

STAND  
TOGETHER.

STOP  
THE BULLYING.

TM

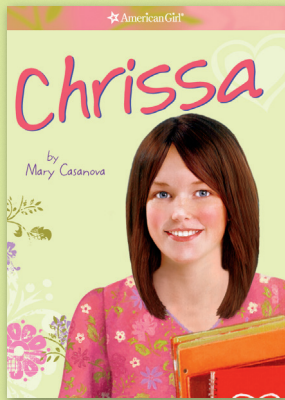
## Curriculum for Grades 3–5



Use Chrissa's stories  
to bring courage to  
your classroom.

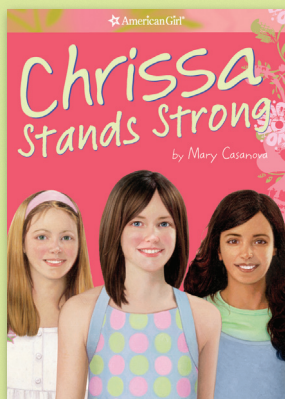
From American Girl  
in conjunction with

the  
Ophelia  
project®



**Chrissa**  
by Mary Casanova

The girls in Chrissa Maxwell's new fourth-grade class are decidedly unfriendly, her valentines mailbox is suspiciously empty, and it's only her first day at Edgewater Elementary. On the advice of her grandmother, Chrissa tries first to be nice and then to ignore the mean girls. But they just won't quit, and they play their tricks everywhere—in class, on the bus, and even at swim club. When the teasing turns into serious bullying, Chrissa must find the courage to stand strong and speak out.



**Chrissa Stands Strong**  
by Mary Casanova

Chrissa has had a good summer, swimming at the lake and practicing her dives for swim-team tryouts. But when Chrissa and her friends start getting mean text messages and e-mails, it's hard to know who to trust. As if the cyberbullying weren't bad enough, a serious accident at the pool turns Chrissa's world upside-down. Who is behind all the mean messages? And what can one girl do to put an end to the bullying?

**PASS IT ON!**

Dear Educator,

Meet Chrissa Maxwell, the newest contemporary American Girl. On her first day at a new school, Chrissa tries to make friends—but is greeted with icy silence from the girls she sits with in Cluster Four. This is just the beginning of the bullying from the “Mean Bees,” who set out to make Chrissa's life miserable.

Chrissa's story is a familiar one in today's schools, where aggression among peers—both boys and girls—has become all too common. But schools are fighting back with programs that empower students to stick up for one another. This curriculum was developed by American Girl in partnership with The Ophelia Project®, an organization that has many strategies and tools available to help schools create safe social climates. The goal of the curriculum is to encourage students to stand together and speak out against bullying, just as Chrissa learns to do throughout her stories.

Your students' understanding of these materials will be enhanced by reading *Chrissa* and *Chrissa Stands Strong* and by watching the DVD movie based on the books. We also recommend *Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends*, a nonfiction book that offers strategies for coping with bullying. If these materials are not available to you, the curriculum stands alone through book excerpts and the enclosed DVD of clips from the movie. For additional resources, including programs and materials designed for both boys and girls involved in peer aggression, visit [www.opheliaproject.org](http://www.opheliaproject.org).

We thank you for introducing your students to Chrissa, and we hope these materials are helpful to you as you work to create a safe and supportive classroom environment.

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 the  
Ophelia  
project®

**Note: You can expect an increase in reporting of bullying during and after use of this curriculum. Students will become more aware of what behaviors constitute bullying and may feel more comfortable reporting them. Some students may over-report as a way to gain attention or even to poke fun at bullying prevention efforts, but those reports should subside as positive behaviors are reinforced and negative behaviors are addressed.**

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**Target Audience: Girls and boys in grades 3 through 5**


