



## BETTY in "Making the Grade"

This story addresses issues dealing with pressures, including:

- What are the pressures facing students?
- How to deal with pressures?
- What are some of the consequences of pressures, peer and parental?

**Pages 1 & 2** - Betty, at the request of Cindy, stops by the gym to give her some tips on how to improve her game. However, Betty finds Cindy in the locker room crying and learns that Cindy's grades are suffering because of all of her extra activities in school. Cindy is very stressed.

Things that can be discussed include

- What are different types of pressures/stresses facing students?
- When is stress good and when is it bad?
- What imposes these stresses? Is it internal or external?
- If it is internal, is the stress helpful or destructive?
- Peer pressure and its stresses, when is it healthy, when is it destructive?
- Parental pressure and its stresses (family circumstances, getting good grades, etc.)

Also, discuss how to recognize unhealthy stress in yourself or others:

- Crying
- Yelling
- Eating/weight problems
- Increased irritability
- Exhaustion
- Rebellion
- Neglecting appearance
- Getting into trouble

**Page 3** - Betty points out to Cindy that she is putting too much pressure on herself and that she needs to speak with her parents/teachers

Discussion points:

- Pressures are a normal part of life. How much pressure one has is not as important as how well we keep it in perspective and deal with it.
- What are some positive ways to help deal with pressure/stress?
- Learn your limits; don't take on more than you can handle.
- Ensure that every moment is not filled with activity - Provide some quiet time.

- Don't be overly critical of yourself; give yourself a break.
- Use your sense of humor when appropriate to lighten the load
- Importance of getting help when one feels overwhelmed. Places a student can turn to for emotional help (parent, teacher, counselor, Mental Health Association, etc.)

**Pages 5 & 6** - Cindy, with Betty's help, discusses her feelings with her teacher and parents and feels much better as a result.

Discuss the importance of :

- Open communication with adults who will listen, give guidance and help put things in perspective
- Communicating with parents/teachers to set clear and realistic goals/expectations.
- Setting realistic and worthwhile goals that are clearly defined, and then a plan of action so that there is a chance of obtaining the goal
- A willingness to risk failure in order to pursue higher goals.
- Adopting an attitude of learning from failures and disappointments.

### Suggested Activities

**Open discussion followed by poster or list to put on wall as reminder of things.** This may include a list of kinds of pressures and things to reduce pressure.

**Do a writing assignment.** Students may write about the kinds of pressures they feel as students, friends, son or daughter. They should write about how they deal with these pressures, whether they are satisfied with their actions, and what they might do differently in the future.

**Create leadership groups** that foster discussion about dealing with pressures.

**Role play.** Take some hypothetical situations (either give it to the students or let them make it up) and have the students practice resisting negative pressures and creating environments of positive peer pressure. The person doing the resisting has two objectives: 1) to refuse to do it, and 2) to persuade the others not to do it. The person creating the positive peer pressure also has two objectives: 1) to join in to do it, and 2) to persuade the others to join in. After the role play, have the class analyze what each person did to satisfy his/her objective. What general principles or guidelines can be drawn from this?

Same can be done with respect to goal setting

## Archie and his Friends in Westchester

In this special edition of *Archie and his Friends*, Westchester County Executive Andy Spano and Archie Comic Publications provide four stories that can be used as learning tools for students. Archie in "Think Don't Drink," Veronica in "Talk, Don't Walk Away," Jughead in "Don't be a Bully" and Betty in "Making the Grade!" address important issues for parents and educators to use in working with adolescent children. The following guide is provided to help you begin the process of teaching with *Archie and his Friends*. We welcome your comments and recommendations for improvement and enhancement.



### ARCHIE in "Think, Don't Drink"

This story provides the opportunity to discuss

- Peer pressure
- Effects of alcohol /drugging and driving
- Consequences of alcohol & drug use
- Acting responsibly

**Page 4** - Archie feels that Zach doesn't want to attend the party and Zach is worried about what kind of party it will be. Teachers should discuss Zach's feelings. Point out that Zach should listen to his "gut" feeling and follow his instinct. "Follow your instinct and most of the time you will make the right decisions."

