

WHEN MY KIDS KEEP ARE BULLIED, Part 1
Sermon Series: I Am The Church
Next Steps Devotional Guide
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1. When you were a child or a teen, can you remember a time you were bullied? How did you deal with it?
2. When you were a child or a teen, did you ever bully someone? Why? What was the result? As an adult, have you ever bullied or harassed anyone to do something? What was it and why?
3. Read Jesus' words in John 16:33 from your sermon notes. In what ways, if any, does Jesus' words help you with being bullied or harassed?
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-4 from your sermon notes. In what ways and where do you see this today?
5. According to a TheGospelCoalition.org, *"there's 150 countries where Christians are severely persecuted for their faith -- 150. 245 million Christians live in the 50 worst persecuting countries. For those 245 million Christians, they can face the threat of discrimination, interrogation, arrest, prison, refugee camps, torture, even death. That's a 1/4 of a billion people being persecuted just for being a Christian in those countries. 1 in 9 Christians worldwide experiences severe persecution. In fact, this past year, 4,136 Christians were killed simply for being Christian. That's 11 Christians a day being killed for being a Christian. 2,625 Christians were detained without trial, arrested, sentenced, and imprisoned in those 50 worst countries along with who knows how many tens of thousands of others. We know that in North Korea, it's estimated that there are about 70,000 Christians languishing in prison alone. Last year, 1,266 churches were burned or destroyed around the world out of persecution."* How can you help your kids understand and deal with this kind of behavior from the world?
6. According to The International Society For Human Rights, quoted in WordWatchMonitor.org, *"80% of all religious freedom violations in the world are directed against Christians."* How can you help kids come to terms with this kind of bullying, harassment, unfairness and intolerance?
7. Read Jesus' words in John 15:19-20. Jesus was perfect. Jesus never sinned. Jesus never hurt anyone but the world still crucified Him. The reason the devil and his demons come after us is to make us miserable and to attempt to hurt God, our heavenly Father. The best way to hurt any parent, is to hurt their kids. Reflect back over you life, where has the devil and demons hurt you to hurt God and how could you use that as a bridge to explain this to kids?
8. Read Ephesians 6:12 from your sermon notes under point #1. Why do you think we tend to forget Ephesians 6:12 when we have been bullied or harassed or hurt by someone?
9. On August 8, 15, and October 3, much of these 3 sermons were about knowing who we are as believers — knowing our identity. God is your Creator. Jesus is your Savior and Lord and the Holy Spirit lives in you. You have the full force of the Trinity bending you to help you engage in this battle with this unseen world of the devil and his demons using people as pawns. How can this help kids and you when it comes to bullying and harassment?
10. Read 1 John 4:4 and Psalm 56:3-4 from your sermon notes under point #2. How could writing down Scripture promises on 3x5 cards or in a digital device help kids deal with bullying and harassment?
11. Read Romans 12:17-19 from your sermon notes under point 3. Our first emotion when our kids are being bullied or we have been attacked, is to get even. Yet, if we do that, we have lower ourselves to either their level or below their level. When we forgive them, it puts us in a position to have God reward us. Brainstorm for a moment what those possible rewards could be. How does this help any kid?
 - a. What rewards could you tell you tell children God could give them if they chose to forgive the bully or the person harassing them?
 - b. Who do you think can do a better job? Who do you think has more resources at taking a person down a notch or two who's been irritating, or arrogant or bullying? God or you? Which one do you trust and rely on more than any children see?

12. When we are harmed or our kids are bullied, God has a different desire for a final outcome than we often do — redemption. We typically get mad, hold a grudge or want to get even.
 - a. Webster defines “redemption” as “the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.” Revenge is the opposite of redemption — revenge is the path to sin, error and evil. Read the in your sermon notes the two-fold purpose of redemption under point #4. How does this help kids deal with a bully and harassment?
 - b. Read Romans 12:21 and Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:43-44 from your sermon notes. You don’t fight fire with fire; you fight fire with faith.
 - i. Read the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as “enemies.” The description is less about a person, and more about a posture, or a perspective or a point-of-view. Why is this more difficult to deal with than a person?
 - ii. Jesus tells us to do four for someone who hurts us. What suggestions could you give to kids on how they could do these four with someone who is bullying or harassing them?
 - c. Read Proverbs 25:21 and Proverbs 24:29 from your sermon notes. Both of these passages emphasize that our response to a bully or anyone who hurts is a personal choice. In what ways can you help kids make this choice?
13. Read Jesus’ words in Mathew 5:38 under point #4. In Jesus’ day, people thought and practice vengeance under the cloak of redemption.
 - a. Jesus knows their sources for this belief. Read Leviticus 24:17-22 and Exodus 21:23b-25 as well as the extent Rome allowed someone to exert their right of the Lex Telionis, based on an ancient code called the Code of Hammurabi (1750 BC). Read Deuteronomy 19:20 from your sermon notes. One person of all of these (Leviticus 24:17-22, Exodus 21:23b-25, the Roman Lex Telionis and the Code of Hammurabi) was to ensure that no one simply took the law into their own hands. When kids are bullied, they naturally want to take matters into their own hands. What ways do you think kids and we are vulnerable to take matters into their own hands in dealing with a bully or harassment?
 - b. The story Lamech in Genesis is an interesting one. Read Genesis 4:23-24 from your sermon notes under point #4. God understands that when someone hurts us or bullies any kid, we have a desire to not only even the score, but get excessive in tilting that score in our favor. In what ways do you think kids and yourself are vulnerable to do this?
 - c. Read Deuteronomy 32:25a, Romans 12:19, and Hebrews 10:30 from your sermon notes under point #4. How can you help kids and yourself accept that God is a better at getting vengeance than we are when we are bullied or hurt?
14. Read Jesus’ words in Mathew 5:39 under point #4. Jesus gives a radical response on dealing with bullying and harassment. Underline or circle them in this passage in your sermon notes. How would you tell a kid to do these four things?
 - a. Read Matthew 26:67-68 and John 18:22 from your sermon notes under point #4. In Jesus day, for a Jew to slap another Jew on the face was considered to be one of the most demeaning and contemptuous acts. What would the equivalent in our day? Why?
 - b. Read the two explanations for the Greek New Testament word translated as “slapping.” Jews consider slapping with the back of the hand twice as worse than slapping with the flat of the hand. Modern forms of a “back-handed slap” were how Martin Luther King Jr. convinced black people not to respond to violence when violence was inflicted on them during the Civil Rights Movement. What examples could you share with children to see how effective this is when a bully gives them a “back-handed slap?”
15. The goal in dealing with any bully is redemption. Even Hollywood has many movies that deal with redemption: Star Wars Episode VI — The Return of the Jedi, The Green Mile, It’s A Wonderful Life, Unforgiven, Good Will Hunting, The Lion King, The Dark Knight Rises and The Passion of the Christ just to name a few.
 - a. Read Luke 23:34, Luke 23:39-43 and Matthew 27:54 from your sermon notes under point #4. How did Jesus’ response to being bullied, beaten and crucified bring about redemption in this passages?
 - b. In what ways does knowing why we respond with redemption rather than revenge helps us know what to do when our kids or we are bullied or harassed?
16. From everything you have read and heard in the sermon, the sermon notes and the devotional guide:
 - a. What would be the most challenging for kids? Why? How could you help them with this?
 - b. What is the most challenging for you? Who could you get to help you with this?