



## **Be a Bus Driver**

At WINGS we use this story to teach kids how their positive emotions are contagious.

### **Teach Kids How They Impact Others with Their Emotions**

It's an important lesson to give kids: positive emotions can affect everyone around them. At WINGS we use this story to explain the concept. Feel free to ad-lib, according to the age of your kids.

#### The Story:

*It was an unbearably steamy August afternoon in Charleston, the kind of sweaty day that makes people sullen with discomfort. There was a woman who was getting ready to begin a bus tour of Charleston. She was there with a large conference group. She was tired and wished she were at home in Atlanta.*

*As she stepped onto the bus, she was startled by the bus driver, a middle-aged man with an enthusiastic smile, who welcomed her with a friendly, "Hi! How are you doing?". This was the greeting he gave to everyone who entered. Each passenger was just as startled as the woman, and few returned his greeting.*

*But as the bus crawled uptown through the thick traffic, a slow, rather magical transformation occurred while the driver gave a running monologue for the benefit of the passenger. His upbeat commentary on the passing scene around them: "There's a terrific sale at the at the Saks department store, a wonderful exhibit at the Gibbes Museum of Art and if you are still here on Saturday, don't miss the Farmer's Market! Did you hear about the new movie that just opened at the theater down the block?"*

*His delight in the rich possibilities the city offered was infectious. By the time people got off the bus, each in turn had shaken off the sullen mood they had entered with, and when the driver shouted out a "So long, have a great day!" each gave a smiling response.*

That bus driver, whether he knew it or not, was responsible for spreading a good feeling that must have rippled through the city, starting from passengers on the bus. The bus driver was sort of an urban peacemaker, wizard-like in his power to affect the sullen irritability that seethed in his passengers, to soften and open their hearts a bit.

It's important to let kids know there are many ways for them to "Be a Bus Driver" in their lives. Give them some examples:

- Walk up to a new child at school and say "Hi, My name is \_\_\_\_\_. What's yours?"
- Hold the door open for people and give them a big smile.
- Greet the fast food worker with a nice "Hello, how are you today?"
- Walk into basketball practice with a smile on your face and give your teammates a high five.
- Happily greet your teacher in the morning.

Here are some more tips:

- The spreading of positive feelings needs to be genuine, not just a game, although spreading positive feelings is fun. The feelings need to be genuine. For example, when you smile at someone, your smile needs to come from a genuine place like "I am happy to greet you. I wish you well." If you compliment someone, you need to be sincere in your compliment.
- Sometimes we don't really feel good inside, but we still want to be nice to others. In that case, it's OK to "act as if" you feel good and still greet people in pleasant ways. Then you may find that you still end up feeling better inside and they may greet you back, which may feel good.

Be conscious of how it feels to be positive toward someone. And note how people react to you. You will begin to see that you can often DECIDE to feel what you want and can control your own emotions.