

Step-Chain by Ann Bryant

Egmont Books

Step-Chain is an original series of books written by Ann Bryant and published by Egmont Books for children aged 9 to 13.

The books are about children connected by a chain of relationships which forms when their parents separate. Each book focuses on a particular issue faced by children when families break up, with the same characters appearing across the series and linking the books together. These up-beat and fast-paced stories show children working out for themselves how to cope with the day-to-day problems they face at home and school.

Step-Chain School Activity Sheets

The three following activities relating to Step-Chain Book 8: Losing My Identity have been created for use in schools. The activities are designed to be used with Upper Key Stage 2 pupils, and were developed to help cover some of the Learning Objectives from PSHE and Citizenship at Key Stage 2.

About the Author

Ann Bryant has written many books for children and teenagers including the successful Café Club series and a series for younger children called *Make Friends With...* published by Orchard Books. She trained as a musician and still teaches music part-time in school. Ann has published over 100 songs, and written scripts, stories and poems for BBC Schools Radio. Her book 'Teaching Key Stage 1 Music' has just been awarded best new product 2002 by the Music Publishers Association. Ann regularly gives author talks and runs music workshops in schools. She got the idea for Step-Chain from seeing how her children's friends coped with similar family situations. Ann lives in Kent with her husband and two daughters.

Books in the Step-Chain series

One Mum Too Many: Step-Chain 1
You Can't Fancy Your Step Sister: Step-Chain 2
She's No Angel: Step-Chain 3
Too Good to Be True: Step-Chain 4
Get Me Out of Here: Step-Chain 5
Parents Behaving Badly: Step-Chain 6
Don't Tell Mum: Step-Chain 7
Losing My Identity: Step-Chain 8
Secrets and Lies: Step-Chain 9
Healing the Pain: Step-Chain 10

For more information about the Step-Chain series, please call the Marketing Department of Egmont Books on 0207 761 3500 or email: nicola.wilkinson@ecb.egmont.com

Introduction to activities based around Step-Chain 8 'Losing My Identity' by Ann Bryant

The following three activities are designed to be used with Upper Key Stage 2 pupils, although they are specifically aimed at Year 6 children. The activities were developed to help cover some of the Learning Objectives from Non-Statutory Guidelines for PSHE and Citizenship at Key Stage 2 (www.nc.uk.net) and Citizenship – a scheme of work for Key Stages 1 and 2 (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)

Activities 1, 2 and 3 can be used to address parts of the following broad objectives from non-statutory guidelines

Pupils should be taught:

- 1a** to talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society
- 2a** to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events;

and also the more detailed objectives given in Unit 1 Taking Part – developing skills of communication and participation (Years 5 and 6) from the schemes of work.

Activities 1 and 2 can also be used to address the following broad objectives from the non-statutory guidelines

Pupils should be taught:

- 2c** to realise the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism, on individuals and communities
- 3f** that pressure to behave in an unacceptable or risky way can come from a variety of sources, including people they know, and how to ask for help and use basic techniques for resisting pressure to do wrong

and more specific objectives given in Unit 2 Choices and Unit 12 Moving On from the schemes of work (detailed objectives outlined with the activities.)

Activity 3 is based around objective 4f from the non-statutory guidelines (detailed with the activity).

ACTIVITY 1

Based around Unit 2 Choices 'What influences our choices'

Children should learn:

- that pressure to behave in an unacceptable way can come from a variety of sources, including people we know
- that peer influence can be positive as well as negative
- to discuss their views and communicate with others

Children can work in small groups discussing the situations on the cards, in terms of the choices the characters had open to them and the choices they made.

The questions could be used to prompt or extend discussions where necessary.

The final card uses an example where someone is exerting pressure that could be seen to be positive.

The activities could culminate in a whole class debate on how best to describe peer pressure, eg. when people feel that the best choice they have is to go along with what's expected of them by their peers.



DISCUSSION CARDS



Page 109

Ryan realises that Joss is trying to persuade him to help steal money at the netball match so that he can buy scratch cards. He decides to agree to it and then work out how to get out of it later.

- Why does Ryan make this decision?
- Is it a good decision to have made?
- What are the consequences of his decision?
- What other decisions could he have made?
- What might the consequences of these decisions have been?
- Have you ever gone along with something initially, intending to sort it out later?
- If you knew someone was in a similar predicament, what advice would you give them?



Page 15

Joss suggests that they (himself, Ryan, Mitch and Dan) take a short cut through Mr Down's garden. Ryan protests that they are not allowed but is called a 'chicken' by the others and decides to follow them.

- Why does Ryan make this decision?
- Is it a good decision to have made?
- What are the consequences of his decision?
- What other decisions could he have made?
- What might the consequences of these decisions have been?
- Have you ever ended up doing something you know is wrong because other people have teased you?
- If you knew someone was in a similar predicament, what advice would you give them?