### Objectives

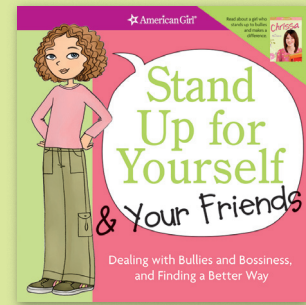
- To educate students about peer aggression
- To identify the roles in aggression: bully, target, and bystander
- To differentiate between assertive behavior and aggressive behavior
- To encourage students to be good bystanders
- To teach students the difference between telling and tattling
- To encourage forgiveness and second chances
- To promote a safe, kind, respectful classroom environment

### Components

- 16-page teacher's guide (including 8 pages of reproducible activities and a letter to parents)
- DVD of concept clips from the *Chrissa* movie
- 8-page take-home magazines for girls (including information about Chrissa's world and a "stop the bullying" poster contest for girls)
- Classroom poster

### How to Use These Materials

- Consider sharing activities with students over an eight-week period (one activity per week). Look for ways to integrate the curriculum into daily lessons, too, such as through morning meetings or statements on the board reminding students how they can care for others.
- Set up rules of confidentiality before the curriculum begins. Institute a "no names" policy when it comes to sharing stories about bullying, and allow students the choice to pass during discussion.
- Adapt the activities according to the size of your classroom. Some of the activities can be done in small groups, and others work best when all students work together.
- If you're using the DVD of concept clips, show clips where indicated by the  symbol, or at the end of the unit to recap lessons learned. If you're showing the full movie, use the time codes in this guide to find teaching moments when you can pause for discussion.
- Consider inviting older students to join your classroom for reading aloud, storytelling, and role-playing exercises. For information on creating a mentoring program, visit [www.opheliaproject.org](http://www.opheliaproject.org).
- Pass it on! Share the curriculum materials with other teachers, or invite your students to prepare a final project or performance that they can share with other classrooms.



### **Stand Up for Yourself & Your Friends**

by Patti Kelley Criswell, M.S.W.

This nonfiction book encourages readers to do what they can to make the world a kinder, safer place. Quizzes invite them to examine their own beliefs and behaviors, and quotes throughout the book offer support from other kids who found the courage to stand up against bullying. The book includes tips for ignoring a bully, speaking up, being a good bystander, and reaching out for help from trusted adults—plus "10 Big Truths About Bullying," a tear-out note to parents.




### **An American Girl: Chrissa Stands Strong**

Chrissa's story comes to life in this direct-to-DVD movie, which highlights the struggles that Chrissa faces—and overcomes—both in the classroom and on the swim team. The movie follows the books closely, but with some adaptations to take advantage of the visual nature of movie storytelling. Still, the heart of Chrissa's story remains the same—one contemporary girl's struggle to find a way to stand strong and stop the bullying.



## ACTIVITY 1 Being a Friend


 Show Clip 1 [00:03:56–00:04:27]. Ask, “Does Nana give Chrissa good advice?” and “Do you feel shy or nervous in new situations? What are some ways to push past those feelings and make friends?”


Read the story excerpt aloud, and discuss the “Talk About It” questions. Give students time to complete the “Think About It” list. Then regroup and ask students to help you brainstorm a list of ways to be friendly and show respect to classmates. Ask, “What do we need from one another to make our classroom safe, comfortable, and productive?” Include rules such as “No teasing” and “Respect differences and different opinions.” Emphasize that although students may not all consider themselves friends, they do need to treat one another in a friendly, respectful way. Post the brainstormed list where students can see it throughout the course of this curriculum.



## ACTIVITY 2 The Ways People Bully

Read the story excerpt aloud, and discuss the “Talk About It” questions. Devote extra time to discussing relational aggression. Both boys and girls engage in relational aggression, and examples include giving the silent treatment; being an on-again, off-again friend; spreading rumors; and forming exclusive cliques. Remind students that bullying is intentional. You can hurt someone’s feelings by accident, but it’s not bullying unless you *meant* to be hurtful.

 Show Clips 2 [00:08:55–00:09:27], 3 [00:24:02–00:24:38], and 4 [00:36:50–00:37:43]. After each clip, ask, “In what way(s) is Chrissa being bullied?” and “How do you think she feels?” Ask, “Which type of bullying do you think is most hurtful?” Emphasize that all types can be equally hurtful.

