



Lace Up Against Bullying

By: Lewis Lois

NARRATOR 1:

It's Monday morning. Grace Taylor and her cousin Mark Brown are running late. They race down the street just in time to see the school bus pull up to the stop.

NARRATOR 2:

As they get closer, they see three boys pushing a new student who is waiting for the bus. The bus driver opens the door and yells to them.

BUS DRIVER:

Stop it! Leave him alone and get on the bus!

NARRATOR 1:

Laughing, the three boys go to the back of the bus. The new student sits behind the bus driver, tears streaming down his face.

NARRATOR 2:

Grace and Mark find seats in front of their friends Maria and Shawn. Grace turns around to talk to them.

GRACE:

Hi, guys. Do you know what was going on at the bus stop?

SHAWN:

Pete and his crew were picking on the new kid.

MARK: (puzzled)

Why?

MARIA:

He was wearing different colored shoelaces, one purple, one orange.

GRACE: (shocked)

They picked on him because of his shoelaces? That's awful!

NARRATOR 1:

A few minutes later the bus arrives at the school. The new student is the first one out. He runs into the school building.

NARRATOR 2:

The rest of the students get off the bus. Pete and his friends walk behind Grace and Mark, still laughing about their actions. Mark turns to them.

MARK:

Guys, why don't you leave the new kid alone? He hasn't done anything to you.

PETE: (to Mark, angrily)

Why don't *you* mind your own business!

PETE'S FRIENDS: (to Mark, together)

YEAH!

NARRATOR 1:

The boys stop and stare at each other. Grace grabs Mark's arm.

GRACE:

C'mon, Mark, let's go. We'll be late for class.

NARRATOR 2:

Mark turns away and walks into the school with Grace. At lunchtime, the cousins meet in the cafeteria. They talk about what happened at the bus stop that morning.

GRACE: (upset tone, to Mark)

What Pete and his friends did to the new student was just wrong!

MARK:

Yeah. I bet that if everyone wore purple and orange shoelaces, they couldn't pick on all the students at once!

NARRATOR 1:

Suddenly, Grace starts smiling.

GRACE:

Mark, that's it! What if, for one day, we could get everyone to take a stand against bullying by wearing purple and orange shoelaces?

MARK:

Great idea! We could call it "Lace Up Against Bullying Day." But there are 400 students in this school! Where are we going to find enough shoelaces for everyone? How would we pay for them?

GRACE:

Hmm . . . Wait! Your dad's friend, Mr. Perez, owns the sporting goods store in the mall. Maybe he can help us.

NARRATOR 2:

That evening, Grace and Mark talk to Mark's dad, Mr. Brown, about their idea. He likes the plan and calls Mr. Perez.

MR. BROWN: (hanging up the telephone)

It's all set. If you two get the approval of your principal, Mr. Perez will supply enough free shoelaces for everyone in your school.

MARK:

Wow! That's great! Thanks Dad.

NARRATOR 1:

The next morning, Grace and Mark meet with Mrs. Whitney, the school principal, to tell her about their idea. Mrs. Whitney gives them her approval and calls Mr. Perez. He promises to get the shoelaces to the school on Wednesday.

MRS. WHITNEY: (to Grace and Mark)

We'll make this Friday "Lace Up Against Bullying Day." You two can tell everyone about it during today's announcements. We'll also post it on the school Web site. I'm proud of both of you.

NARRATOR 1:

Grace and Mark go to the school's computer room to broadcast their plan to the school.

GRACE:

Good morning. We're here to tell everyone that this Friday will be "Lace Up Against Bullying Day." Show your support by wearing purple and orange laces in your shoes on Friday.

MARK:

Starting at lunchtime on Wednesday, pick up your free purple and orange shoelaces in the cafeteria. Send the message that bullying hurts everyone.

NARRATOR 1:

On Wednesday morning, boxes of shoelaces arrive at the school. At lunchtime, students stand in lines to get their lunches -- and their shoelaces. During their lunch period, Grace and Mark help give out some of the shoelaces.

GRACE:

Mark, look! Everyone is taking shoelaces!

MARK:

I sure hope this idea works.

NARRATOR 2:

Friday finally arrives. Grace and Mark anxiously take seats on the school bus wearing purple and orange laces in their shoes. Pete and his friends are the last students to get on the bus.

NARRATOR 1:

As the boys look down the aisle, they see that everyone is wearing purple and orange laces, including the bus driver! Their mouths open wide in disbelief. The bus driver greets them.

BUS DRIVER: (smiling)

Good morning boys!

PETE AND FRIENDS: (together, in grumbling, low voices)

Good morning.

NARRATOR 2:

The boys sit down and don't talk to each other -- or anyone else -- during the ride to school. Grace whispers to Mark.

GRACE:

So far so good!

NARRATOR 1:

When Grace and Mark get to school, they are amazed by what they see. In addition to wearing purple and orange shoelaces, many students, teachers, and staff are wearing purple and orange clothing, including shirts, jackets, and socks.

NARRATOR 2:

Mrs. Whitney is wearing sneakers with purple and orange shoelaces. She shakes hands with Grace and Mark as they enter the building.

MARK:

Mrs. Whitney, this is incredible!

MRS. WHITNEY: (smiling)

Mark, this response shows the strength in numbers. Congratulations! It looks like "Lace Up Against Bullying Day" is a huge success.

NARRATOR 1:

At that moment someone taps Grace on the shoulder. It's the new student who had been bullied. He whispers two words to Grace.

NEW STUDENT:

Thank you.

NARRATOR 2:

Then the new student smiles and waves to Grace. She waves back as he walks down the hallway, his head held high.

GRACE: (smiling)

Mrs. Whitney, I agree with you. This day *is* a wonderful success.

