

# Attitudes & Values

Levels: 1, 2 and 3

**Subject:** Diabetes is not about...

TEACHER

STUDENTS

1/4



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## ANDREW HAS IT ALL WRONG

Lately, it seemed like nothing could make Bobby smile. His mum thought it had to do with the fact that, a month ago, the doctor had told him he had diabetes. But, that wasn't it!

Bobby was sad because Andrew, his best friend, had stopped playing with him at break time; and, because, any time Bobby suggested football, Andrew didn't feel like playing.

Bobby and Andrew had always been inseparable. One never did anything or went anywhere without the other. Whenever dad suggested going to the movies or going fishing, Bobby always asked: 'Is it all right if we ask Andrew to come?'

Why was Andrew acting weird? Bobby remembered how Andrew seemed distant, the day Miss Michaels brought the whole class to visit him, in hospital. All the kids went wild when they saw the toys his aunt and uncle had brought him! Yet, his best friend hardly even said 'Hello!'

Miss Michaels had also noticed the change. So, she decided to look into the matter.

- OK, kids. It's break time! You can go, now! Andrew! Could you stay behind, for a moment, please?

Andrew sat at his desk. He had no idea what Miss Michaels wanted.

- You've been looking a bit down, lately. Are you all right?
- Hmm...Yeah...
- Don't you like coming to school?
- Yes, Miss.
- Is everything all right, at home?
- Yeah.
- Are you sick?
- No, Miss.

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- Is it about Bobby?
  - Hmm...
  - Have you had a fight?
  - No.
  - Andrew, how much would it cost me to get you to string more than four words, together?
- Andrew smiled.
- I wouldn't charge you for that, Miss!
- But, he didn't smile long.
- ... Is it Bobby's diabetes?

Andrew lowered his head in attempt at hiding the effort he was making not to let that silly tear show and slip from his left eye.

Clever Miss Michaels - she was a teacher, after all! - picked up, right away, on what it was that was bugging Andrew about Bobby's diabetes.

- But, Andrew. Bobby's fine, now! You know that, right?
- I know. But he's always having shots. And, Peter says that drug addicts are always having injections, too.
- Oh! But, you don't think Bobby's a drug addict, do you?

Now, the idea that Bobby might be on drugs had crossed Andrew's mind. After all, this was all very new to him. But, no, he no longer feared that because, one day, he'd overheard his mum talking to Aunt Helen, on the phone, about an elderly lady who also needed shots.

- No, I don't think that! But...
- So, what is it, honey?
- Well, I heard my mum tell my aunt that diabetes is a terrible disease and that a man she knew had died of it. Only, before he died, he went blind.

By now, there wasn't a thing Andrew could do to hold back that silly tear in his left eye, which rolled down his cheek, followed by another couple of tears from his right eye.

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- Bobby's my best friend and I don't want anything to happen to him.  
- But, my dear Andrew. You don't have to be afraid of that! Just because Bobby's got diabetes doesn't mean that he's going to die or, even, that he'll go blind!

Andrew looked up, with a sheepish grin.

- Really?

- Of course not! All it means is he's got to take good care and have his insulin shots, in order to do all the things he's always done: play football, do schoolwork, run about and poke fun at me, when my back's turned...

By now, Andrew was sure Miss Michaels had special powers. How else could she have known that Bobby and he loved imitating her, whenever she turned around?

But, Andrew was still not fully at ease. And, though he was ashamed to admit it, it was now or never:

And, also, I'm afraid I might catch diabetes!

That was something he'd had on his mind, ever since the hospital visit. And, now, he felt he was a bad person for caring more about not catching diabetes than about Bobby.

Miss Michaels smiled at him. At last, she understood! So, that's what it was! Poor Andrew! He must have been having a pretty rough month! Miss Michaels gave him a hug.

- Andrew, sweetheart: diabetes is not a disease you can catch!  
- You mean to say I won't get sick from playing with him?  
- Exactly!  
- Not even if we wrestle?

Andrew reminded Miss Michaels how Bobby and he loved playing pirates, and how they inevitably ended up rolling around on the park lawn.

- You couldn't catch diabetes, even if you cut yourself!



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- Promise me Bobby's not going to go blind and that he isn't going to die because of diabetes!
- I promise!

How that changed the expression on Andrew's face! Once again, as if by magic, he went back to being his old happy self.

Now, go outside and play! There's still a few minutes break time left.

Miss Michaels decided she'd call Bobby's doctor, that very morning, to ask him over to the school, to tell the other kids in the class all about diabetes. She did not want another experience like that!

Meanwhile, in the school yard, Bobby had only had a bite of his sandwich. He'd turned down playing catch, though Louisa had, specifically, asked him to play (and she was the prettiest girl you'd ever seen) and he hadn't felt like talking to Mikey, who'd sat next to Bobby.

Suddenly, the classroom door screeched open - just as it had done all year and would go on doing, unless someone oiled it! Bobby looked up, just in time to see a blur of a figure rush towards him, flat out. He knew it was Andrew, who was all over him, hugging him with all his might. He'd run at Bobby so hard they'd both fallen over backwards, Andrew laughing his head off as they both rolled about the schoolyard.

Bobby didn't quite know what to make of it. All he could think was it must have been something pretty important Miss Michaels had told Andrew; and, though he didn't know what it was, he was delighted! Bobby thought: 'I mustn't forget to ask him what happened, in there!' But, right now, he was quite happy, just rolling about with Andrew.

And, as they did, the two friends laughed and laughed. Mikey was sure they'd both gone crazy. Just as he was sure Miss Michaels would rush out of the classroom, to tell them off. But, instead, there she was: watching them, both, through the classroom window, and smiling as she picked up the phone.