



Cinema/Chicago and the 47th Chicago International Film Festival
Education Outreach Program Screening: *The Bully Project*

Director: Lee Hirsch
90 minutes, not rated
In English

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas/questions and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students are required to respond to the screening with a one-page essay. Essays (either all or select) must be sent to Cinema/Chicago.*

Synopsis: *The Bully Project* follows five kids and families over the course of a school year. Stories include two families who have lost children to suicide and a mother awaiting the fate of her 14-year-old daughter who has been incarcerated after bringing a gun on her school bus. With an intimate glimpse into homes, classrooms, cafeterias and principals' offices, the film offers insight into the often cruel world of the lives of bullied children.

Recommended for: humanities, cultural and social studies, film and video students.

Appropriate for: mature 6-8 grade students, all high school students.

Study Ideas/Questions:

1. What makes someone a bully? Why do you think people become bullies?
2. Think of the students who are highlighted in the film – Alex, Kelby, Ja'meya, Ty and Tyler. What about them made them targets for bullies? What makes someone appear to be an "outsider" or "outcast?"
3. Tyler's father says that while Tyler didn't come home with bloody noses and broken bones, he did come home with emotional wounds. What is the difference between physical abuse and mental abuse? Why is mental abuse possibly more damaging than physical abuse?
4. Think of the different stories that are told in the film. Who is to "blame" in each of these stories? Who is to blame for Tyler's suicide? Who is to blame for the abuse Alex experiences?
5. The film focuses on both the student perspective and the adult/parent perspective. Do you feel that the parents and adults understand what the students are going through? How do they try to reach out to the students? How do they succeed? How do they fail?
6. Kelby has a strong group of friends that support her. How important are friends? How does having friends help boost self-esteem and confidence for Kelby?

7. How do the parents and other students try to stop bullying? Talk about the different things they do to accomplish their goal.
8. What resources are available at your school for victims of bullying? Do you feel safe from bullies at your school?
9. Have you ever bullied someone or been bullied? Explain how you felt and the result/consequences.
10. How could you help someone who is being bullied? What can you do to stop bullying in your school?

Useful Links and Resources:

Film website (includes trailer and student/teacher resources): <http://www.thebullyproject.com/>

Interview with director Lee Hirsch: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/28/the-bully-project-lee-hirsch-documentary_n_855268.html

Stand for the Silent organization: <http://standforthesilent.com/>

Information about Cinema/Chicago's Education Outreach Program:
<http://cinemachicago.org/education/>

*Schools who do not send in essay requirement will not be allowed to attend future Education Outreach Screenings.