

MOVIE: “Mean Girls”**Sub Topic Theme:**

I’ll Hurt You

Lesson Objective:

To begin to understand the process of bullying and what drives teens to take on this character trait in their lives. Helping students view and discuss how the actions of a few can be very hurtful and degrading to others can help



the group identify bullying and some of its root causes. The “Burn Book” has particular significance as a hurting tool, which debunks the old adage that “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Realizing that words DO hurt, and deeply sometimes, may help kids grasp the significance of what they say. Ultimately, pointing kids toward the way Jesus has called us to deal with other people can offer them a path out of bullying and being bullied.

Intro to the Movie:*Mean Girls*

Raised in the African bush country by her zoologist parents, Cady Heron has just returned to the United States and she thinks she knows all about the "survival of the fittest". But the law of the jungle takes on a whole new meaning when the home-schooled 16-year old enters public high school for the first time. Trying to find her place between jocks, mathletes, and other subcultures, Cady crosses paths with the meanest species of all - the Queen Bee, aka the cool and calculating Regina George, leader of the school's most fashionable clique, the Plastics. Cady wants to fit in and now she has friends from two different worlds, but to keep the Plastics as friends, she must do things she has never done before, such as being deceitful, scheming, and finally becoming untrustworthy. When Cady falls for Regina's ex-boyfriend Aaron Samuels, though, the Queen Bee is stung - and she schemes to destroy Cady's social future. Cady's own claws soon come out as she leaps into a destructive "Girl World" war that has the whole school running for cover.

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as how teens treat each other, the ‘pecking order’ in a high school, how being mean can harm others, how a person’s life can be devastated by bullying, and the ideas behind revenge or getting even. Also look for what insecurities or hurt may have existed in the bullies’ lives that create their need to hurt others. Discuss

how easy it is to get sucked into the hurtful drama of a person or group and what can be done to prevent that. Each student will have some identification with being the new kid at school and trying to find their place.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. What things can you identify with as the new kid at a school? How have you decided to connect with certain people or groups? What do you look for? Are you drawn to the powerful people or the average people or the outsiders? Why?
3. What do you think was the most hurtful thing done to someone in the movie? How do you think the “Burn Book” demonstrates bullying? What other forms of bullying did you recognize in the movie?
4. Talk about some actions that people in the movie took to resist or reduce the influence of bullies. What was effective and what wasn’t? What would you do or have you seen done in response to bullies that you think provides a good strategy for dealing with these situations?
5. When is the last time that you were part of bullying someone else? Can you identify a hurt in you that made you act that way?

Group Input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions.

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *To begin to understand the process of bullying and what drives teens to take on this character trait in their lives. Helping students view and discuss how the actions of a few can be very hurtful and degrading to others can help the group identify bullying and some of its root causes. The “Burn Book” has particular significance as a hurting tool, which debunks the old adage that “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Realizing that words DO hurt, and deeply sometimes, may help kids grasp the significance of what they say. Ultimately, pointing kids toward the way Jesus has called us to deal with other people can offer them a path out of bullying and being bullied.*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

Simply put, bullying is a matter of the heart. When our heart has been hurt in some way, we can feel like we have to settle the debt owed to us. Sometimes, we decide to turn that “You owe me” attitude on other people, especially those that we perceive as weaker or of lesser stature or importance than ourselves. We can derive a sense of dominance and victory at another’s expense. We have to win, which means that they have to lose. It’s a zero sum game that can leave us feeling strong and powerful for a time, but it usually catches up to us after a while, until we come across someone else who leverages their power over us. And it hurts all over again! We can see that played out several times in how the girls treated each other and how they were treated in return.

Take a look at the story of Joseph and his brothers found in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. There are 12 brothers; 10 brothers from one mother and the last 2 from another mother. Joseph was number 11, the first kid of the second mother whose name was Rachel. It seems that the father (Jacob) really loved Rachel and her two boys, which of course, set up a jealousy thing with the other 10 brothers. Wow, this stuff even happens in the Bible from families long ago. Nothing’s really new is it?

So here’s how it goes down in Genesis 37:3-35:

³ Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other sons, because he had been born to him when he was old. He made a long robe with full sleeves (a decorated robe) for him.⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them, they hated their brother so much that they would not speak to him in a friendly manner.

⁵ One time Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more.⁶ He said, “Listen to the dream I had.⁷ We were all in the field tying up sheaves of wheat, when my sheaf got up and stood up straight. Yours formed a circle around mine and bowed down to it.”

⁸ “Do you think you are going to be a king and rule over us?” his brothers asked. So they hated him even more because of his dreams and because of what he said about them.

⁹ Then Joseph had another dream and told his brothers, “I had another dream, in which I saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down to me.”