 Show Clip 5 [01:03:08–01:03:38]. Ask, “Which kind of bullying is this?” and “In what ways is it different from other kinds of bullying?” Explain that cyberbullies can spread hurtful messages and photos to a lot of people in a very short time through e-mails, IMs, text messages, and Web postings.


**Act it out:** Write the following sentences on the board or on a note card: “Would you mind? I was sitting there.” Select three students to read the sentences out loud. Before each student delivers the lines, privately instruct the student to read in one of the following ways: (1) with a friendly tone of voice, (2) with a bullying tone of voice, (3) with “bullying” body language—a mean or threatening facial expression and hands on hips or arms crossed. After each student delivers the lines, ask the class, “Did that feel like bullying? Why or why not?” Show students that bullying isn’t always about the words you use. Your tone of voice and body language can make a person feel bullied, too.

Give students time to complete the “Think About It” questions. Regroup, and ask, “Why might someone bully?” Reasons might include jealousy, feeling left out, loneliness, low self-esteem, wanting attention, or being bullied by others. Emphasize that most bullies don’t feel good about themselves, but hurting others makes them feel worse because they can’t be proud of their own behavior. Remind students that whatever the reason, bullying is never O.K.



## ACTIVITY 3 We All Play a Part

Read the story excerpt aloud, and discuss the “Talk About It” questions.

 Show Clip 6 [00:15:30–00:15:51]. Ask, “What role does each girl play in this scene?” and “What might Chrissa be thinking and feeling?”

**Act it out:** Choose three students to come to the front of the classroom. Use name tags to show who will play the parts of bully, target, and bystander. Hand one end of a jump rope to the bully and the other end to the target. Ask the students to tug gently back and forth on the rope. Now ask the bystander to pull the middle of the rope. Demonstrate how the bystander makes a difference in the “tug-of-war” of bullying. When the bystander pulls toward the bully, he or she takes part in the bullying. If the bystander pulls toward the target, he or she helps the target and takes away some of the bully’s power.

Ask students to complete the “Think About It” questions. Emphasize that no matter what your role, your response matters. You’re either standing up against bullying or you’re encouraging it. There’s no middle ground.



## ACTIVITY 4 Standing Up to Bullying


Read the story excerpt aloud, and discuss the “Talk About It” questions. Brainstorm words that describe how Chrissa may be feeling, such as *angry*, *hurt*, *lonely*, or *confused*. Acknowledge that ignoring a bully sometimes works and sometimes doesn’t. Let students know that if ignoring doesn’t work quickly, it probably won’t work. If bullying continues for more than a day or two or if students feel unsafe, they should try another approach.


**Act it out:** Make three signs that read “Yes,” “No,” and “Not sure.” Post them in different areas of the classroom. Ask students to listen as you read aloud the following options for how to stand up to a bully. After you read each option, the students should walk to the sign that represents their opinion about that option. Say, “When someone hurts your

feelings, you could . . .” Complete the sentence with the following:

- threaten to get back at the bully.
- ignore the bully.
- tell an adult what happened.
- stay home from school.
- crack a joke, such as, “Hey, thanks!”
- send the bully a nasty e-mail.
- write in your journal.
- say in a confident voice, “Leave me alone.”

After each option, process the students’ responses. Talk about the difference between being *assertive* (standing up for yourself in a way that’s respectful, not mean) and being *aggressive* (standing up for yourself by bullying back or trying to hurt someone else). Emphasize that it’s O.K. to be angry after someone hurts you, but being sarcastic or threatening is not O.K.—and it just fuels the bully’s fire.

 Show Clip 7 [00:27:30–00:28:12]. Ask, “How is Chrissa coping with bullying in this scene?” and “Do you think it’s a good approach? Why or why not?” Talk about fantasy or storytelling as a creative way to work through negative feelings.

 Show Clip 8 [00:36:00–00:36:49]. Ask, “How does Chrissa react to Tara’s insult?” and “Do you think she’s letting Tara shake her confidence?” Talk about Chrissa’s facial expression and how she appears more annoyed than hurt. She’s practicing ignoring Tara in a strong, confident way.

