

THE ADVOCATES CLUB  
By Jamil Jude

### **Educational objectives for The Advocates Club:**

1. To provide examples of bullying, including those based on negative stereotyping;
2. To identify/practice empathy tools;
3. To inspire critical thinking and advocacy toward principles of social justice, tolerance, and mutual respect;
4. To examine common fears and resentments regarding people who are different;
5. To increase self-awareness regarding typical responses to difference;
6. To explore factors that create prejudice;
7. To learn strategies to promote inclusion and diversity

### **Summary:**

Marya, a star athlete, has been bullied for her looks. With her father's coaching she's learning about how to gain allies, to "look for the helpers." He tells her that bullying decreases when students advocate for each other. So, Marya finds an ally in Sebastian and together they form the Advocates Club, to decrease bullying in their school by having kids become allies and advocates for each other. As Sebastian overcomes being bullied with the help of others, he runs for class president. They help Sharif, the new kid, to deal with bullying he's faced. At the end of the play, the club is gaining many new members: students who want to help each other overcome the bullying in their school.

### **CHARACTERS**

Mayra –13. Captain of the girls' basketball team. President of the Advocates Club.

Sebastian –13. One of the "popular" kids. 1<sup>st</sup> generation American.

Sharif –13. A talented young inventor. New to school.

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*A song in the popular genre is playing. Lights rise as MAYRA comes on. She begins to arrange her parent's kitchen for an after-school group meeting of the ADVOCATES CLUB. SEBASTIAN enters with some snacks and drinks.*

**SEBASTIAN**

Hey Mayra! The balloons outside look great. People should be able to see them clearly.

**MAYRA**

Hey Sebastian. You brought snacks?! Great job.

**SEBASTIAN**

Yep. Mrs. Mounts heard about the club we started and she wanted to pitch in and support. Isn't that cool?

**MAYRA**

Really? That is awesome. She's one of the good ones. Wish we had more teachers like her.

Can you give me a hand with these chairs?

*SEBASTIAN assists MAYRA*

**SEBASTIAN**

Yea she really is. She makes history class not boring. Like I would literally fall asleep in Mr. Hamilton's class last year. And I was sitting in the front row!

**MAYRA**

I remember! I would try to elbow you when he wasn't looking to keep you from getting in trouble!

**SEBASTIAN**

Thank you for that. I'm not sure I would've passed that class had it not been for those sharp elbows of yours.

*They share a laugh*

**SEBASTIAN (contd.)**

But no need for that in Mrs. Mounts' class. Like I actually can't wait to get there every day. This morning, she talked to us about the Civil Rights era and how important allies and advocates, the people who spoke out against the unfair treatment of Black people, were in getting the laws changed.

**MAYRA**

Yeah, I love looking at those pictures, seeing people of all different races, holding hands, singing and marching together for equality.

**SEBASTIAN**

Me, too! That's when I brought up the Advocates Club. I told her that we started a club dedicated to helping students who feel like no one has their back. I told her we wanted to create a group where all students felt welcomed, just like how the Civil Rights advocates tried to create a society where people would be treated equally and fairly.

**MAYRA**

I like the way that sounds!

**SEBASTIAN**

At lunchtime, she called me to her office. Over the intercom! I was scared. In the back of my mind I wondered if I accidentally fell asleep and couldn't remember! When I got there, she presented me with the snacks. She said how proud she was of us for "taking the initiative to create a support network for fellow students." She even asked if she could be the faculty sponsor.  
So whaddya think?

**MAYRA**

What do I think?! I think that's AMAZING! We're on our way!!

*They high five!*

**SEBASTIAN**

What's been up with you?

**MAYRA**

Well basketball season is coming to an end BUT we have a really big game coming up.

**SEBASTIAN**

The city championship, right?

**MAYRA**

Exactly! The team is really excited. We've had a really good season. Everybody's been playing so well.

