Lunchroom Loneliness
Written by Kelly Hashway

Danny carried his lunch into the cafeteria and looked around. He always ate lunch with his best friend, Marcus, but Marcus was absent. Who would Danny sit with?

"Please find a seat, Danny," Mrs. Montgomery, the cafeteria monitor, said. Danny noticed a line forming behind him. He was holding everyone up as he tried to figure out where to sit. He walked around the front tables and saw Joey, a boy from his class. As Danny approached the table, he noticed there was an empty seat next to it.

"Hey," Joey said, "you can't sit here. This seat is saved."

"Oh." Danny picked up his lunch and walked away. He found another table with two empty seats. He didn't know the kids at the table, but he had to sit somewhere. "Can I sit with you?" Danny asked them.

The boys looked at Danny and shook their heads.

"This table is for 5th graders only!" one boy shouted. We don't let little kids like you sit here."

Now what was Danny going to do?

Things to Discuss:

1. How do you think Danny felt when he could not find a seat in the cafeteria?

2. Do you think Joey did anything wrong? Why or why not?

3. Do you think the 5th graders did anything wrong? Why or why not?

4. What might Danny say to someone in the cafeteria if he wanted to sit by them?

5. Was Danny being bullied? Why or why not?
In the story, “Lunchroom Loneliness,” Danny is having trouble finding a place to sit. Imagine you saw a person like Danny in the cafeteria looking for a seat. What would you say to him or her?

In the space below, draw yourself inviting a friend to sit at your table in the cafeteria. Include speech bubbles to show the conversation.
Teacher's Discussion Guide

Anti-Bullying Story
Lunchroom Loneliness
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Read the story aloud and discuss.

1. How do you think Danny felt when he could not find a seat in the cafeteria?

   He probably felt left out, lonely, or unwelcome. He may have been nervous or felt anxious.

2. Do you think Joey did anything wrong? Why or why not?

   Joey probably should have done something to make Danny feel welcome at his table.
   If he really was saving the seat, perhaps he could have invited Danny to pull up another chair.

3. Do you think the 5th graders did anything wrong? Why or why not?

   Yes, they were rude to Danny. Older students should be positive role models for younger students, and they should have made Danny feel welcome and comfortable around them.

4. What might Danny say to someone in the cafeteria if he wanted to sit by them?

   “I usually sit with Marcus, but he’s not here today. Can I sit at your table?”
   “Is this seat taken?”
   “I’d like to join you for lunch. Do you have room at your table?”

5. Was Danny being bullied? Why or why not?

   In a way, he was being bullied because his schoolmates were making a conscious effort to exclude him.