Page 14

Joss uses the money he stole from his step-mum's 'rainy day' box to buy scratch cards. He gives one to Ryan who finds he has won £5. Joss teases Ryan about using his winnings to replace the stolen money, so Ryan decides to buy something rude for his sister, even though he would rather replace the money.

- Why does Ryan make this decision?
- Is it a good decision to have made?
- What are the consequences of his decision?
- What other decisions could he have made?
- What might the consequences of these decisions have been?
- Have you ever taken something from someone and felt unable to return it even though you would like to?
- If you knew someone was in a similar predicament, what advice would you give them?



DISCUSSION CARDS

Page 19



Joss is teasing Ryan about being a wimp, and tells him to ring someone's doorbell then run away in order to prove he's not. Ryan feels he has to do it otherwise Joss will keep on about it all weekend, so he decides to get it over and done with.

- Why does Ryan make this decision?
- Is it a good decision?
- What other decisions could he have made?
- What might the consequences of these decisions have been?
- Have you ever done anything you don't really want to do or know is wrong, in order to try and get someone to leave you alone?
- If you knew someone was in a similar predicament, what advice would you give them?

Page 87



Ryan is in trouble in his maths lesson because the teacher thinks he has been writing notes. She asks him who he was writing to. He desperately tries to think of a reply and eventually comes up with, "I'm sure I just saw God... in the corridor."

- Why does Ryan decide to say this?
- Is it a good reply?
- What are the consequences of him saying this?
- What else could he have said?
- What might the consequences of him saying these things have been?
- Have you ever lied when asked a question and ended up in even more trouble than you started in?
- If you knew someone was in a similar predicament, what advice would you give them?

Page 139



Hayley has made Ryan promise that he'll stop Joss from stealing and that he won't act as lookout for him. However, during the match, Joss turns to him and says, "OK Rye. This is us, I think." Ryan and Hayley exchange a worried glance as Joss walks off and then Ryan begins to follow him.

- Why does Ryan make this decision?
- Is it a good decision?
- What are the consequences of his decision?
- What other decisions could he have made?
- What might the consequences of these decisions have been?
- Have you ever been in a position where two people or groups of people want you to do different things and you have to choose between them?
- If you knew someone was in a similar predicament, what advice would you give them?

ACTIVITY 2

Based around Unit 12 Moving On 'What About My Friends'
(QCA Schemes of Work for Citizenship)

Children should learn:

- about different types of bullying and harassment
- how to act assertively, and to develop strategies for dealing with bullying

The role-play cards are designed to be used with the three flash cards Assertive/Passive/Aggressive. A group of children act out the situation on the card and the rest of the group decides in what manner (assertive/passive/aggressive) a designated character is behaving by holding up the appropriate card. The group then alters the way in which the identified character behaves. The rest of the group decides how they are now behaving and discusses the effect this change in behaviour has on the situation. After exploring the situations in this way the whole group discusses how assertive behaviour could be used to negate bullying.

An extension of this is to ask role-playing pupils to become one of the characters in the situation and put them in the 'hot seat.' The rest of the group can then ask them questions to determine how the character feels about the situation and the reasons behind why they behaved as they did. Other characters can then be put in the hot seat in order to look at the situation from different perspectives. If characters have altered their actions in different 'takes' of the same scene, they can compare the feelings the different actions gave them.

Other possible links with QCA Scheme of Work for Citizenship:

Unit 8 How do rules and laws effect me? 'How can we take responsible action?'

Children should learn:

- about some of the laws that young people tend to break and why

Unit 9 Respect for Property 'What are the consequences of crime'

Children should learn:

- that stealing is wrong
- that victims of crimes can be affected in a number of ways
- to use their imagination and understand the experience of others

Other possible links:

National Literacy Framework (Year 6 Autumn Term/Writing Composition)

Children should be taught:

- to prepare a short section of story as a script, eg. using stage directions, location/setting

Text from which the role-play scenarios are taken can be used by teachers to model how prose can be converted into play-scripts. Then, following the dramatic work where pupils alter the behaviour of the characters and therefore the outcome of the situations, pupils could then write these new situations down in play-script form.



ROLE-PLAY CARDS



Page 142

Ryan has coughed in order to stop Joss from stealing money in the changing rooms by making him think someone is there. Joss is angry when he sees no one is there and demands "What's going on?" Ryan replies "I'm going to report you unless you stop what you're doing now." Joss threatens to claim that Ryan was the culprit, but Ryan hides his fear and says he doesn't care. He then walks away.



Page 43

Joss is teasing Ryan because his mum has given him a kiss and has asked Joss to baby-sit for him. Joss calls him a wimp and says that to prove he is not he should agree to be shut in the loft for an hour. Ryan creates lots of excuses to avoid this, but Joss seems to have an answer to them all. Ryan convinces himself he'll be fine just for fifteen minutes but has to fake a yawn in order to hide his fear.



