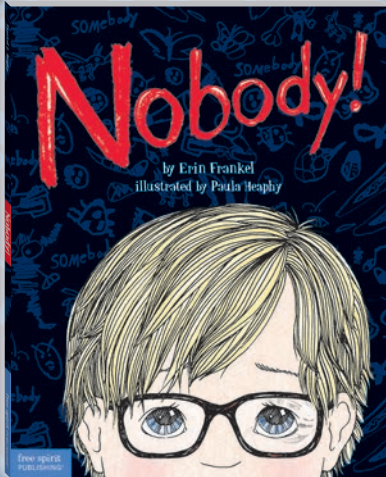


A Leader's Guide to

Nobody!



by Erin Frankel
illustrated by Paula Heaphy



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Dear Leader,

As caring adults, we have the potential to be important influences on children's ability to face and overcome situations of adversity. When it comes to bullying, we each play a crucial role in guiding and supporting children. In *Nobody!*, adults are part of Thomas's support system, along with peer upstanders and the power of positive thinking. It's up to each of us to bring that supportive role to life. We must create an environment and culture in which it's not only safe but worthwhile for those involved in bullying to take a stand against it, and to seek help when it's needed.

When I ask children who are being bullied why they don't tell caring adults about the situation, I hear the same answer again and again: "*Because the bully will get in trouble, and then the bullying will get worse.*" While writing *Nobody!*, I kept this insight in mind. What would happen, I wondered, if rather than consistently getting in trouble, the child doing the bullying consistently got help? How would this change things for the child who is being bullied? How would it change things for the child who is doing the bullying? And how would it change things for the children who witness bullying around them? Unless we teachers, parents, and other caregivers reach out to *all* of those involved in bullying, the cycle of anger, fear, and violence will continue. And those children who continually get in trouble—for whom we have zero tolerance and whom we label as bullies or as having anger issues—will bully again when we aren't looking, and will end up getting in bigger trouble down the road. These are the facts. And we will be faced with the realization of what children have been telling us—that *the bullying will get worse*. Fortunately, a different outcome is possible. You can be the reason why a child feels safe to tell, the reason why a child chooses to stand up for himself and others, and the reason why a child never bullies again.

I hope that the discussion questions, activities, and suggestions in this guide will help foster a caring community of learners in your classroom, school, and community. You will find additional activities in the back of *Nobody!*, as well. Thank you for taking the time to make a difference! If you have any questions or need extra ideas for how to use the book, please feel free to contact me via the website for the Weird series and *Nobody!* at www.theweirdseries.com.

Sincerely,

Erin Frankel

Integrating the Book into Your Classroom Routine

There are many ways to integrate *Nobody!* into your classroom schedule and curriculum. Some ideas include using the book:

- at the beginning of the school year when working with students to define what will make your classroom a caring community
- as a lead-in to National Bullying Prevention Month, No Name-Calling Week, or other national or local anti-bullying initiatives
- during character education units on courage, compassion, empathy, kindness, truthfulness, fairness, confidence, self-respect, or tolerance (just to mention a few)
- when specific instances of bullying have occurred in your classroom or school (*Note:* Take care not to name participants or single out students)
- as a reminder throughout the year to choose kindness

However you use the book, consider revisiting the characters and their challenges throughout the school year to discuss the choices they made. If students have forgotten details, it is often nice to go back and read the book again.



Discussing the Story

Meet the Main Characters

This is a pre-reading activity designed to introduce students to the characters in *Nobody!* and initiate a general discussion on bullying-related vocabulary and concepts. The activity will help children obtain a working vocabulary to discuss bullying and also provide an opportunity to consider some of the words and labels we use when talking about bullying.

1. Introduce the book. Tell students that you will be reading a picture book together, and say that the story is about bullying. If you are working with a large group and have access to an electronic whiteboard or projector, show the cover image in large size so that the entire class can see it in detail. Alternatively, invite students to sit in a reading circle so that they can see the book clearly as you hold it up for discussion.

2. Introduce Thomas. Tell students that Thomas is the name of the character on the cover. Tell students that he is involved in bullying. Ask: “How many of you think that Thomas is the child who is doing the bullying?” You can have students give a show of hands. *Talking Tip:* Point out that you did not ask, “How many of you think Thomas is *the bully*?” Explain that you will be referring to the bully as “the child who is doing the bullying.” Tell them that labeling someone a bully is never a good idea, because it’s a negative term and can be harmful to a person who is trying to change her behavior.

