



HOW DO YOU HANDLE CLIQUES?



Coping with Cliques

Jocks. Geeks. Snobs. Do classmates use labels like these to describe groups of kids at your school? If so, you may be familiar with cliques.

Cliques are small groups of people who hang out together and exclude others. They tend to have shared interests, such as sports or hobbies, and rules about how members should look, dress, or act. Some cliques are friendlier than others.

Kids who are part of a clique may not feel free

to be themselves. They might even be pressured to give up other friendships or do unsafe things such as break the law or smoke cigarettes. If they don't fit in, they risk being shut out or bullied. This can cause a lot of pain and disunity.

True friends like you for who you really are. They encourage you to be yourself and do the things you enjoy. When you have friends like that, you can rise above the challenges of cliques.

Understanding Cliques

Think about how kids in your school or neighborhood get along, and answer these questions.

What are some of the cliques in your school?

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What are some stereotypes about those cliques? (e.g., The "Jocks" get bad grades.)
Do you think the stereotypes are true?

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Are you part of a clique? If so, how do you describe your group?

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Do you have to change yourself to fit in with your friends?

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Is there tension between cliques in your school? If so, why?

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Why do you think cliques form?

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What would you say if your friends wanted to exclude someone from joining your group?

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At school, try sitting with a new group of kids at lunchtime. Describe what happens:

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How can you help bring more unity to your school? (e.g., Stick up for kids who are being bullied, or make friends with someone new.)

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