Ask students to complete the “Think About It” exercise, and invite them to share responses.




## ACTIVITY 5 Being a Good Bystander

Read the story excerpt aloud. Talk about reasons why someone might be afraid to stand up for someone else, such as fear that the bully will turn on him or her. Brainstorm other



ways to stand up for someone, such as telling an adult about the bullying or saying something supportive to the person being bullied.

 Show Clip 9 [01:00:31–01:00:58]. Ask, “How do Sonali and Gwen stand up for Chrissa?” and “What else could they do to support her?”

**Act it out:** Invite students to role-play the following scenarios. (Review ahead of time to make sure that none of your students’ names appear in the scenarios.) After each scenario, ask what the bystander might be thinking and feeling. Is he or she feeling scared or stuck? Emphasize that the bully *wants* the bystander to stay silent. Brainstorm ways for him or her to overcome fear and speak up, either to the bully, the target, or an adult.

**Scenario 1:**

At recess, two boys are teasing Jake because he’d rather read a book than shoot baskets. They grab his book and won’t give it back. Ben is shooting baskets nearby, and he sees that Jake is really upset. What might Ben be thinking and feeling? What can he do? [Tell the boys to knock it off and get back to the game, or tell an adult what’s going on.]

**Scenario 2:**

Mariah decides that she and Molly are best friends now and that Robin is “out” of the group. At lunchtime, Mariah says that Robin can’t sit with her and Molly. What might Molly be thinking and feeling? What can she do? [Tell Mariah that she’s still friends with Robin and doesn’t want her left out, or invite Robin to sit with her at another table.]

**Scenario 3:**

Kaley used her cell phone to snap a shot of Bree sleeping at a slumber party. Kaley sent the photo to all of her friends’ phones. Landon just received the photo on his phone. He knows Bree would be really embarrassed if she knew the photo was being sent around.


What might Landon be feeling? What can he do? [Delete the photo, and text Kaley to say, “That’s not right. Stop it.”]

Give students time to complete the “Think About It” list. Remind students that being a good bystander doesn’t always mean saying something directly to the bully. It just means doing *something* to help the person being bullied.



## ACTIVITY 6 Telling vs. Tattling

Read the story excerpt out loud, and discuss the difference between tattling and telling. Brainstorm ways that students can approach adults other than face-to-face, such as with an e-mail or written note—even an anonymous note.

 Show Clip 10 [00:54:35–00:55:19]. Ask, “Why do you think Sonali decides to tell the truth?” and “Is she telling or tattling?” Point out how Sonali speaks up after she hears that Gwen is afraid to come to school. (Sonali is helping Gwen rather than trying to get Tara into trouble.)

**Act it out:** Hand out note cards with the following conversation starters written on them. After each one is read, ask students, “Is that tattling or telling?” and “How do you know?”

**Conversation starters:**

1. “Mom, I have a problem, and I’m not sure what to do.”
2. “Mrs. Smith, Jillian’s reading a book instead of finishing math.”
3. “Coach, I think Ryan’s having trouble and needs some help.”
4. “Mr. Piper, something happened online today that’s really worrying me.”

Give students time to complete the “Think About It” question. Regroup, and list some

adults students might approach about bullying, such as teachers, parents, guidance counselors, the principal, coaches, and troop leaders. Remind students that it's always best to speak up. Chances are, other people are bothered by the bully's behavior, and if one person speaks up, others may, too.



### ACTIVITY 7 Apologies & Second Chances

Read the story excerpt out loud, and discuss the difference between just saying “sorry” and giving a genuine apology. Talk about the natural consequence of hurting someone—that even if someone forgives you, that person may need time before he or she trusts you again. Giving second chances means being “friendly” but doesn't require you to be close friends.

Show Clip 11 [00:18:58–00:20:07]. Ask, “Is Sonali's apology genuine? Why or why not?”

Show Clip 12 [00:41:45–00:43:13]. Ask, “Does Chrissa seem ready to give Sonali a second chance? Do you think she should? Why or why not?”