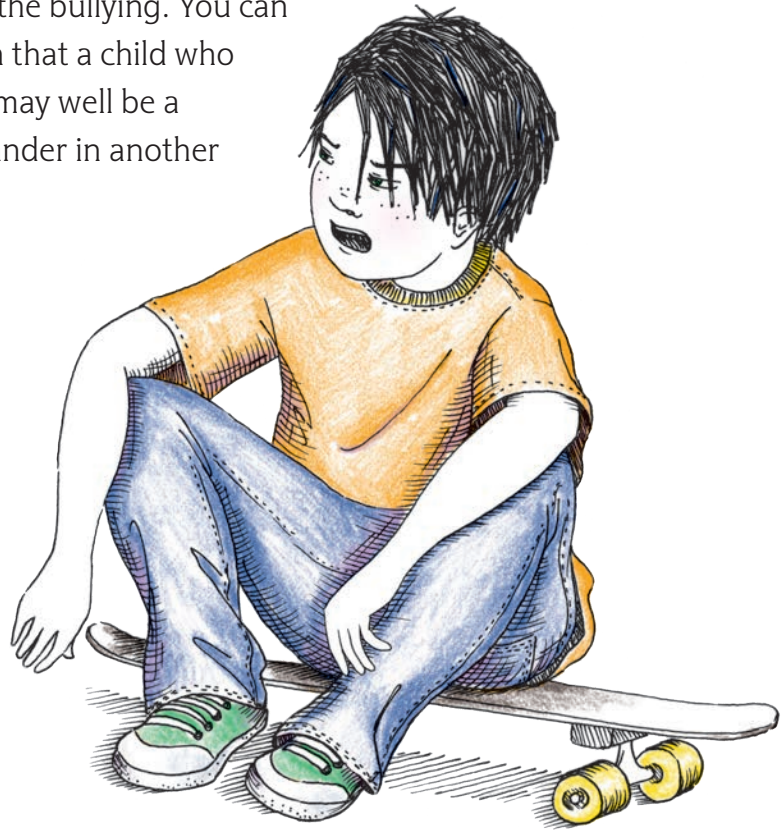
Ask: “How many of you think Thomas might be a bystander?” Take the opportunity to explain what a bystander is and introduce the word *upstander*. Explain that an upstander is someone who stands *up* for someone who is being bullied instead of standing *by*. Finally, ask: “And how many of you think that Thomas might be the target of bullying? Is Thomas the



boy who is being bullied?” Based on the illustration, students are likely to guess that Thomas is the target of bullying. Ask: “What makes you think that Thomas may be the target of bullying?” Possible answers may include “Because he looks sad,” or “Because he looks scared.”

Ask students if they think that a bystander, an upstander, or a child who is doing the bullying can feel sad and scared. With this discussion, you can help students contemplate the idea that we all share common feelings.

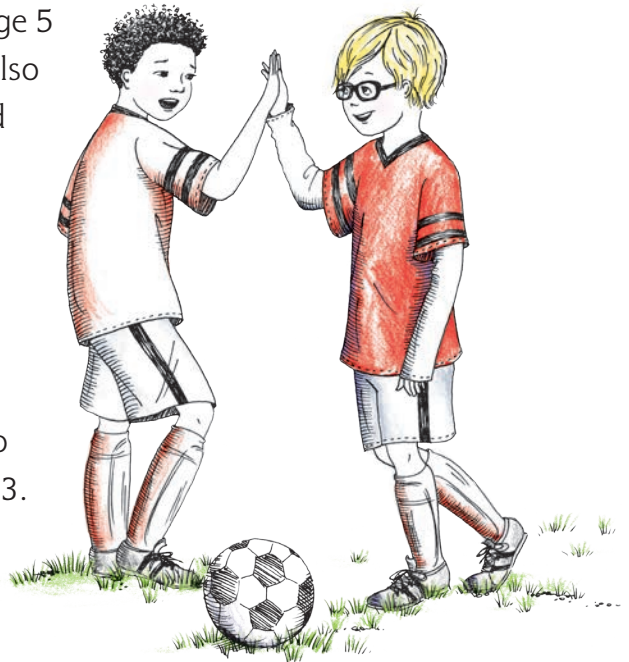
3. Introduce Kyle. If students haven’t already noticed the story’s other main character reflected in Thomas’s glasses, they will enjoy discovering him as you point out the reflection. Introduce Kyle as the other main character from the book. Ask: “Who do you think Kyle is?” *Talking Tip:* Use this opportunity, once again, to encourage students to avoid labeling. If students say Kyle is *the bully*, remind them that he is the child doing the bullying. You can take this opportunity to explain that a child who acts as a bully in one situation may well be a target, a bystander, or an upstander in another situation.



