

## **Mean Teasing**

With kids at home together 24/7 for almost two weeks now, you have likely heard some unkind comments followed by, "just kidding." In Character Coaching class, students learn that saying "just kidding," "just teasing," or "it was a joke," does not excuse unkind behavior. In fact, saying these kinds of things after being mean makes the situation worse because it says the student thinks being unkind is funny or entertaining.

**Discuss: Talk through the following questions with your students.**

- When do you think teasing is okay and when is it not?
- What are some of the ways you, your siblings, or your friends "kid around?" How can you tell if your kidding has become unkind?
- How can you tell when someone is bothered by teasing?
- How would you feel if someone wouldn't stop doing something that bothered you? Do you always stop when others ask (even when your siblings ask)?
- What character traits do you demonstrate by stopping when someone asks?
- How can you let your siblings or friends know when their teasing is hurtful?
- Who can you go to if you have a problem with teasing?
- What would you do if you saw other kids teasing your sibling or friend in an unkind way?

Teasing can be okay if everyone involved is enjoying it, and if it stops immediately if one person is no longer having fun. If everyone isn't having fun, then it is neither fun nor funny.

### **Game: Change The Story**

Help kids practice stopping by letting one person tell a story/talk about a recent experience. When you or a sibling says "Stop," the speaker must stop immediately. Wait 5 - 10 seconds. When you or the sibling says, "Go," the speaker must start a new story. Give younger students a chance to think of two story ideas before starting. With older kids, don't let them add any extra words when they restart, such as "ummm," "let me think of something," etc. Let your kids take turns ( if you have an only child, he/she can take turns with you) so everyone gets to experience both roles. This game helps kids practice their verbal skills, listening skills, self control, stopping when asked, and flexibility (making a change right away).