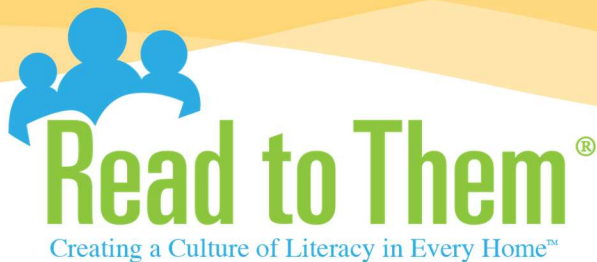


**Assembly Ideas for
Dog Days (2013)
by Karen English**

1. **Bullying Skit** – Explain to the students that in *Dog Days*, the main character, Gavin, is new to the school and is dealing with an older boy who is bullying him. There are many anti-bullying resources online that can help you form an assembly on the topic. One site to check out is Not in Our Town. Their school-focused program, Not in Our Schools, has a full complement of materials, including some skit scripts you could adapt for your assembly: <https://www.niot.org/nios>. Another online resource is the National Bullying Prevention Center: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/>.

2. **Stamp Out Bullying/Be Kind Week** – In *Dog Days*, Gavin has to deal with being bullied by an older boy. He is also new to the school, and many students are not exactly bending over backwards to be nice to him. While reading *Dog Days*, your school could host a Spread Kindness campaign, and the kickoff assembly could introduce the program. The assembly could start with local cheerleaders and athletes leading a kindness cheer or chant. You could invite a speaker who has dealt with bullying and its long term effects. The counselor or librarian could share a picture book about kindness or bullying. You could have spirit days that spell out the word KIND:
 - K – Kindness Kickoff Assembly
 - I – Include Everyone (Sit by someone new in the lunchroom or on the bus)
 - N – Nothing Beats Kindness (Wear your favorite sports team attire)
 - D – Dream of Kindness (Wear pajamas)

You can also put up a bulletin board in the main hallway or in the cafeteria that says *We Put the I in KIND*. Have big letter spell out K I N D, with the K, N, and D filled in with bright colors and shapes and the I left as an open outline. To fill in the I, have teachers and staff add examples of kids doing kind things as they see them around school during the reading of *Dog Days*. By the end of the read, the I will be filled with kindness. Finally, hand out a kindness calendar with *Dog Days* that shows acts of kindness for each day. Students can mark out each act as they completed them. You could offer a prize for completed calendars, like a pencil or lollipop with a label on it that says Kindness Champ.



3. **Buddy Bench** – Many schools have installed Buddy Benches on their playgrounds to combat bullying and exclusion. A Buddy Bench is just a simple bench located somewhere in the middle of the playground. If you are looking for a friend to play with, you should sit on the Buddy Bench. Other children not on the Buddy Bench should glance at it from time to time. If they see someone sitting on it, they should invite that friend to join them to play! Show students a video from YouTube about how the Buddy Bench works. While reading *Dog Days*, have some sort of fundraiser to raise money for a school Buddy Bench. The assembly could be the kickoff for this fundraiser. You can find a metal bench for about \$100, so the fundraising goal should be achievable. Encourage participation at any level so all families can feel included – even 50 cents will help you reach your goal. Hopefully by the end of the book, you will have enough money, and you can install your bench as a culminating activity.
4. **Carlotta Monologue** – In *Dog Days*, we learn how Gavin feels about the little dog he has to walk, and how his feelings change. You could give a sneak peek to the novel without giving away too much of the plot by having the little dog, Carlotta, do a monologue about how she feels about coming to Gavin’s house. See the Assembly Script in this packet for an idea of how the monologue could go, but feel free to modify it to fit your school.
5. **Vet Visit** – In *Dog Days*, Gavin is given the task of walking his great aunt’s dog. Have a local vet visit the school to talk to the students about proper pet care and careers in veterinary medicine.
6. **Support a Local Animal Shelter** – Have a representative from a local animal shelter visit the school with a few animals, or take groups of students on a tour of their facility. Most animal shelters are committed to educating children about the issues of pet overpopulation, spaying and neutering, neglect and cruelty, and responsible pet care. During your school-wide read, the school could collect money and materials to donate to the shelter.
7. **Parade of Pets** – Send home an All About My Pet template (in this packet). Have students fill it out and bring it back before the reading begins. The posters will contain a picture of the pet as well as descriptions of what the pet looks like, what they eat, what is most special about them, etc. Hang the finished posters around the gym, cafeteria, or hallways, and classroom teachers could take their individual classes on a Parade of Pets. There is also a template for students that don’t have pets where they could tell about a pet they wish they could have.