**Pages 5 & 6** - When Archie and Zach arrive at the party, they are unexpectedly invited to have a drink, smoke some pot or participate in a beer "chugging" contest. Discuss "beer chugging contests" and other drinking games. Discuss binge drinking and the risk of alcohol poisoning. Discuss how marijuana is an illegal substance and harmful. Point out some of the consequences they may normally not think of:

- Getting sick
- Acting stupid
- Actions they will later regret.

**Page 6** - Archie and Zach decide on an alternative drug- and alcohol-free activity. Discuss several possible activities in your community, such as:

- Movies
- Bowling
- Miniature golf
- Ice skating
- School- or church-sponsored activities
- Other idea the group can come up with and can suggest to the local community

# Teacher's & Leader's Guide

**Pages 7, 8 & 9** - Archie and Zach leave the movie and are on their way home when they discover Jenna crying nearby the site of a car crash. They find that Tim and Bob were injured when Tim crashed his car into a tree after drinking.

Please discuss how these actions have serious consequences:

- The possibility of serious injury or even death. (local news will probably have a story on such types of accidents that can be clipped and used.)
- The financial cost such as repairing the car, tickets and fines, lawyer fees, increased insurance premiums.
- The emotional impact: Sadness of losing a friend, shame of disappointing your parents and family, the thought of everyone else laughing behind your back because you acted like a total fool while you were drunk or high.
- Discuss other consequences such as suspension from extra curricular activities & sports and jeopardizing college scholarships and even entrance itself.

### Suggested Activities

**Role play.** Let the students pair up with their best friend in class. Ask them to imagine the responsibility of having caused the car crash that killed that friend or injured them so seriously that they can never play sports, or walk again, etc. Then ask them to make a pact to protect each other from making dumb decisions about alcohol and drug use. The pact might include a pledge not to let the other drive while intoxicated or be a passenger in a car operated by someone who has been drinking or using any kind of drugs. At the conclusion of this story, Archie's new friends in Westchester put on a play for their classmates. Have your students put on their own play or skit for the class or the entire school. Kids listen to other kids.

**Reproduce the "No Drinking / No Drug Pledge Cards" in the comic.** Let the students hand them out and collect them (not the teachers). They can submit them to the Westchester County Office of Drug Prevention and STOP-DWI to be included on our website. They should also exchange a copy with their "best buddy," who will have to remind their friend of the pledge when it comes time for "decision making."

**Create a hall display.** "50 ways to have fun without alcohol" might be a good theme. The "wall" can be a resource of activities and ideas.



## VERONICA in "Talk, Don't Walk Away"

This story addresses the subject of communicating with parents with the following themes:

- The importance of open communication
- The need to listen, talk, respect each other and build trust
- The need to address issues and talk openly about them

**Page 1** - Veronica, a friend of Mandy, tells Mandy's parents that they are going to a party. Mandy's parents are surprised and angry because Mandy has told them she and Veronica were doing something else.

Discuss what it means to communicate/have a conversation and the different ways to communicate, verbal vs. non-verbal, talking with your eyes, body language.

**Page 2** - Mandy tells Veronica that her parents never listen to her; therefore, she says she does not need to tell them what she is doing.

Discuss why it is important to keep the lines of communication open between parents and children?

- Sharing ideas/opinions/information shows respect & helps build positive bonds, trust & understanding
- Not paying attention/ignoring messages leads to frustration & stress as well as sneaky & devious behavior
- The more effective your communication, the easier it will be to deal with difficult situations
- Building trust is key to freedom. Trust and positive relationships are built through honesty and acting responsibly

What does it mean to listen?

- Parent's role
- Child's role

**Page 3** - Mandy's parents, while drinking themselves, tell Mandy she cannot go to the party because they heard the parents allow their children to drink. Mandy refuses to listen to them and storms out of the house.

Issues that can be discussed include:

- Giving clear messages, actions/with words
- Communicating through behavior
- Reasons for negative behavior (to get attention/get message across that needs not met/stopping an activity or gaining pleasure)
- Talking vs. listening: discuss with students that in a conversation both parties want to feel like they are being heard. If they listen to what their parents say first, then their chance of being heard improves.

**Page 4** - Mandy explains to Veronica that her parents are not interested in her and what is going on in her life. They no longer have time for her.

- Talk about things that bother children that their parents say/do and how this can be changed.
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**Pages 6 & 7-** Mandy's parents decide to meet Mandy and Veronica and spend relaxing time with them at Playland.