Meet Everyone Else

When reading the book, encourage students to consider what the other characters (besides Thomas and Kyle) in the story are doing and feeling. Refer to these characters by name as well. Doing so will make the stories more engaging and help students make connections. Here is a little introduction to other repeating characters and some of the places you will find them in the book.

- **Patrick** is the boy in the soccer uniform on page 5 who compliments and supports Thomas. We also see him standing up for himself on page 9, and telling Mr. C. about the bullying on page 18.
- **Mr. C.** is the caring teacher throughout the book. See page 6 for his first appearance.
- **Jay** is Thomas's best friend. We see him supporting Thomas on pages 6, 14, and 27.
- **Sebastian and Douglas** are the two boys who are often with Kyle. We see them first on page 3. Douglas is the boy with the hat and light-colored hair. We see Douglas standing up for Thomas on page 29.
- **Luisa** is the girl with the polka dot boots. We first see her on page 2. She has also been bullied and appreciates Thomas's understanding on page 23.
- **Jayla** is the girl with the hat on page 2. She stands up for Thomas.
- **Katy** is Thomas's older sister. We see her standing up for Thomas on page 12 and supporting him on page 23.
- **Sam** is the girl sitting on the steps on page 3. We see her standing by while Kyle bullies Thomas at the lunch table on page 8. She has bullied others in the past.
- **Ms. Evans** is the librarian. She is seen confronting Douglas and Sebastian about Thomas's notebook on page 10 and encouraging Thomas on pages 23 and 24.



Also, ask students to consider the actions and feelings of other characters in the book who are not named, such as Thomas's mom and Kyle's dad.

Story Activities

At the end of *Nobody!* you will find activities that you can use in the classroom to reinforce what children have learned. Here are some additional activities that relate to the ideas in the book.

Interesting!

This activity will help children reflect on how we are all different in some way and how our differences are what make us interesting. Putting the focus on what makes Thomas different and interesting will serve as a stepping stone to self-reflection.

1. Focus on Thomas. Ask: “When Kyle calls Thomas a *nobody*, how does Thomas feel?” Show students pages 2 and 3 in the book. Ask: “When Kyle says to Thomas, ‘Nobody cares about your stupid bug collection?,’ do you think it’s true?” Ask: “What about all of the other kids who are appreciating Thomas’s collection?” The object is to help students see that there are others who care about Thomas.



Then turn to page 8. Ask: “Is it true what Kyle says to Thomas: ‘Nobody sits with girls?’ What about Thomas? Isn’t Thomas somebody?”

Finally, turn to page 25 and read to students what Thomas wishes he could say when Kyle says, “Nobody wears glasses like those.” Thomas wants to respond, “I do and I’m somebody.” Highlight how Thomas has a hard time saying those words to Kyle, which is why upstanders are so important. Tell students that they can support kids like Thomas by practicing what they would say in that situation.

Explain that you will pretend you are Kyle, and students can practice standing up for Thomas by saying things like, “Thomas does and he’s somebody!” Use the example from the same page to get things started. As Kyle, say, “Nobody wears glasses like those.” Students can respond with something like, “Thomas does, and he’s somebody.” Continue on with several more examples, such as, “Nobody sits with girls,” “Nobody draws like that,” and “Nobody collects insects.”

2. Make an “Interesting Jar.” Ask students to think of some of the things that make Thomas an interesting person. Discuss how the things that Kyle picks on Thomas for are also the things that make Thomas interesting. Explain that when someone says something mean to you over and over again, you may start to doubt yourself and

believe what that person is saying. Show an example of this by reading Thomas’s words from page 20: “Still . . . what if Kyle is right? What if nobody is like me? What if I am different?” Tell students that it is important to remember that our differences are what make us interesting—and that’s pretty cool! Read page 21: “But aren’t we all different in some way? Isn’t that what makes things interesting?” Point out the different insects in the jar and how they are each unique and interesting. Tell students that you want to know what makes them interesting and suggest making an Interesting Jar. Give them copies of the coloring page on page 14 of this guide. Tell students to fill in their jars with pictures or words that show some of the things that make them interesting. When students are finished, they can cut out the jars. Alternatively, if desired, students can fill real jars with drawings, written words, and small objects representing their interesting traits and qualities as individuals.