**SEBASTIAN**

(Teasing) "The team" this. "We're really good" that. How is it that you're our team's captain and best player, but you always talk about the "team" like you only ride the bench.

**MAYRA**

No I don't.

**SEBASTIAN**

Yes you do.

**MAYRA**

No I don't. I just don't tell everyone I see that I average 18 points, 7 assists, and rack up a city-best 5 steals per game. I prefer to let my play do the talking.

**SEBASTIAN**

(Laughing) Alright. I get it.

**MAYRA**

But this city championship game is going to be a big deal for the team, and for me. I heard that a few of the coaches from the traveling team will be there. This is my chance to show 'em what I got!

**SEBASTIAN**

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I know you're going to kill it.

**MAYRA**

I heard the coaches been talking about me. If I make the team, I'll be the first 8<sup>th</sup> grader to ever play on the high school traveling team.

**SEBASTIAN**

Really? That's pretty cool, Mayra.

**MAYRA**

Getting on that team would mean so much. They sent all five of their starters to college last year. You know my dream is to make it to college on a basketball scholarship, just like my idol/

**SEBASTIAN and MAYRA**

Diana Taurusi!

**MAYRA**

She's a beast! But, I'm gonna be better than her one day!

**SEBASTIAN**

Yea you will!

I'll be at the game to cheer you on.

**MAYRA**

Pssh. You'll be there to pass out your snazzy campaign buttons.

**SEBASTIAN**

Yes, Mayra. I'll be doing that, too. I'm going to the game to cheer on my best friend AND pass out some campaign buttons.

**MAYRA**

(Sarcasm) Aren't you just the best bestie in the whole wide world?  
How is the campaign going, Mr. President?

**SEBASTIAN**

Future Mr. President. I didn't win yet.

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The campaign is going well. I'm having fun. Meeting a lot of kids in our class.

**MAYRA**

I thought you knew everybody Mr. Popular.

**SEBASTIAN**

Me too! I get surprised every time I meet someone I've never met before.  
Hey, have you met the new kid, Sharif?

**MAYRA**

I think so. Quiet kid? I think he sits in front of me in biology.

**SEBASTIAN**

Yep. That's him.

We got technology together. He's like the best student in that class. Everybody knows it.

He told me the weirdest thing the other day. I was passing out my campaign buttons, asking people to vote for me. When I passed him a button, he wouldn't take it. I asked him why; he said he was transferring schools.

**MAYRA**

I thought he just moved here. He's already leaving?

**SEBASTIAN**

Same thing I said. When I asked him why, he didn't say anything.

**MAYRA**

Well does he have any friends? Being new and not having friends can be hard. Especially here, where everybody has their own clique.

**SEBASTIAN**

I don't know. I don't think so. I did invite him to join our club. We'll see if he shows up.

**MAYRA**

We'll see if anybody shows up.

**SEBASTIAN**

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I put up a poster.

**MAYRA**

Was the poster typo free? You know you always forget to add important details.

**SEBASTIAN**

I did that one time!

Yes, the poster is typo free.

So, like I was saying, I put up a poster, you put up balloons; of course people are going to show

**MAYRA**

But what if nobody shows up?

**SEBASTIAN**

Don't you start that now. This is only our second meeting.

**MAYRA**

We only had two other people show up last week. One was your brother, who was only there because we held the meeting at your house, and the other was your mom.

**SEBASTIAN**

(Defensive) She was just there to bring us food.

**MAYRA**

Great, so we only had one other person at the meeting...

**SEBASTIAN**

Well, I do think we'll have a better turnout today. I tell everybody about it when I give them a button. Brendon, Lauren, and Jessica promised me they would show up and I heard a few kids talking about it at lunch.

**SEBASTIAN**

Like I said, we'll see.

*SHARIF enters the room.*



**SHARIF**

Hello, am I in the right place?

**SEBASTIAN**

(To MAYRA) Told ya!

Hey Sharif. Welcome! Thanks for coming.