Discuss positive ways to communicate:

- Best communication occurs when children and parents are engaged in comfortable, enjoyable activities together
- Learning positive ways to manage stress; enjoying each other will build lifetime relationships
- Taking time to relax and have fun in an atmosphere where feelings are expressed openly

### Suggested Activities

**Role play.** One student plays the role of a parent (or any adult) who listens and another parent who does not listen. How are relationships affected by how well people communicate? Another role playing exercise could be for students to act out a scenario of asking their parent to go to a friend's house for a sleep over. One student "tells" his parent that he is sleeping over and creates an argument. The other student "asks," explaining that he would really like to sleep over, you can call my friends parents etc. Then compare the different reactions.

**Discuss whether students feel they can communicate with their parents.** If yes, why do they feel this way? If no, why not and how do they think they can improve communicating with their own parents? Are there things the students want to talk with their parents about and can't? Why? How can this be changed?

**Brainstorm** ways to build trust and the advantages of this to both students and adults.

**Do a writing assignment.** Students can put themselves in the position of being a parent. What are the concerns of a parent when dealing with children?

Students may also write about a time when parents trusted them and the student let them down. What happened? Was it more difficult to regain trust? How was this done? What are the lessons learned?



## JUGHEAD in "Don't Be A Bully"

This story addresses the issue of bullying, including:

- What is it?
- What are some of the consequences?
- How to handle it - in self and others?

**Page 1** - Stanley does not want to go to school and pretends that he is ill so he can stay home. Stanley appears to be afraid and anxious and does not want to face being ridiculed and intimidated by other students in the playground.

What is the difference between bullying and just kidding/fooling around? Discuss, from the perspective of the doer and the victim, the consequences and feelings surrounding such activities as:

- Name calling
- Making things up to get someone in trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking things away from another person
- Damaging the belongings of another person
- Stealing someone's money
- "Stealing" someone's friends
- Spreading rumors
- Threats and intimidation

**Page 3** - Jughead suggests that Stanley address the problem with his mother and/or teachers

Issues to be discussed include:

- The importance of telling someone about the problem (it won't otherwise stop)
- How to tell someone without appearing to be weak or a tattletale
- Ways to address the problem (with a parent, another close relative, the school nurse, a teacher, etc.)

**Page 6** - Jughead reminds a friend of Jakes how it feels when one person is cruel or bullies another person.

Discuss:

- How to address the problem with a bully in the playground
- How not to be a bully
- Empathy: would I want someone to do that to me?
- Why people bully
- How to make peace -- and if you are the bully how to apologize

Teachers should also discuss the role of the bystander, and that by just watching and taking no action, this also contributes to the bullying. Discuss what actions might be taken if you see someone bullying or being bullied. Tell a teacher, parent or other adult.

### Suggested Activities

**Role Play.** Play out different bullying scenarios based on student input. Take a particular bullying situation (either give it to the students or let them make it up). One person's objective is to be a bully; the other person's objective is to be the peacemaker. After the role play, have the class analyze what each person did to satisfy his/her objective. What general principles or guidelines can be drawn from this?

**Do a writing assignment.** Have you ever been a bully or have you ever been bullied? What happened? Was it worth it? What did you learn from it? What would you do differently now?

**Create leadership groups** that foster discussion about dealing with bullying in the school

## Resources for Teens

[www.westchestergov.com/teendrinking](http://www.westchestergov.com/teendrinking)

A county government site dealing with teen drinking issues

[www.westchestergov.com/kids](http://www.westchestergov.com/kids)

A kids website created by the county with links to many things

[www.westchestergov.com/youth](http://www.westchestergov.com/youth)

Website of the county's Youth Bureau

**591-HELP** Alcohol and drug helpline run by Student Assistance Services

**TEEN FYI:** a helpline staffed by youth for youth  
1-866-TEEN

**Drug Abuse Information Line:** 1-800-522-5353

**Runaway & Homeless Youth Hotline**  
1-888-997-1583

**Suicide and Crisis Counseling Hotline:**  
347-6400

**Family Abuse Hotline of the Mental Health Association**  
347-4558

For more helpful resources see the back pages of "Archie and Friends in Westchester" comic book