Show Clip 13 [00:57:43–00:58:24]. Ask again, “Is Sonali's apology genuine? How does this apology differ from her earlier one?”

**Act it out:** Write the following apology script where all students can see it: “I'm sorry that I \_\_\_\_\_. What can I do to make it right?”

Ask students to take turns reading the script, filling in the blank with different examples (such as “told your secret,” “laughed at your mistake,” and “left you out of the game”). After each example, invite the other students to brainstorm ways to “make it right.”

Give students time to complete the “Think About It” questions. If some students struggle with Question 1, encourage them to practice writing out the apology script, filling in the

blank with as many “made-up” examples as they can. Regroup and remind students that we *all* make mistakes—no one is perfect. What's important is that we apologize, try to make things right, and start again.



### ACTIVITY 8 Working Together to Make a Difference

Read the story excerpt out loud, and talk with students about the relationships they have with friends and with teammates. Teammates don't have to be good friends, but they do have to respect one another as they work toward a common goal. Remind students that the same is true for classmates and other groups of people who may not be considered good “friends.” Do students have anything to add to the list they brainstormed in Activity 1?

Show Clip 14 [01:20:34–01:20:58]. Ask, “Why does Chrissa reach out to Tara?” and “Do you think Tara will work with Chrissa to win the race? Why or why not?”

Give students time to complete the “Think About It” exercise, and regroup to brainstorm a class project as a conclusion to this curriculum. Make a friendship bulletin board or wall like the one students create at the end of *Chrissa Stands Strong*. Or have students create songs, poems, stories, or skits based on the theme of standing up for others. Can they video-record their presentations or perform them for younger classrooms? A collaborative project is a powerful way to bring students together and to invite them to be role models for others.





# ACTIVITY 1 Being a Friend

*Chrissa* (page 5)

Three girls sauntered in and sat down at my cluster. I glanced up and smiled. "Hi," I said. "I'm Chrissa."

No response, but the girl with long dark-brown hair offered me a halfhearted smile.

As more students arrived, whispers fluttered around the room.

"Uh-oh."

"The new girl's stuck with the Queen Bees!"

"You mean the *Mean Bees*," someone else whispered. "Bzzz!"

This didn't sound good, but I remembered my grandmother's advice. *If you want a friend, be a friend. Don't wait for others to say hi. Just introduce yourself.*

I tried again. "Hi, I'm Chrissa Maxwell."



## Talk About It

- How does it feel to be the new student in class?
- What are some ways Chrissa reaches out in friendship to the other girls in her cluster?
- How do Chrissa's classmates respond to her?
- What could they do to make Chrissa feel welcome? What would *you* do if you were there?

## Think About It

List one way that you can be friendly and show respect to each of the following people:

A classmate \_\_\_\_\_

A teammate \_\_\_\_\_

A younger kid on the playground \_\_\_\_\_

A sibling \_\_\_\_\_

A new student at school \_\_\_\_\_







## ACTIVITY 2

# The Ways People Bully

*Chrissa* (page 12)

“Ohhh,” Tara said in a voice just quiet enough not to draw attention from Mr. Beck, who was on the other side of the room. “Gwen Thompson is the Loser Girl. Yeah, you two could have your own club. You certainly aren’t in ours.” Jadyn and Sonali cracked up.

I’d seen older girls like this before. On the playground, they whispered and giggled about others and on the bus they refused to give up saved seats. They treated other kids as if they were invisible—or worse, lowly as worms. I ached to be around my old friends instead of these girls.

### Talk About It

There are several ways that people bully: (1) *physically*, such as harming someone’s body or their property; (2) *verbally*, such as teasing or name-calling; and (3) *relationally*, such as excluding someone or spreading rumors that might hurt someone’s reputation.



- In what ways are Tara, Jadyn, and Sonali bullying Chrissa? How do you think Chrissa feels?
- Brainstorm more examples of each type of bullying: physical, verbal, and relational.
- Could you ever bully someone by accident?

### Think About It

1. Think about a time when someone intentionally tried to hurt you. How did you feel? What did you do?

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2. Think about a time when you may have mistreated or bullied a sibling, classmate, or friend. What were you thinking or feeling? How did you feel afterward?

