

# Teacher's/Leader's Guide for *What's Up with Violence Prevention*

These activities reinforce the material in *What's Up with Violence Prevention*. Many are experiential, helping students work together to better understand issues related to violence prevention and to improve skills needed for success in school and in life. You can also use these activities to help students meet core curriculum standards (civics, science, etc.)—listed in parentheses after each activity. In addition, these activities can help address other standards, such as the National Health Education Standards.

Visit our Web site at [www.teachersguides.com](http://www.teachersguides.com) (password: StopViolence) for more information about these standards—and for additional activities, information and links to other useful sites.

## Page 5—Bill of rights

Ask students to cut a sheet of paper into 10 pieces. On each, have them write a value (something that is very important to them, such as friendship or success). Then arrange their values in order of importance. Tell them to crinkle up the 3 values they would least mind losing, and toss them. Have them look over the rest carefully and choose their 3 most important values. Toss away the 4 that remain. Ask students to share their 3 most important values, write them on the board, and count up how many times each is mentioned. Using the U.S. Bill of Rights as a reference, create a mock bill of rights based on the class's top 10 values. Ask them how they would feel if someone:

- asked them to give up their 3 most important values
- took the class's bill of rights away.

Ask them what they would do to protect their values. Would fighting to defend these values be OK? You may also link this activity with the world conflict activity (on other side) to start a discussion about the concept of "justifiable violence."  
(civics, history, life skills)

## Pages 11-13—Superheroes

Ask students to list 8-10 superheroes that they're familiar with. Encourage students to identify female as well as male heroes. Describe the special powers of each. List them on the board.

- Do the superheroes start fights, or do they try to stop them? Is it OK to fight in those circumstances?

- Can they think of any superheroes who use peaceful ways to end conflicts? What are those ways?
- What do they think young children learn from the way superheroes act?
- Ask them to invent their own superhero, and draw and write a comic strip that shows how he or she uses peaceful powers to end conflicts.  
(arts, language arts, life skills)

## Page 16—Listening well

On a table in the front or back of your room, create a simple pattern out of straws (or toothpicks), and place paper or cardboard to shield it from the students' view. Divide the class into pairs. One person from each pair will be the speaker and the other will be the listener.

The speaker is allowed to look at the pattern and take notes or make sketches of the pattern. The speaker will be given the number of straws needed to make the pattern. The speaker will then return to his or her listener and give the straws to him or her.

The speaker must then coach the listener to use the straws to recreate the pattern, using only words (no gestures, facial expressions or body language). The listener can ask clarifying questions, but only after the speaker gives an instruction. (To make this activity more challenging, make a more complex pattern.)

Discuss how difficult effective communication can be even about a simple and concrete object. Compare to conversations about feelings or thoughts and how easy it is to misunderstand and be misunderstood. (social studies, life skills, math)

### Pages 5, 18 & 19—Domestic violence

Invite someone (spokesperson or client) from a domestic violence shelter or a law enforcement officer to visit the class. Have the class write questions and give them to the speaker beforehand. Or, ask the speaker ahead of time to describe how:

- violence has changed his or her life
- easy or difficult it was to deal with the violent situation. (*social studies, life skills*)

### Pages 4 & 20—Media influence

For 3-5 days, have your students use the definition of violence on page 4 of *What's Up with Violence Prevention* to keep track of the number of:

- violent acts they see on TV
- times that each show or ad showed the people who acted violently being rewarded
- times that each show or ad showed the people who acted violently being punished.

Ask them to calculate the number of violent acts they see per week, month, year, lifetime.

Taking all the shows together, compare the number of “rewarding consequences” to the number of “punishing consequences” experienced by violent characters. Ask them:

- Does this result represent what happens in the real world? What kind of message does the resulting view give?
- What are the effects of violence on them? On their little brothers or sisters? (*math, arts, technology/media, life skills*)

### Page 21—Role-play

Break the class into pairs: one student will play Crystal and the other will play TJ. Crystal wants to talk TJ into coming back to her. TJ doesn't want to be her boyfriend, but he cares about her and doesn't want her to attack the other girl. Have them role-play a conversation where TJ uses listening skills and Crystal uses assertiveness skills.

After 2-3 minutes, have TJ use assertiveness skills and Crystal listening skills. Ask which communication skill was more comfortable for them and why. Ask them for ideas to improve

these skills.

Your students could also role-play how they would handle other situations, such as:

- They see a couple arguing violently in an empty hallway.
- A friend, unhappy with his test score, swears loudly, pounds his locker and storms off to “confront” his teacher. (*life skills, health*)

### Page 21—Reporting crime

Invite a law enforcement officer to visit your classroom to talk about the value of reporting suspicious activities. Ask the speaker to include real-life stories of how the public has assisted law enforcement to break up crimes in progress, capture suspects or prevent crimes from happening.

Discuss the attitude that reporting crimes is being a “snitch.” Ask students if their opinions would change if they or a loved one were the victim. (*civics, health, life skills*)

### Page 23—Peace zone

Write a school proclamation declaring your school an official peace zone. Either have the students write and illustrate it on a poster or contact your city to see if they will issue a proclamation. Display it prominently in the school. Contact a local newspaper to cover the unveiling. If your school has a Web site, find out if you can post it there. Photocopy the proclamation, and hand it out to students. (*civics, language arts, technology/media*)

### All pages—World conflict

Ask students to read, and cut out, articles in newspapers or news magazines about conflicts taking place in the world. Have them write about the following questions:

- Why is each party involved in the conflict? Are any of the values in the class's bill of rights being threatened?
- How have the parties tried to resolve their conflict so far? How successful have they been?

Discuss how conflicts can develop into longstanding battles (for example, in Northern Ireland or the Middle East). (*civics, history, language arts*)