**SHARIF**

I thought I had the wrong house.

**SEBASTIAN**

Didn't you see the balloons?

**SHARIF**

I did. I just didn't see any people.

**SEBASTIAN**

We're working on that.

Sharif, I want to introduce you to my best friend, and the president of the Advocates Club, Mayra Gamez.

**MAYRA**

What up, Sharif? Thanks for coming by. We're happy to have you.

**SHARIF**

Thanks. To be honest, my bonehead cousin forgot that he was supposed to pick me up today so I had to walk home. Saw the balloons and figured, "why not."

**MAYRA**

(Shooting a glance at SEBASTIAN) Well that's great to hear.

**SHARIF**

I still wasn't sure if I should come. I had no clue what an advocate is or why you needed a club for it.

*Going into their motto*

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**SEBASTIAN AND MAYRA**

(Really enthusiastically) We are the advocates. We are students dedicated to supporting other students. We are the advocates!

*They conclude with a not-so-epic handshake. SHARIF looks at them for a beat. Unsure of what to do next, he claps. Slowly.*

**MAYRA**

We're still working on that  
Anyway, Sharif, tell me about yourself. Sebastian told me a few things—

**SHARIF**

(Cutting her off. Afraid of what's been shared) What did he say?!

**MAYRA**

(Noticing his unease) Uhh, nothing really. Just that you have technology class together and that he asked you to come join our club.

**SHARIF**

Oh.

**MAYRA**

Well?  
What else? You're new here, right?

**SHARIF**

Uh yea. My parents had some issues getting me and my siblings, a brother and a sister, registered for school so we missed the first week.

**MAYRA**

Where were you before?

**SHARIF**

We were living on the East Coast. My mom's job moved us here. She's an engineer. I really want to be an engineer when I grow up because I like science and math and I'm really good at it.

**MAYRA**

Sebastian says that you're the best in tech class

**SHARIF**

Thanks, Sebastian.

**SEBASTIAN**

What does your dad do?

**SHARIF**

My dad's a painter.

**MAYRA**

Your dad's an artist?! That's really cool. Is he like famous?

**SHARIF**

(Laughing) No he isn't like Picasso famous but he's had a couple of paintings hung in museums. Our house is filled with his paintings and sketchings and stuff.

**SEBASTIAN**

That sounds great.

**MAYRA**

Yea, I'd love to see that! We'll have to meet at your house the next time!

*Sharif flashes a brief smile*

**MAYRA**

Well, Sharif, this is my house.

**SEBASTIAN**

Pbfff! Spoken like an only child.

**SHARIF**

Well you have a nice house.  
What bout you Sebastian?

**SEBASTIAN**

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(Going into campaign mode) My name is Sebastian Major.  
(Realizing his audience, drops out of it) But you all already knew that.  
I'm running for school president—

**MAYRA**

Which we already knew

**SEBASTIAN**

(Ignoring her) Mayra and I have been friends for years. We first met in the third grade. She was one of the first people to be nice to me.

**MAYRA**

I felt bad for him.

**SEBASTIAN**

Not even.

**MAYRA**

He was sitting by himself at lunch so I did him a favor and sat next to him.

**SEBASTIAN**

You didn't have many friends either

**MAYRA**

That's true.

**SEBASTIAN**

We were there for each other back then and been best friends ever since.

**SHARIF**

So is that when you all started this club?

**MAYRA**

Actually, we just started.

**SEBASTIAN**

Wanna tell him the story?

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**MAYRA**

(A little uneasy) Uhh, maybe later.

**SEBASTIAN**

Come on, Mayra. We gotta tell people what led to us starting the club. It may help warm people to the idea of helping others. What do you think, Sharif?

**SHARIF**

Yea, I guess it'd be nice to hear.

**MAYRA**

(Still unsure) Well, I guess it all started because of the worst day of my life...

*The world starts to change. We return to MAYRA's memory. The other actors take on the other characters from her memory.*