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### ACTIVITY 3

# We All Play a Part

Chrissa (page 9)

“Oh, wait,” Tara whispered, waving Jadyn, Sonali, and me closer as she scribbled on the back of a heart-shaped piece of construction paper. “I totally forgot about one for Gwen!” Then she showed us. It read:

*Roses are red,  
Violets are blue.  
You’re the Loser Girl  
And no one likes you!  
Ha ha—just kidding!  
Happy Valentine’s Day  
from Guess Who?*

The other girls all laughed and for a second, I giggled, too, feeling part of an inside joke. This must be a joke between Tara and this Gwen girl. At least I hoped so. Because if I got that card, I sure wouldn’t like it.

### Talk About It

There are three roles that people play when it comes to bullying: the bully, the *target* (the person being bullied), and the *bystander* (a person who sees someone else being bullied).

PASS IT ON!

- In the story excerpt above, which girls are playing the role of bully? Who is the target? What role does Chrissa play?
- Does joining in the laughter mean joining in the bullying?
- If Chrissa isn’t sure whether Gwen is being bullied, how could Chrissa check it out?

### Think About It

Think about a time when you saw someone being bullied. How did you feel? What were you thinking? What did you do?

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ACTIVITY 4

# Standing Up to Bullying

*Chrissa* (page 41)  
When I approached my desk, Tara pinched her nose. "Whoa! Something stinks."

Jadyn clamped her nose with her thumb and forefinger. "P.U.!"

"Hey, today's taco day, Chrissa. Are you going to have some *llama beans* with your taco?" Tara asked.

Though Sonali hadn't seen the llamas, she pinched her nose, too.

I set my backpack beside my desk, sat down, and lifted my desktop, pretending to organize my boxes. This was going to be another awful day.



### Talk About It

In this scene, Chrissa chooses to ignore the Mean Bees. Ignoring is one way to deal with bullying, but there are many other options. The key is to stand up for yourself in a way that's *assertive*, or gets your needs met without hurting other people or keeping the fight going.

- How do you think Chrissa is feeling?
- Do you think ignoring a bully works? Why or why not?
- What else could Chrissa try?

### Think About It

Imagine that two of your classmates are looking at you, whispering and laughing. You know they're making fun of you. List two ways that you could respond assertively. On a separate piece of paper, draw a picture of yourself responding in one of those ways.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_





# ACTIVITY 5 Being a Good Bystander

*Chrissa* (pages 63–64)

Minutes before the end of art class, Gwen returned. She sat on her stool and hid behind her bangs. I leaned closer. “Are you feeling any better?” I asked.

From the nearby art table, Tara cleared her throat and, as always, spoke in a voice that was just below the teacher’s radar. “She was probably just faking it to get out of class.”

I spun around to Tara and the Mean Bees. It was one thing for *me* to get picked on, but it burned me to see her pick on Gwen again.

“I don’t think Gwen would fake being sick,” I snapped back. “But maybe you would.”



### Talk About It

- Did Chrissa respond to Tara in an assertive way or an aggressive way?
- What are some other ways that Chrissa could have stood up for Gwen?
- Can it sometimes feel scary to stand up for someone else? Give some reasons why.
- How do you think Chrissa feels *after* she stands up for Gwen? How do Gwen and Tara feel?

### Think About It

List three things you could do or say the next time you see someone else being hurt:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





ACTIVITY 6

# Telling vs. Tattling

*Chrissa* (pages 47–48)  
I stepped into the hallway, uncertain if I should return to the classroom and tell Mr. Beck exactly what had happened. I turned this way, then that, circling slowly. They wouldn't really have flushed all the registration forms, would they?  
If I were to tell Mr. Beck the truth, he'd know I had disobeyed his order to go straight to the office. *And* I would be tattling, wouldn't I?  
I had enough troubles stacking up against me without adding *tattler* to the top of the heap.



### Talk About It

Chrissa is afraid of being called a “tattler,” but there’s a big difference between tattling and telling. *Tattling* is what you do when you’re trying to get someone into trouble. *Telling* is what you do to help yourself or someone else who is being hurt.

