

## **“A Playground Dialogue”**

**By Jack Bloomfield**

### Characters

Billy

Brynn

Liam

Luke (Billy’s big brother)

### **\*\*\*Synopsis\*\*\***

Three 5th grade students are playing at the local playground. They begin a dialogue that is a result of conversations that one of the boys continually overhears his parents having. Somehow, he feels like something is wrong with the way his parents feel about certain groups of people and it has been troubling him. He soon finds that his friends are hearing the same things in their homes and have the same feelings. As the conversation continues, a big brother of one of the children comes along and answers some of their questions. He helps them come to an agreement that when it comes to spreading prejudice and intolerance, they will be doing things differently when they grow up.

**MESSAGE FOCUS:** *Young children are extremely impressionable at this age and most of what they learn about other people and groups of people come from adults in their lives. What did we learn from the adults in our lives and how do we see others that are different than us today?*

Opening scene:

Billy, Brynn and Liam are playing a game of Frisbee in the local neighborhood park. Billy is very troubled by some things he is hearing at his home and opens up to his friends. They sit in a circle and begin a dialogue.

Billy:

“Hey guys. Can I ask you something? I always hear my parents talking about different groups of people and they’re always saying bad things about them. Do your parents talk like that too?”

Brynn:

“What groups are you talking about?”

Billy:

“Well, my dad says bad things about gay people. He calls them names like faggots and homos and says that their perverts.”

Liam:

“My Mom’s kind of like that too. She doesn’t like black people. She’s always saying that I should stick with white people for friends.”

Billy:

“I wonder why this is? “

Brynn:

“Now that you guys mention it, I always hear my mom and dad say that people who don’t go to our church are not “in” with God.”

Liam:

“I wonder why that happens to people when they grow up?

“Brynn:

“I think it’s called prejudice.”

Liam:

“Prejudice? I’ve never heard of that word. What does that mean?”

Billy:

“I think I know. I think it is when you don’t like someone that is not the same as you.

Liam:

“What do you mean? Aren’t all people sort of the same?”

Brynn:

“I think so, but when people get older, it seems like something changes. It seems like kids see the things that make us the same and adults see the things that make us different.”

Billy:

“What’s up with that? Hey look guys, there’s my big brother Luke.”

(At this time, Billy’s big brother Luke is cutting through the park on his way home from school. He sees Billy, Brynn and Liam sitting in a circle talking. He waves and says hi as he’s walking by and Brynn calls out...)

Brynn:

“Hi Luke. Can you answer a question for us? We’ve been talking about something and wonder if you know what prejudice means? We’ve heard this word from other people.”

Luke acts very surprised that kid’s in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade are talking about something like prejudice. He’s carrying a book bag. One of the books in his book bag is a dictionary.

Luke: (he begins with a chuckle)

“This is a pretty deep conversation for guys your age. Anyway, I guess it’s kind of like when you don’t like other people without knowing them. Actually, I have a dictionary. (reaches in his book bag and pulls out a paperback dictionary) I wonder what the real definition is? Let’s see. Preeeeefix...Preeeeegnant...Preeeeehistoric...here it is. Prejudice. It says: (reading slowly) An adverse judgement or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts. Another definition given says: (slowly again) Irrational suspicion or hatred of a particular group, race or person.”

Liam:

“So that’s what it means. Is this something that happens to you as you get older cause I don’t know any kids like us that think that way.”

Luke:

“I know. I can’t explain it. At your guy’s age, you only see another kid as a possible new kid to play with or to become friends with. A lot of times when people get older, they stop seeing people as kid’s see them. They begin to see if other people fit into the same beliefs and groups as they do.”

Billy:

“I never do this. Remember when that new boy moved in across the street and I ran over to meet him?”

Luke: (looking at Billy)

“Yea, but did you here mom and dad? They were wondering what the man did for a job and what religion their family was.”

Brynn:

“Who cares about that?”

Luke:

“It’s something that happens to a lot of people when they get older. I can’t really explain it.”

Liam:

“Doesn’t that mean that a lot of people then avoid each other and don’t have a chance to become friends?”

Luke:

“It’s kind of what happens. It seems like older people gravitate toward being mostly with (holding both hands up in the air and doing the quotation marks sign) “*their kind*” of people.”

Billy:

“Well, everyone is my kind of people!”

Luke:

“You feel this way because you’re a kid Billy. You see others as they really are, not as people that you have to size up first to see if they fit into certain groups that you’re OK with. It’s a big issue with lots of grown-ups.”

Brynn:

“I don’t think I want to grow up if this is what is going to happen to me.”

Billy and Liam: (together)

“Me either. Me either.

Luke:

“I’ve got an idea. Why don’t you guys make an agreement right now that when you grow up you will always see other people as you see them right now. You think you want to do that?”

Liam, Billy and Brynn:

(together) “Yeah, Yeah, For Sure.”

Luke:

You guys can help change the world if you stick with this commitment throughout your whole life and teach others to do the same. Seeing others through the eyes of a child can put an end to prejudice, intolerance and division of *all* people. (Luke holds his arms wide open looking at the three kids. With excitement and encouragement he bursts out...)

**YOU GUYS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!**

(At this moment, Brynn, Billy and Liam join their hands together as the scene ends.)

Fade to black....

THE END

**Dialogue and questions.**

Is the story true? Do small kids see other people and groups differently from older people?

Why is this?

When does this change take place?

Why does this change take place?

Is this kind of thinking responsible for things like war, terrorism and one country hating another country?

Is this the kind of thinking that keeps one group thinking that they are better than another group?

What about locally in your community, school, place of worship and neighborhood?  
Where do differences show up in a negative way?