicks at soccer, and kick to him as if he were younger; and Luke won't let him play with Ted's Game Boy.]

Stories of Us

Episode 5: Belonging

Teacher's Guide

Preview extracts of pages 22-23

Note: When discussing Lily's story be mindful that some students may talk about personal experiences with problems at home. This needs to be treated with caution in the open class environment. The teacher needs to acknowledge their feelings, but avoid publicly discussing further personal detail, and coax them back to the story.

- Lily sees her parents arguing on the phone – how do you think she feels? [Sad; uncomfortable; worried about Manny's feelings; confused; worried about what might happen.]



ADDITIONAL TEACHER SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR *SEGMENT B*

- When Andre kicks the ball gently to Josh he is treating him as if he were younger and not good at the game, which may make Josh feel bad – as if he doesn't belong. And Josh does not seem to be good at soccer – which makes it harder for him to join in.
- The girls encouraging Melissa to audition for the singing group is another example of friendship.

Segment C



PLAY *SEGMENT C*

(Duration 4 minutes 32 seconds)



SUMMARISE *SEGMENT C*

At the *End Segment C* prompt, summarise what we have learnt.

- Lily is sad because her father might be moving out.
- Sam and Stacie are friendly to Josh.
- The girls are unhappy because they have to choose four per cabin at camp.
- Josh talks to Luke and Ted.



SEGMENT C QUESTIONS

- What is Josh doing to try to make friends? [Takes his Game Boy to school and approaches Luke and Ted; chats with the girls when they approach him.]
- Are the other kids being friendly to Josh – what about the girls? [Sam and Stacie are friendly and supportive.]
- What about the boys? [Luke and Ted talk to him, but tell him his game is no good and talk about other choices for camp in front of him – without thought for his feelings.]
- Lily is unhappy – what's going on for her? [Parents arguing, dad moving out; wants to keep it private, but word is already spreading to other kids.]
- Lily's friends are trying to support her – how? [Try to cheer her up by talking about getting double presents, saying she's "still lucky"; asking about how Manny is coping; promising not to tell anyone.]
- Do you think Lily's friends really understand what she is going through? *If required, prompt them with the follow-up question:* What makes you think that? [The girls' naïve comments to Lily about getting "double presents", etc are superficial; and Lindsay's comment that "none of us get double stuff" indicates that their parents are all together – and they therefore cannot relate to her experience of separating parents.]



Stories of Us

Episode 5: Belonging

Teacher's Guide

Preview extracts of pages 28-31

Class Three – Third Viewing

The third class is designed to focus on the options that the main characters have for helping Josh and Lily have a greater sense of belonging.

In Class Three the *Play Version* is viewed again, with different probing questions at the end. After viewing the video you may choose to have the students work in groups when exploring the questions, then collate their suggestions on the board.

Note: If you haven't already done so, rewind the tape to its beginning.

Student Briefing

Before playing the video:

- Ensure the students have their photocopied centre page of the Teacher's Guide.
- Explain to the students that in this class they will be watching the film again without interruption. At the end they will discuss what would have helped Josh and Lily.



PLAY THE VIDEO WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

(The *Play Version* duration is 26 minutes 40 seconds)



STOP THE VIDEO AT THE END PROMPT

- As the students are now familiar with the characters you may choose to stop the tape once the character's names start to appear on the screen. Refer to the following questions as discussion starters.



THIRD VIEWING QUESTIONS

- Let's make a list of what Josh did to try to make friends. What was the first thing he did? [Helped Jason when hit by the ball.]

Once a student has correctly answered the question, write 'Helped Jason' on the board.

- What was the next thing Josh did? [Played soccer with Jason and Andre.]

And so on. The final list might look something like:

What Josh did to make friends.

- Helped Jason
- Played soccer with Jason and Andre
- Talked to Luke and Ted
- Talked to Sam and Stacie when they approached him
- Brought his Game Boy to school to try to play with Luke and Ted
- Did the Indonesian project with Sam and Stacie
- Walked with Sam and Stacie
- Stole chocolate to get a game so he could play with Luke and Ted
- Wrote down that he wanted to go to camp with Luke and Ted*

[*Whilst this last point wasn't specifically referred to in the story, the fact that Josh was chosen to be in Luke and Ted's group at camp implies he had selected them in his camp list.]

- What else could Josh have done to make friends?

Encourage the students to explore the possibilities.

Write a list on the board headed 'What else Josh could have done'.

Once the list is exhausted, start to explore what the other kids did to help Josh:

- Now let's make a list of what the other kids did to help Josh feel like he belonged. What was the first thing they did? [Andre and Jason played soccer with him.]

Write a correct answer on the board – e.g. 'Andre and Jason played soccer with him' – under the heading 'What kids did to help Josh belong'.

- What else did they do? [e.g. Sam and Stacie spoke to him.]

The final list might look something like:

What kids did to help Josh belong.

- Andre and Jason played soccer with him
- Sam and Stacie spoke to him
- Luke and Ted talked to him when he brought his Game Boy to school
- Sam invited him to do the Indonesian project with her and Stacie
- Sam and Stacie walked with him after school
- Sam and Stacie defended him when he was teased by boys