

## JUST KIDDING

By Trudy Ludwig

D.J.'s friend, Vince has a habit of teasing people and then saying, "Just kidding!" as if this statement will make everything okay. But it isn't okay. D.J. feels that Vince's jokes often have a "sharp edge" that can "cut you into pieces." With the help of his father, brother, and teacher, D.J. learns to take positive action in response to the harmful teasing and two seemingly harmless words, "Just kidding!"



**WITS and WITS LEADS Connection** : Talk it out, Seek Help

## Questions and Activities



### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Look at the cover of the book.
  - When do you usually hear the expression, "Just kidding!"
  - What do you think each of the boys on the cover are thinking/feeling?
- What do people usually joke about? How does it feel when people share a joke?
- How do people typically react when they hear a joke?
- What do people tease others about? How does it feel when you are being teased?
- How do people react when they see others being teased? *There are different bystander roles during this experience. Some people laugh, some people are silent but do not laugh, some people speak out and try to stop the teasing.*



### QUESTIONS DURING THE READING

- Page 2: What is wrong with using the game "Rock, Paper Scissors" to place D.J. on a team? *This game was only used to decide which team D.J. was to join but it was not used for the rest of the team members. Vince said that the "Loser gets D.J." on their team.*
- Page 8: Why was it hurtful to be called a "girlie" by Vince when D.J. announced he would be the goalie for the soccer team. *Girls are sometimes stereotyped to be weaker or not as strong in sports. Vince did not congratulate or encourage D.J. he just made fun of him and pranced around the soccer field to continue the teasing.*
- Page 10: Vince chanted "D.J.'s wearing pj's!" and continued poking D.J. even though D.J. told him to stop several times. What else could D.J. do in this situation? *Get up and move to a different seat. Select a different seat next time he gets on the bus. Seek help from the bus driver, his teacher, and or his parents.*
- How does Mrs. Winter describe the difference between tattling and reporting? *Tattling is when you are trying to get someone into trouble. Reporting is when you are trying to help someone in trouble.*



## QUESTIONS AFTER THE READING

1. What is the difference between “just kidding” and hurtful teasing? *Kidding makes everyone feel better and teasing causes one or more people to feel badly.*
2. What is the difference between having fun with others and making fun of others? *Having fun allows everyone to feel good about the experience. Making fun causes people to feel humiliated or hurt.*
3. Do you have a favourite joke? Why is it funny? Is it possible it could be hurtful to someone else?
4. How can you tell if your friends like it when you are joking and having fun with them? *They smile, laugh and possibly make a joke too.*
5. How do you let your friends know when the joking feels like harmful teasing? *State how you feel, request that they stop.*

Seek Help:

6. D.J. tried to deal with Vince’s harmful teasing on his own. What did he do? Was this strategy working? *D.J. tried ignoring the behaviour but he felt hurt and alone despite his efforts.*
7. Was it easy for D.J. to seek help from his father? *No, D.J. felt ashamed and frustrated and he did not want to talk about it. Sometimes it takes courage to seek help.*
8. Did the teasing stop after D.J. received help from his Dad? *No, they needed help from D.J.’s teacher too. Keep seeking help until you get the support you need.*
9. Who were the bystanders in the story? What could they do to stand up for D.J.? *It takes an audience to laugh. They could choose not to laugh and not provide Vince with the attention he desired. They could seek help from the teacher, the bus driver and/or the soccer coach.*



## ACTIVITIES AFTER THE READING

- *Test Yourself! Is it kidding or harmful teasing?*  
Distribute a copy of the *Test Yourself!* to each student. Read aloud each statement to the students and answer any questions to clarify their understanding. Students determine whether the statement indicates a funny “kidding” experience or a harmful teasing experience. Discuss the responses as a class.
- *Crossing the Line – When kidding becomes harmful teasing.*  
Distribute the *Crossing the Line* handout to students. Ask students to describe three ways they can recognize when kidding “crosses the line” and becomes hurtful teasing.
- *It’s Okay To Seek Help*  
Distribute the “*Its Okay To Seek Help*” handout to your class. Each student illustrates an experience when they needed to seek help from an adult. After they have drawn the experience illustrating the sequence of events in six squares they are to cut out each square and rearrange the squares in a pile facedown on their desk. Assemble students in small groups of two - four people. Each student will take turns arranging the another person’s six square story in the order that they think it should appear. Then they will try to retell the story based on what they see in the squares. After they have described how they think the story happened the owner of the drawings will tell the original version of the story. Students may compare similarities and differences between the original version of the story and the predicted version offered by the partner or small group.

## **JUST KIDDING: Test yourself! Is it kidding or harmful teasing?**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Classify the phrases listed below by putting a check mark under the correct category.**

“But I learned the hard way that when a joke has a sharp edge to it, it can cut you into pieces.”

*D.J.*

The Experience	Kidding	Harmful Teasing
1. The person being teased and the person teasing both laugh and swap roles happily.		
2. The joke is a posted photo on the internet without the owner's permission.		
3. The joking continues even when one person becomes distressed or says, "Stop."		
4. The joking is meant to get everyone to laugh.		
5. The joke is "one-sided" - only one side or one person finds it funny.		
6. The joke is meant to laugh <i>at</i> the person.		
7. The joke is meant to laugh <i>with</i> the person.		
8. The joke is funny and one person feels humiliated.		
9. The joke maintains the respect of everyone involved.		
10. The joking stops if a person becomes upset or says, "Stop."		
11. The joke makes the person look uncomfortable.		

Think of a question you can ask yourself before you do or say something to figure out if it would be kidding or harmful teasing.

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# JUST KIDDING: *Crossing The Line*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Describe three experiences when kidding with our friends "crosses the line" and becomes harmful teasing.

<p><b>1</b> Kidding</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>The line between kidding and harmful teasing.</p>	<p>Harmful Teasing</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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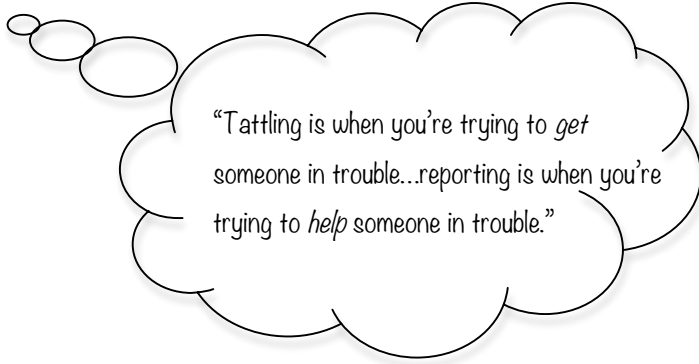
<p><b>2</b> Kidding</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>The line between kidding and harmful teasing.</p>	<p>Harmful Teasing</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p><b>3</b> Kidding</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>The line between kidding and harmful teasing.</p>	<p>Harmful Teasing</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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## JUST KIDDING: *It's Okay To Seek Help*

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Name \_\_\_\_\_



Draw a story about a situation you observed or experienced when you needed to seek help from an adult.

Include:

1. The situation
2. What happened
3. How you felt
4. How you decided to seek help
5. How help was offered
6. The end result

When you are finished cut out your squares and rearrange them so that they are out of order. Put your squares in pile facedown. Ask a partner to turn over and view each square and put the squares in the order that they think the story occurred. Invite your partner to tell the story that they see illustrated in the squares. Once they are finished, tell them the original story and compare similarities and differences in both versions.