¹⁰ He also told the dream to his father, and his father scolded him: “What kind of a dream is that? Do you think that your mother, your brothers, and I are going to come and bow down to you?” ¹¹ Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept thinking about the whole matter.

Joseph Is Sold and Taken to Egypt

12 One day when Joseph's brothers had gone to Shechem to take care of their father's flock, 13 Jacob said to Joseph,

“I want you to go to Shechem, where your brothers are taking care of the flock.”

Joseph answered, “I am ready.”

14 His father told him, “Go and see if your brothers are safe and if the flock is all right; then come back and tell me.” So his father sent him on his way from Hebron Valley.

Joseph arrived at Shechem¹⁵ and was wandering around in the country when a man saw him and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

16 “I am looking for my brothers, who are taking care of their flock,” he answered. “Can you tell me where they are?”

17 The man said, “They have already left. I heard them say that they were going to Dothan.” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

18 They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted against him and decided to kill him.¹⁹ They said to one another, “Here comes that dreamer.²⁰ Come on now, let's kill him and throw his body into one of the dry wells. We can say that a wild animal killed him. Then we will see what becomes of his dreams.”

21 Reuben heard them and tried to save Joseph. “Let's not kill him,” he said. 22 “Just throw him into this well in the wilderness, but don't hurt him.” He said this, planning to save him from them and send him back to his father. 23 When Joseph came up to his brothers, they ripped off his long robe with full sleeves. 24 Then they took him and threw him into the well, which was dry.

25 While they were eating, they suddenly saw a group of Ishmaelites traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were loaded with spices and resins.²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain by killing our brother and covering up the murder?²⁷ Let's sell him to these Ishmaelites. Then we won't have to hurt him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed,²⁸ and when some Midianite traders came by, the brothers pulled Joseph out of the well and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

29 When Reuben came back to the well and found that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes in sorrow. 30 He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not there! What am I going to do?”

31 Then they killed a goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood.³² They took the robe to their father and said, “We found this. Does it belong to your son?”

33 He recognized it and said, “Yes, it is his! Some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been torn to pieces!” 34 Jacob tore his clothes in sorrow and put on sackcloth. He mourned for his son a long time. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “I will go down to the world of the dead still mourning for my son.” So he continued to mourn for his son Joseph.

What started as an extremely violent act borne out of jealousy and hatred by the brothers toward Joseph took a very different turn because God was involved with Joseph's life. He

gained favor with Egypt's Pharaoh over time and became one of the men in charge of the entire Egyptian kingdom. Years later, due to a famine, his brothers come to him for food, but they seriously don't recognize him. Then after several interactions, the story continues like this:

Genesis 45:1-8

¹ Joseph was no longer able to control his feelings in front of his servants, so he ordered them all to leave the room. No one else was with him when Joseph told his brothers who he was.² He cried with such loud sobs that the Egyptians heard it, and the news was taken to the king's palace.³ Joseph said to his brothers,

“I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But when his brothers heard this, they were so terrified that they could not answer.⁴ Then Joseph said to them,

“Please come closer.” They did, and he said,

“I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.⁵ Now do not be upset or blame yourselves because you sold me here. It was really God who sent me ahead of you to save people's lives.⁶ This is only the second year of famine in the land; there will be five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor reaping.⁷ God sent me ahead of you to rescue you in this amazing way and to make sure that you and your descendants survive.⁸ So it was not really you who sent me here, but God. He has made me the king's highest official. I am in charge of his whole country; I am the ruler of all Egypt.”

Joseph credits God for changing his own heart from wanting to get revenge on his brothers for the ‘debt’ they owed him. Now that he was extremely powerful, he would not use that power to bully the brothers that had bullied him years ago. Looking at the brothers’ vengeful, hateful attitude in the beginning, we can see that this way of treating people is very contrary to what Jesus lays out as a way our lives should be lived. In fact, he actually says some pretty strong things about people who knowingly hurt other people, and he always offers us a way of changing – actually complete transformation from the inside out. He says that he will heal our hurting heart so that we, like Joseph, do not need to take advantage of others any more. Jesus offers to settle the debt we feel like we’re owed and release us from its grip on us! Now that’s great news!!

Challenge:

1. Remember one of the positive strategies from the movie and discussion about dealing with bullies and talk about it with your friends and leaders.
2. Take a personal inventory using a piece of paper with a line down the middle. Write down people you have hurt on one side and the deepest personal reason you can think of for why you did it (deep feelings like ‘I’m really angry at my mom,’ or ‘I feel so insecure at school,’ or ‘I really hate myself!’)

3. Write out a prayer to God for his presence and help in your attitudes about who has hurt you and those you feel like you should overpower. Ask Jesus to sit with you in the pain of your heart and heal you so you will stop hurting others.

Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of a being alone and isolated, I'll Hurt You!