3. Present and display. Using the illustration on page 21 in *Nobody!*, you may choose to take pictures of students holding their jars up like Thomas. Pictures can then be displayed on a bulletin board or over lockers or personal storage spaces, or elsewhere in the classroom or hallway. Alternatively, students may prefer to decorate their rooms at home with the jars. Consider having students present their Interesting Jars to the class before displaying. If you like, when a student is finished presenting, students can support their classmates by saying, “[Student’s name] is SOMEBODY!”

Why Telling Is Not Tattling

The object of this activity is to help children reflect on the importance of telling a caring adult when they witness bullying. It will help students understand that telling on someone who is bullying makes a positive difference—it matters to others—and it does not make the person who speaks up a tattletale.

1. Turn to page 18. Focus the attention on what is happening to Thomas. Putting the focus on Thomas will help children reflect on Patrick’s decision to tell Mr. C. about the bullying. Ask: “What are the boys doing to Thomas? How many boys are involved in bullying Thomas? How do you think Thomas feels?”



2. Focus on Patrick. Ask: “What is Patrick doing? Why does it *matter* to Patrick if Thomas is being bullied?” Using the word *matter* in your questions will help students make the connection that telling a caring adult matters when it comes to bullying, and that telling is not the same as tattling. Prompt students: “If Patrick is telling on Kyle, does that mean that he’s being a tattletale?” Explain that a few simple questions can help them determine whether Patrick is tattling. Ask: “Does it look like Thomas and Kyle will work out the situation on their own?” When students answer *NO*, reply: “Then telling Mr. C. *matters*.” Ask: “Does it look like Thomas could get hurt? Do you think his feelings are already hurt?” When students answer *YES*, reply: “Then telling Mr. C. *matters*.”

3. Emphasize and reiterate that speaking up for someone who is being bullied is not tattling. Remind students that it isn’t easy for someone who is being bullied to speak up, which is why it helps so much when others like Patrick do. Ask: “How do you think Thomas feels when Patrick tells Mr. C. about the bullying? Do Patrick’s actions matter to Kyle? How do you think Patrick feels, knowing that his actions matter to Thomas?” Help students see that, by telling Mr. C., Patrick has also helped Kyle get the help he needs to make better choices. Help them understand the difference: Instead of tattling on Kyle, Patrick is helping Thomas and Kyle and making a difference in their lives.

Ask students: “What would happen to Thomas and Kyle if Patrick hadn’t told Mr. C.? Would Thomas feel like he could be himself? Would Kyle get the help he needs to change his behavior?” Remind students that each and every one of them matters—and so do their actions. Also remind students that telling a caring adult if they are targeted by bullying is just as important as telling a caring adult when someone else is the target. Refer to page 31 in *Nobody!* and ask: “Who did Thomas turn to when he was being bullied?”

4. Make posters spreading the word. Tell students they are going to make posters to help others understand what it takes to make a difference for others in bullying situations. Working individually, in pairs, or in small groups, students can draw pictures to show scenarios (like the one on page 18) in which it matters to tell. Older students can include text that shows how telling makes a difference to those involved in bullying. Consider making a classroom display with the header: *When it comes to bullying, telling someone MATTERS. You can make a difference!*

