

## BULLYING: WHAT CAN WE DO?

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One of the hardest parts of parenting is comforting your child who has been hurt by something another kid said or did to them at school, and feeling powerless to make it better. In Matthew 5:38-39, Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." Elsewhere, the Bible says to love them, forgive them, pray for them, and do good things for them ([Matthew 5:44](#), [Matthew 6:14-15](#), [Luke 6:27](#), and [Ephesians 4:31-32](#)). In the midst of the bullying, all of those things can seem impossible for both you and your child. Here are some steps to help both of you through it.



### Working with the bully and safe adults

Some schools, churches, and justice systems have been using restorative justice practices as an alternative to punitive practices. If your school offers restorative justice, your child is given the opportunity to speak to the one bullying them in a safe setting, to say how the other's actions have impacted them, and offer suggestions of what can be done to make life better.

The child who is doing the bullying is also an active participant in restorative justice. They are given the opportunity to take ownership of their actions; as a person they are separate from their behavior, which means they can choose to act differently. In that safe setting, they can suggest what they can do to make things right. Restorative justice is a beautiful process that can help both parties to heal and move forward in their lives.

You can learn more about restorative justice with this [introductory video](#) and see what actually happens in an RJ session.

### Forgiving someone even when they're not sorry

However, the school, the child doing the bullying, or their parents may not want to participate in restorative justice. The beautiful thing about forgiveness is that it doesn't *have* to involve the other person. Forgiveness is a heart thing. If you and your child want to deeply forgive someone who has bullied them, there are a few steps:

1. Encourage your child to name all of the ways that the bullying hurt them without making up excuses for the one who did the bullying. And ask your child how these actions impacted them.
2. Take a moment to really feel the pain those actions have caused. Then release the pain and that person to God. Pray, "In Jesus name, I forgive so-and-so for what they did." Pray over every hurt specifically.
3. Ask God to fill you and your child with the Holy Spirit, and then pray a blessing over the other person. Some Bible passages that you could pray over the relationship include [Isaiah 32:15-18](#), [Isaiah 40:31](#), [Philippians 4:19](#), [Proverbs 3:5-6](#), and [Romans 12:2](#).

It's heartbreaking to see our children hurting, but we can help them. As mom or dad, you can be there for them, listen to them, pray over them, pray for the other child, and help them come up with safe strategies to get the bullying to stop. If you're not sure what to do, speak to your child's teacher or principal and ask for

suggestions.

To talk to your kids and family about bullying, check out Kids Corner's [Power Tools: Take a Stand Against Bullying](#) eBook.

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article [A Christian Response to Bad Behavior](#)

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