**Thank You Mr. Falker - PeaceBuilders Lesson (Give Up Put Downs)**

**Agenda:**

1.) Teacher reads book aloud to students

2.) Teacher leads discussion with students, exploring various focal points and themes found the in book

**Discussion Questions:**

**Put-Downs**

**1.) In what ways did others put Trisha down?**

- Called her names Toad, Maggot, Dumbbell, etc.

- Told her she was stupid, ugly, etc.

- Eric convinced other kids to pick on her

**2.) In what ways did Trisha put herself down?**

- Believed she was dumb

- Convinced herself she’d never learn to read

- Thought she wasn’t worthy of getting help (hid her problems rather than seek help)

- Believed a lot of what bullies told her

- Didn’t think she should stand up for herself

- Even when teachers started helping her, she still believed she was dumb at first

**Understanding Trisha (aka - The Victim)**

1. **What do we know about Trisha that added to her struggles with learning? (What stressors made her situation even worse?)**

-Her family really values education; especially reading and acquiring knowledge.

-She was really looking forward to learning how to read; making her struggles with reading even more frustrating when she couldn’t.

-Her struggles became more obvious/pronounced as she got older and peers advanced.

-She wanted to fit in, but couldn’t because of her struggles (other kids noticing she is different, but don’t know why).

-If you can’t read numbers and letters well, it is difficult to do well in most academic subjects.

-She is required to go to school, so she can’t escape these problems.

-Grandparents died (They were a big support for her. They were close, and it would be hard for her to cope with this loss even if she didn’t have other issues going on!)

-She was focusing on trying to hide her struggles from others, which took her focus from actually learning/achieving.

-When her family moved, she expected things to get better, which made it so much worse when things didn’t improve (increased frustration/disappointment).

**2.) What were Trisha’s strengths?**

-Drawing/artistic ability, Kindness, Didn’t respond aggressively to peers, Willing to accept help when given to her, Appreciative, good memory (memorized what peers read out loud), cunning (fooled teachers for years into thinking she could read)

**The Bullies:**

**1.) Why did the one boy, Eric pick on Trisha so much?**

- He might have been jealous that Trisha was getting a lot of Mr. Falker’s attention

- Maybe Eric wished he got special attention too

- Maybe Eric felt bad about himself for some reason, and wanted to put Trisha down so he felt better about himself (so he felt smarter, more popular, superior, etc.)

- Maybe he was copying some bullying behavior that had been done to him before

- Maybe he learned this bullying behavior from watching others

- Didn’t realize the true harm he was doing to Trisha

- Liked getting the attention from peers by bullying Trisha

**2.) Why did the other kids follow along with Eric and continue to bully Trisha?**

- Wanted to fit in/be liked by peers

- Didn’t want to become the new target/victim themselves

- Thought it was fun/funny

- Didn’t know how else to handle the situation

**Trisha’s Supports:**

**1.) What could the other kids have done to help/support Trisha?**

- Could have realized she was hurting and stopped making fun of her

- Could have told Eric to stop bullying her (stood up for Trisha)

- Could have tried to help her figure out why learning was so hard

- Could have told an adult about the mean things other kids (like Eric) were saying/doing to Trisha.

- Could have helped her stay away from the kids who were mean to her

**2.) Who were Trisha’s actual supporters? (The ones we know about for sure)**

-Family (Grandparents, Mom)

-Teachers (Mr. Falker, Miss Plessy)

**3.) What did Trisha's supporters do to support/help her?**

-Grandpa (and other family members) instilled in Trisha a desire to learn, and a longing to gain knowledge, and a love of reading

-Grandma was kind, loving, encouraging, and believed that Trisha would succeed

-Mr. Falker was kind, encouraged her, believed she would succeed, complimented her, pointed out her strengths, defended her from mean peers, gave her extra help, found another way for her to look at her struggles, found creative ways to help her learn, brought Miss Plessy into the picture for added Reading support

**Self-Reflection:**

**1.) Can you remember a time when you were being called names or were put-down by others?** (How did you feel? How did you handle it?)

**2.) Can you think of a time when you were calling someone names or putting them down? After hearing this story and talking about it, do you have any new thoughts about that?** (How it made that person/people feel? What they thought about you and your behavior?)