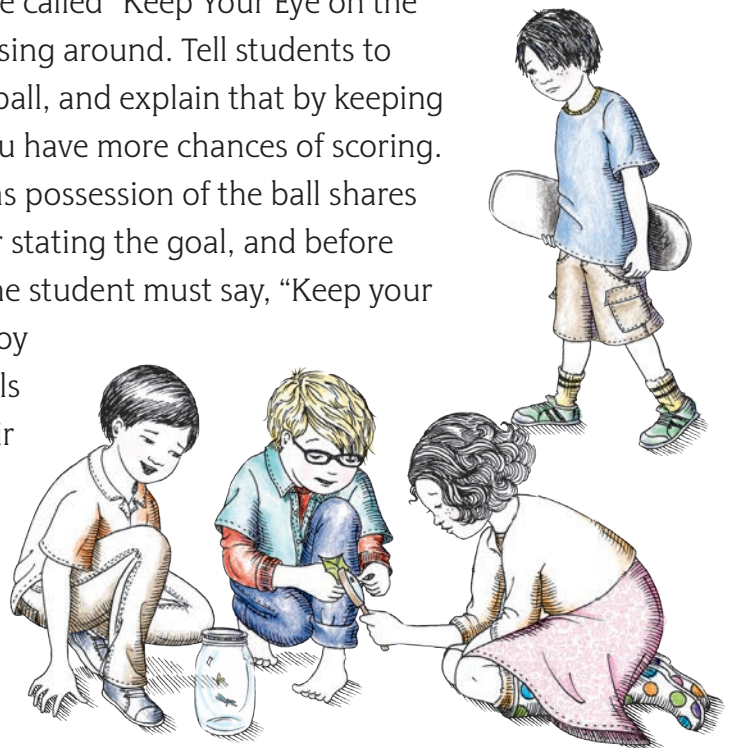
Keep Your Eye on the Ball!

The goal of this activity is for students to see and understand how, when Kyle thinks twice before speaking and acting, he is able to make better choices about his behavior. Changing old habits isn't easy, but students can learn that setting goals and planning what they could do or say in certain situations can help.

- 1. Observe.** Read Thomas's observation of Kyle's behavior on page 32 as a starting point for discussion: "Lately Kyle seems to be acting a little better." Ask students: "Why do you think Kyle is acting a little better?" Then, point out Kyle's speech balloon on page 33. Kyle is admiring one of Thomas's insects and says to Thomas, "This one's kinda cool." Ask: "Does this sound like something Kyle would normally say to Thomas?" Encourage students to consider Thomas's second observation of Kyle's behavior: "He's starting to think twice about what to say and do." Explain that when Kyle takes a moment and thinks twice, he is able to picture his behavior goals, stay focused, and act kindly.
- 2. Set goals.** Tell students that one of Kyle's goals for acting better might be to say something nice to Thomas about his hobby like he did on page 33. Ask students to think of a few other ways to show kindness. Encourage them to be specific. For example, if students say, "Be nice," ask them to think of specific examples such as "Hold the door for someone" or "Lend someone a pencil."

Tell students that you will play a game called "Keep Your Eye on the Ball." Hold up a plush sports ball for passing around. Tell students to envision their goals for kindness as this ball, and explain that by keeping your eye on the ball—on your goals—you have more chances of scoring. Have students sit in a circle. Whoever has possession of the ball shares a goal for kindness with the group. After stating the goal, and before passing the ball to the next classmate, the student must say, "Keep your eye on the ball!" Older students may enjoy repeating as many previously stated goals as they can remember before saying their own new goals and passing on the ball.

- 3. Create and display.** Students can have fun creating, cutting out, and decorating drawings of soccer balls, footballs, or other sports balls of



their choice. Tell students to write or draw a goal for kindness in the center of the ball. Consider creating a “Keep Your Eye on the Ball!” bulletin board with a sports-themed backdrop such as a goal box, basketball net, or a baseball glove. Students can present their kindness goals before displaying them on the bulletin board.

A New Story

When students have had the opportunity to explore the book’s central themes and consider what it means to be somebody who matters, you can use this pair or small-group activity as a way to further investigate how each person in a situation has an important role to play.



1. Focus on Thomas’s new story. Ask students what Thomas decided to name his new story. Refer to page 36 and show students Thomas’s new drawing and the new title of *Somebody!* Ask: “What is different about Thomas in this picture compared to the cover of *Nobody!?*” Students may point out that Thomas seems happy and that we can see him smiling. Ask: “Why is Thomas happy now? How has his story changed?”

2. Discuss the task. Tell students to imagine that Thomas has decided to write another new story. He wants to call the story *Somebody!* This time, he wants to feature one of the people who helped him change his story from *Nobody!* to *Somebody!*

Explain that students can help Thomas by creating poster-sized book cover designs for him. Tell students that they will work in pairs (or, if you prefer, groups of three).

3. Review character names. Reviewing the names of the characters will help students in their discussions. Encourage them to think and talk about what each person did to make a difference. After some discussion, have each pair or group agree on one character to highlight in their cover design. (Depending on the size of your group, you may want to devise a system to guarantee that a variety of characters are featured.)

