

# Is your child a bully victim?

Many children are bullied at school and it causes parents and children much pain. This article is not an in-depth discussion of the full extent of the subject, but it does give directives for you as parents on how to pray.

- Firstly, it is important to work on your child's self-image. Children who are bullied often have a very poor and/or warped self-image. The child must be taught that he or she also has a place in the community, that they are worthy and have their own talents and gifts that are just as special as those of others.
- Pray for the child to understand his or her position in Jesus. Pray that the child will understand that he is so important that Jesus was prepared to die for him and lives in him after re-birth. The child needs to understand that God loves him unconditionally and that the Spirit of God lives in him. We are talking about children here who have a personal relationship with Jesus. If the child does not have a relationship with Jesus, explain the way to salvation clearly and how to become a child of God.
- Parents must teach these children how to pray themselves. The child must go and stand before God himself and ask Him for wisdom, and guidance and protection for his situation. This is of the utmost importance.
- Teach the child to bless the person who is bullying him or her. It is very important.
- Pray that your child will not react in the wrong way: with anger, bitterness or hatred. Pray that God will set him or her free from fear of the bully. It is fear that makes the child lose heart and makes him feel helpless. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (**2 Tim.1:7**). Pray for physical protection. It is only in the minority of cases that physical protection is important, but it is the fear of getting hurt physically that paralyses many children.
- The parents can and should prepare the child spiritually. It is useless to make the child's battle easier for him by visiting the school continuously and complaining to the teachers. In the end, the child must overcome the situation himself/herself otherwise the same problem will repeat itself over and over again in his or her life. There are many bullies in life and the sooner the child learns to handle it, to deal with the situation and find his own way of not only surviving, but living in freedom within each situation, the sooner the child will also be equipped to tackle the rest of his or her life.
- If it becomes necessary to go and talk to the school authorities, pray for wisdom on how and when to do it.
- Try not to take your child out of the school. It does not really solve the problem.
- Ask God if there is not a deeper problem in your family that needs to be faced: In many cases when children are bullied, there is a problem with the way the family functions. For example, there could be a domineering dad or mom, a child who for some reason or another experiences rejection at home, or is overprotected. Pray that the Holy Spirit will provide insight on how to solve the problem.

## **Also teach your child to actually pray for the bully!**

- Guard against negative prayer, accusing the bully and pointing out to God all the 'sins' of the bully.
- The bully normally also has a self-image problem himself and suffers much pain in his life. Pray for this child to also understand who he or she is and what God's purpose is with him/her.
- Bullies often come from homes or situations where there is a lack of love, where they experience rejection and are belittled, where they are treated with violence for making mistakes and are sometimes punished too heavily and sometimes unfairly. Bullies are children who rebel against such circumstances and then take out their anger, inferiority and frustration on other children, in this way trying to be in a situation where they can take control of their circumstances. Because they know only violence, they react violently towards everyone around them. Bullies are children who go about with great pain in their hearts, seeking love and acceptance, but it is hidden behind a façade of bluster.
- Bullies usually need acceptance and they want to be part of the 'in-crowd'. They are desperately in need of friends, but easily become jealous of other children. Bullying other children gives them a feeling of power and they believe this will make them acceptable to the group and gain esteem. This is why bullies normally have a few children who form a bully-group with them.

- Pray for the fear of the Lord to keep the bully in check.
- Pray for the bully's domestic situation, that he or she will get to know the love and unconditional acceptance of God.
- Pray for the salvation of the bully. Maybe he will one day be able to help other bullies to come to accept that it's foolish to continue being a bully.