Page 12

Joss has been teaching Ryan and his two best friends, Mitch and Dan to play 'coin rugby'. Joss decides that whoever wins keeps playing. Ryan thinks the rule is because Joss is confident he is going to keep winning. Mitch and Dan appear to be impressed with how Joss is playing. However, when it is Ryan's go, it turns out that he is really good at it and he goes into the lead. Joss then declares there is another new rule that means Ryan has lost all his points. Not wanting to look as though he is sulking, he says nothing while the others tease and laugh at him.



ROLE-PLAY CARDS

Page 155



Hayley says 'Hi Ryan! Joss's gone out, I hope!' before both she and Ryan realise that Joss is there behind them in the hall. After a period of silence where Ryan feels paralysed with fear and Hayley is pale and scared, Ryan decides to stand up to Joss. Joss looks at them in disbelief, his arms hanging limply by his sides, his face chalk white and his eyes big and round with disbelief. Joss asks Hayley in a small squeaky voice why she is not his girlfriend any more.

Page 20



Joss has deliberately tried to get Ryan into trouble by goading him into knocking on a stranger's door and then running away. Ryan runs out of the drive to find Joss talking to the owner of the house. 'Who's that coming out of my house? Can I help you?' asks the owner, throwing Ryan a very suspicious look. Ryan does not say anything. Meanwhile, it turns out that the owner is Mr Rutland, Joss' English teacher. Joss tells Mr Rutland that Ryan is French as though this explains what Ryan was doing in his front garden.

Page 94



Despite waking up and feeling sick about the day ahead, Ryan finds himself walking to the bus stop with Joss. They are both going to Joss's school. Ryan is to pretend that he is a French friend of Joss's. Joss stops and tells Ryan to get his jeans and stuff out of his rucksack. Ryan says, 'I can't get changed here! I might get arrested.' Joss tells him not to be stupid and to go behind the lamppost, and then laughs all the time Ryan is getting changed. As they set off for the bus stop Joss gives Ryan his instructions for the day. Then they walk on in silence.



FLASH CARDS



PASSIVE



AGGRESSIVE



ASSERTIVE

ACTIVITY 3

Based around 'Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.' (Non Statutory Guidelines for PSHE & Citizenship at Key Stage 2)

Pupils should be taught:

- that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view
- to realise the nature and consequences of racism, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviour, and how to respond to them and ask for help.

Unit 12 Moving On 'What about my friends?'
(QCA Schemes of work for Citizenship)

Children should learn

- about different types of bullying and harassment

In this activity the main objective is to discover: how Joss's behaviour and the situations he 'forces' Ryan into, make Ryan feel, both physically and emotionally; how Joss's behaviour affects how Ryan is able to respond verbally; what it is about his behaviour that could be deemed bullying, teasing or aggressive; and why this behaviour has the effect that it does.

A chart could be created and added to at various intervals during the reading of the book to record incidences and the resulting effect on Ryan's feelings and the way it makes him respond.

See chart on the next page.



RESPONSE/FEELINGS

Behaviour	Physical	Emotional	Verbal
<p><i>Page 109</i></p> <p>Joss is coercing Ryan into helping steal from the changing rooms</p>	<p>"I'm staring at the table, but it's going all blurry."</p> <p>"My eyes are starting to water."</p>	<p>"My inside organs all switch places... then lurch back to where they belong."</p> <p>... "the room seems to be swimming about."</p>	<p>Ryan ends up blurting out his realisation of what Joss has been up to.</p> <p>"I'm making up the first thing that comes into my head."</p>
<p><i>Page 135</i></p> <p>Joss has told Ryan's mum that they are going to watch Hayley's football match. Joss and Ryan's mum is laughing about a silly mistake she has made.</p>	<p>Ryan bangs all the kitchen utensils, making as much noise as he can.</p>	<p>Ryan feels so alone, he just wants to hide.</p>	
<p><i>Page 44</i></p> <p>Joss has coerced Ryan into going into the loft to prove he's not a 'saddo'.</p>	<p>Ryan fakes a yawn and a big sigh, trying to hide his fear.</p> <p>He shudders at the thought of going into the loft.</p> <p>"My heart's banging like mad."</p>	<p>"I'm petrified."</p>	<p>Ryan is only able to manage to whimper his reply to Joss's threats about 'dobbing' him in.</p>
<p><i>Page 145</i></p> <p>Ryan has stopped Joss from stealing at the netball match but is thinking about Hayley and Joss' reaction to what he has done.</p>		<p>'I feel like someone who's just taken a big rucksack off their back and put another rucksack on, expecting it to be empty but finding it... weighs even more.</p>	