



# Do The Right Thing

## A Study Guide for Grades 3-6

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## **THE COMPANY**

At Beth & Scott and Friends, we strive to educate and entertain children and adults through the writing and performance of original songs, shows and workshops. Beth and Scott Bierko, the owners and principal performers, are a husband and wife team of singer/songwriters and arts-in-education specialists. Since 1993, Beth & Scott have performed thousands of school assemblies and workshops for children. They are parents of two daughters, Helen and Stephanie.

## **THE PROGRAM**

***“Do The Right Thing”*** is an interactive concert ideal for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6th graders. It is a program brimming with important lessons about how to treat yourself and the people around you with care and respect conveyed through original songs, stories and vignettes. The goal is to teach children about how to make choices that are right for them and to understand how the choices they make have a strong impact – positively or negatively - on other people and sometimes even national and world events. These lessons are all presented through the arts with ample opportunity for audience participation.

To help students better understand the messages and to get the most out of this event, Beth and Scott strongly recommend that the classroom teacher utilize some of the ideas listed on the following pages to prepare students for their concert or as a follow-up to the show. Numerous discussion questions and activities have been provided. Please feel free to choose those that are most appropriate for each class or make up other ideas of your own.

## **DO THE RIGHT THING - STUDY GUIDE**

### **Questions/Discussion Topics:**

Choose any of the questions or ideas below to review elements of the show with your students or to further their understanding of making good choices. The questions can be used for class discussion or as a starting point for essay or journaling. Songs from the concert that relate to these topics are listed in parentheses.

- **Breathing / Stretching / Quiet Time/ Self Care - ("Earthly Lullaby")**

How can we use our breathing to help us? *For example, to calm us down if we're excited, anxious or angry. Use it to wake us up if we're tired.* How does it feel to breathe more slowly and deeply? Does your breath change after stretching? How?

If you take time to be totally quiet, do you notice any changes in how you think or feel afterwards? Is/was this hard or easy to do? Why?

- **Self Esteem/Making Choices - ("Hands Open, Hands Closed", "Make Your Own Style")**

One of the best ways we can “do the right thing” for ourselves is to accept who we are, just the way we are and at the same time be somewhat willing to be open to new ideas. When are you comfortable wearing your favorite outfit or doing something you really like to do? When, if at all, do you not feel comfortable expressing yourself? Can you name some examples of “hands open” choices (sharing, caring, helping) and compare and contrast them to “hands closed” choices (holding onto anger, fear or trying to hide)? When are you more likely to make a hands open choice? What might make someone make a hands closed choice?

- **Bullying/ Conflict Resolution - ("Hey Little Ant", G.O.S.S.I.P.I.N.G)**

Do you think it's ok to pick on others? Why or why not? What if the other is an ant or some other creature? Does that make a difference? Why or why not? Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt as small or insignificant as an ant? Has there ever been a time when you teased or picked on someone because you felt bigger or more important than they were or felt pressure by peers to do so? What can you do if a bully tries to pick on you? If you saw someone else being picked on, what could/would you do? Why? Do you think gossip is harmless or harmful? Explain. Sometimes people are told they can't take a joke. Is there a difference between “just kidding” and teasing that's harmful? How can one tell the difference between the two?

- **Our Influence on Others and the World - ( “Courage”, “Water Into Wine”)**

Have you ever excluded someone from a group you were part of? Have you ever been excluded from a group? What was that like? Is it fair to have to play with everyone? Why or why not? Can you give examples of how a choice you make can have an impact on the world? For example, choosing to recycle makes a positive impact. Choosing to litter will make negative impact. Can you think of examples of an individual or a community that has worked to make a difference to others? (i.e. school or church donations, volunteering time or energy to a good cause.) What was it like to witness or be part of that experience?

- **Random Acts of Kindness - (“Angels”)**

Can you name 5 acts of kindness you've received today/ this week? Can you name 5 random acts of kindness you've given today/this week? What does it feel like to give or receive these or to notice someone else giving them? Is it hard or easy to notice these?