- Why are kids sometimes afraid to tell parents or teachers about bullying?
- If you told an adult about bullying and someone called you a “tattler,” how would you respond?
- What are some ways to let adults know about bullying if you’re too afraid to talk face-to-face?

### Think About It

If you or someone you knew were being bullied, whom could you tell?  
List three adults you could talk with at school or at home.

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Then choose one of those adults, and write down the words you would use to start the conversation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





**ACTIVITY 7**

# Apologies & Second Chances

*Chrissa* (pages 76–77)

Reluctantly, I took the phone from Tyler’s hand. “Hello?”

“Chrissa, it’s me. Sonali.”

I didn’t bother to say anything. She had no reason to call me. We weren’t friends.

“I want to apologize,” she said.

“Is your mom making you again?” I asked, my voice pinched as I remembered her delivering the red bag.

“No, this is different. It’s about what happened at the pool today. It was *supposed* to be this big joke, but . . . it really wasn’t funny.”

“No, it wasn’t.” My grip loosened on the phone. Sonali was so hard to figure out. How could I know if she was being sincere?



### Talk About It

- Do you think Sonali is genuinely sorry? How can you tell?
- What else can Sonali do to make things right with Chrissa?
- If Chrissa accepts Sonali’s apology, does that mean Chrissa has to be friends with Sonali?
- Do you think everyone deserves a second chance?

### Think About It

**1.** Think about a time when you apologized for hurting someone. Were you given a second chance? How did that feel?

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**2.** Think of someone you know who might deserve a second chance. Write down one way you could be friendly to this person.

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## ACTIVITY 8 Working Together to Make a Difference

*Chrissa Stands Strong* (page 21)  
Settled into our sleeping bags, we talked about school starting soon and swim-team tryouts tomorrow.  
“You know, I’m not a strong enough swimmer yet to try out,” Gwen said, “but I’m happy to come watch.”  
“That would be really nice,” Sonali said.  
“Yeah,” I agreed. “Even if we don’t make it into the diving division, I’m sure we’ll be on the swim team.” I paused. “And Tara’s so good, she’ll be on the team, too. As a team, we’re going to have to work together if want to win.”



- ### Talk About It
- How is being a teammate different from being a friend? How is it similar?
  - How can you be friendly toward someone even if you’re not good friends?
  - How can teammates and classmates *become* friends?
  - What common goals are you and your classmates working toward?

### Think About It

1. Write down something you could do today to make your school a kinder, safer place.

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2. What is one way you could teach younger children at your school about kindness, working together, and standing up for others?

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Dear Parents,

To empower students to fight back against the growing problem of peer aggression, our class will be participating in a special curriculum unit developed by American Girl, in partnership with The Ophelia Project. The curriculum introduces students to Chrissa, a girl who faces bullying at her new school and finds the courage to do something about it.

The curriculum educates students about the ways in which people bully, identifies the roles in aggression (the bully, the target, and the *bystander*, or the “kid in the middle”), and encourages students to stand up for one another and to report bullying to adults. Our goal is to use this curriculum to promote a safe, kind, and respectful environment for your child.

As a parent, you are still the most influential person in your child’s life. What can you do to protect him or her from peer aggression?

- Model kindness and inclusion in your home.
- Take your child’s friendship and bullying concerns seriously.
- Provide opportunities for your child to form friendships outside of school.
- Develop a relationship with your child’s teachers, coaches, and school officials (preferably *before* your child comes to you with concerns about bullying).
- Educate yourself about bullying and the strategies that work best to counter it. Then pass it on! Share what you’ve learned. Together, we *can* make school a safer place for all students.

For more information, visit [www.opheliaproject.org](http://www.opheliaproject.org) and [americangirl.com/girloftheyear](http://americangirl.com/girloftheyear), where children can take a pledge to stand together against bullying. And please feel free to contact me if you have questions about the curriculum or concerns about how peer aggression may be affecting your child. Thank you for your support of this important initiative.

**PASS IT ON!**

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teacher’s signature