4. Design and create. Once each group has decided on a character, tell students that they will work together to design their cover and draw the character. Guide them to include additional background sketches or designs that will help readers know something important about the featured character. For example, if students choose Ms. Evans, the librarian, they might want to include pictures of books in their cover’s background. Older students might also enjoy using words as part of their cover design. For example, if students choose Patrick, they might include the word *upstander* in

their background art. Supply poster board as well as colorful markers and crayons. Encourage students to make their covers look like real book covers by including the author's name ("by Thomas") as well as their own names ("illustrated by . . .").

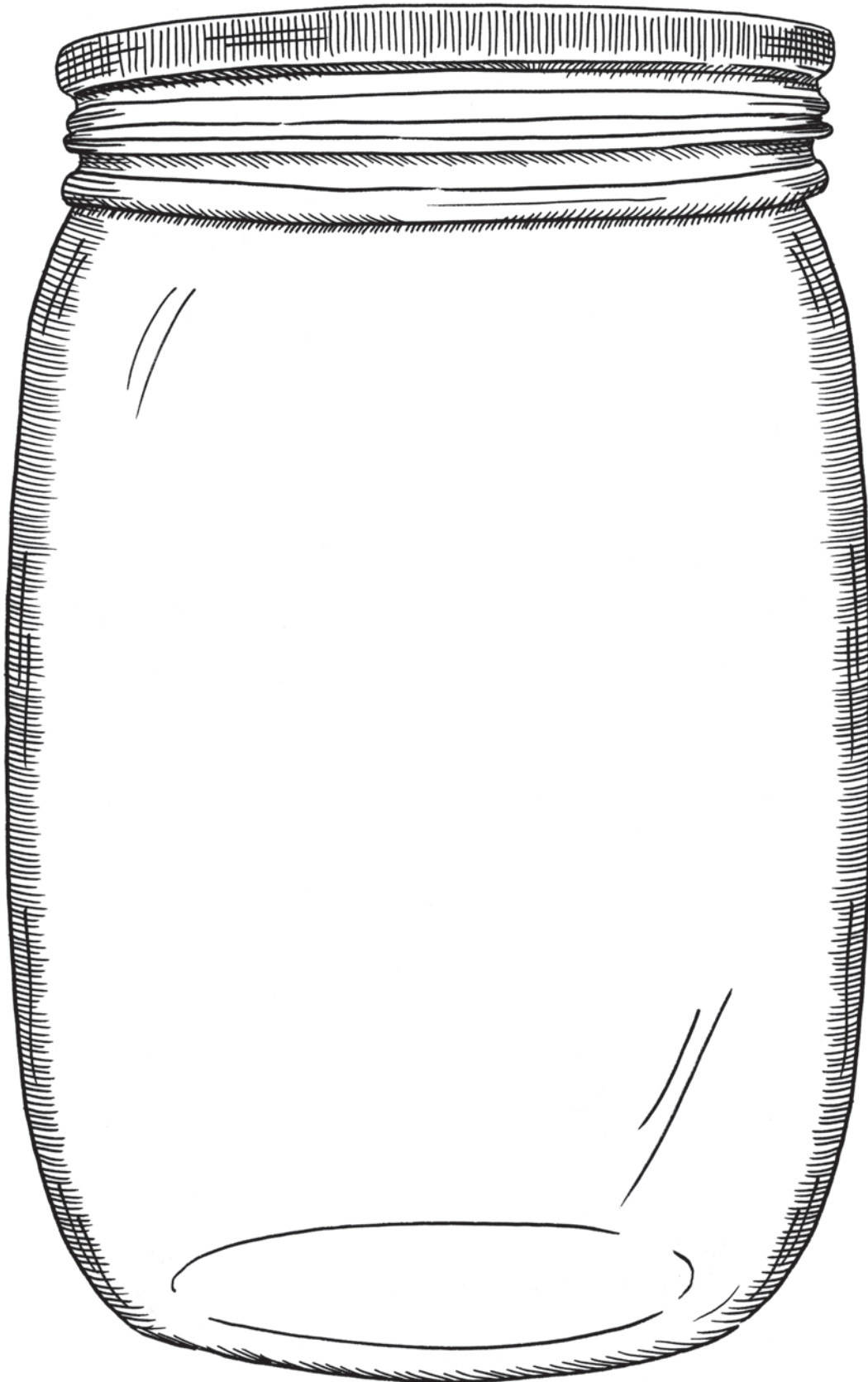
5. Display. Given the size of the posters, you may choose to display one poster at a time, over the course of several weeks, or you could feature the posters in groups, displaying those featuring the same character at the same time. Doing so will allow you to highlight the role that each character plays in Thomas's story and in our stories as well. You may also invite students to write, draw, or act out a story that goes with their covers.