### **Activities:**

**1. Breathing** – Try using breath work in your classroom to help with transitions and to give students an opportunity to find that inner voice and clarity. 1.) Sometimes a simple deep breath or two when the children are excited or over-stimulated will calm them down. You can also use deep breaths and simple arm stretches if they seem lethargic. 2.) Take a minute or two before beginning a lesson, in between activities or at the end of a lesson to get students quiet, preferably with eyes closed and ask them to breathe quietly in to the count of 4 and out for a count of four. Do this 4-5 times. Then let them open their eyes. See if they notice a difference in how they feel. Option: Instead of counting to 4 after closing their eyes, ask them to “listen for the sounds there are in silence” and after a few minutes, let them share what they heard. It’s all about focus and breathing deeper.

**2. Self Esteem / Making Choices** – 1.) Have children make a list of words they would use to describe themselves or things they can do well. Alternately, they can do a collage that represents their “style”, interests and talents. 2.) Create (with or without students’ help) some questions that reflect a hands open or hands closed choice. For example, “If at a party would you... a. be the first one to start the dancing, b. join in once a few people got things started, or c. cling to the wall for dear life no matter what. You can use a variety of scenes – sports, greeting relatives, helping (or not) to bring in groceries. This magazine quiz approach can be fun, especially if kids ask the questions of one another and they can be an easy springboard for discussion questions above.

**3. Bullying/ Conflict Resolution** – 1.) To playfully illustrate how unreliable gossip can be, play a game of Telephone, a.k.a “whisper down the lane” Here’s how it works: 4-5 students stand in a line and the first whispers a phrase into the second child’s ear (e.g. “The 3 o’clock train arrived at 4:02.” or “Peter told Paula that Sue swims with Sam”). The second whispers to the third and so on. The last child says what he/she heard and then the first child says the original phrase out loud to see how accurate they remain.

**4. Our Influence on Others and the World**– 1.) Organize within your class (or throughout the school) a project where children can make a difference- collecting food, clothing or money donations for a worthy cause, writing letters to seniors or soldiers, helping younger students in the school (i.e. reading buddies). This gives them a chance to practice working together toward a goal and to feel the pride, empowerment and other rewards that come from helping others. 2) Encourage activities and games where children include everyone – Simon Says or Jump

Jim Joe, and/or activities that model working with more than one partner. 3.) Sometimes people who seem very different from us aren't so different if we take the time to get to know them. Try placing students in small groups (3-4) and through dialogue see if they can come up with 4-5 things they all have in common. Challenge them to go deeper/more interesting than just "We're all boys" or "We're all 10 years old". Encourage ideas like where they have traveled, a favorite TV show or sports team, they all are the oldest in the family, etc. You can have the children re-group and do this 2-3 times with different partners each time.

**5. Acts of Kindness** – 1.) Set up a day or a week or a month of noticing random acts of kindness within the classroom or school or community. You may want to offer rewards (stickers or a pencil) to those folks who are spotted doing something good. You can even set predictions or goals of how many acts you think/hope to witness. They can be logged in or graphed for review. 2.) Try writing your own verse of The Angels song for someone in the school or for the biggest act of kindness. It could also be a poem or a letter of thanks. The main point is to acknowledge them and to get kids writing.

**6. Writing** - Encourage students to email or write letters to Beth & Scott. They can practice their letter-writing skills and tell us which songs they liked best and why. Be sure that they include their name, age and school. We always appreciate feedback and encourage teachers to write with thoughts, comments and suggestions as well. Letters can be sent to: [info@bethandscott.net](mailto:info@bethandscott.net) or 999 Cliff Road, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

## **Reference Materials**

### **BOOKS**

Because We Can Change the World: A Practical Guide To Building Cooperative, Inclusive

Classroom Communities by Mara Sapon-Shevin

Creating the Peaceable School. By, Richard Bodine, Donna Crawford, and Fred Schrumpf, Champaign, Ill. Research Press, 1994

Children's Songs for a Friendly Planet. Compiled by Evelyn Weiss, , Priscilla Prutzman, and Nancy Silber, New York, NY, Educators for Social Responsibility Metropolitan Area, 1986

Creative Conflict Resolution: More than 200 activities for keeping peace in the classroom K-6. by William J. Kreidler Glenview, Ill: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1984

Smart Moves: Why Leaning Isn't All in Your Head by Carla Hannaford, PHD

Brain Gym by Paul and Gail Dennison

### **ONLINE**

The Children's Music Network – [www.cmnonline.org](http://www.cmnonline.org)

Education World - [www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com)