I Think It Means . . .

Use the following quotes from Thomas in *Nobody!* to help students reflect on what the characters mean. Invite discussion with questions like: "What do you think Thomas means when he says that? Why do you think Thomas feels that way? Have you ever felt like Thomas? What happened? What did you do?"

- "I wish I *could* miss it [the bus] . . ." (page 1)
- "I don't even enjoy the things I'm good at anymore." (page 7)
- "I tell him to stop, but he doesn't listen. At least not when *I* say it." (page 9)
- "If nobody else speaks up, then it's my word against his." (page 10)
- "I wish some people would look a little closer when Kyle is mean to me." (page 11)
- "And I wish some people (like my sister) would just stay out of it." (page 12)
- "But no one wants to make him [Kyle] mad." (page 15)
- "Why is everyone always worried about Kyle's feelings? Wait . . . *is* everyone worried about his [Kyle's] feelings?" (pages 16–17)
- "How does being mean to me make things any better for Kyle? Does he think he'll have more friends? If I were him, I'd think again." (pages 18–19)
- "Maybe nobody is like me. And maybe that's a *good* thing." (page 23)
- "I've decided that *nobody* can make me feel like a nobody." (page 35)





About the Author and Illustrator

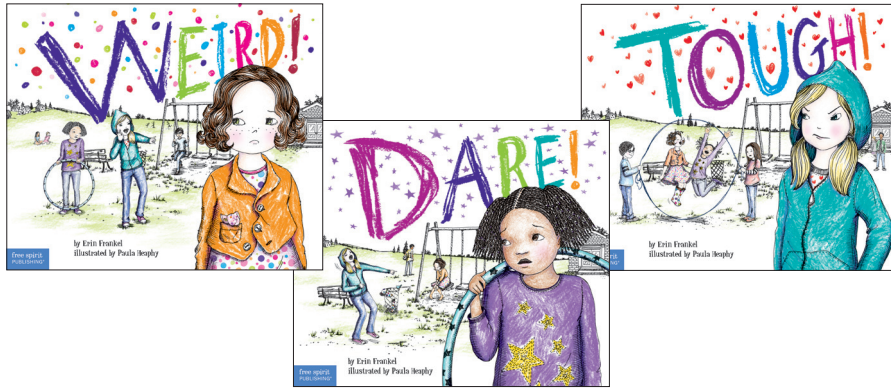


Erin Frankel has a master's degree in English education and is passionate about parenting, teaching, and writing. Erin knows firsthand what it feels like to be bullied, and she hopes her stories will help children stay true to who they are and help put an end to bullying. She and longtime friend Paula Heaphy are grateful to be able to spread a message of kindness through their books. In her free time, Erin loves chasing after her doggie Bella in the woods of Pittsburgh and traveling to Spain with her husband Alvaro and their three daughters, Gabriela, Sofia, and Kelsey.



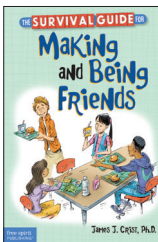
Paula Heaphy is a textile designer in the fashion industry. She's an explorer of all artistic mediums from glassblowing to shoemaking, but her biggest love is drawing. She jumped at the chance to illustrate her friend Erin's stories, having been bullied herself as a child. Together, they envisioned the *Weird!*, *Dare!*, and *Tough!*, a story of bullying told from three perspectives. Paula lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she hopes to use her creativity to light up the hearts of children for years to come.

The Weird Series

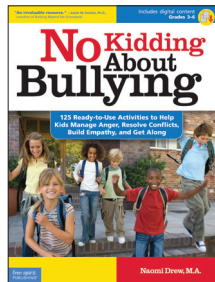


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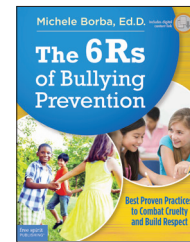
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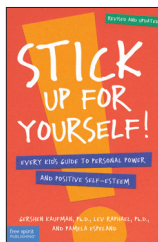
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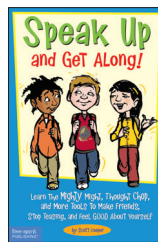
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