

# Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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Teachers often see solutions that elude others. The perspective may come from their academic background or their own life experiences.

For example, as a passionate baseball fan, I appreciate what being a part of a sports team can give to children. The camaraderie of being part of a team, learning to work together and having a sense of belonging can truly make a difference in a person's life.

A recent article in *Reader's Digest* told of a teacher who had a similar view of making sure all children have a sense of belonging. She created it not on a sports field but in a math classroom.

Glennon Doyle Melton, creator of the momastery.com blog, wrote about meeting with her son's teacher. During the meeting, the conversation turned to other things that children must learn, such as the importance of being kind.

To that end, Melton wrote, "Every Friday afternoon, she asks her students to take out a piece of paper and write down the names of four children with whom they'd like to sit the following week. The children know that these requests may or may not be honored. She also asks the students to nominate one student who they believe has been an exceptional classroom citizen that week. All ballots are privately submitted to her."

From these questionnaires the teacher seeks out patterns to determine which students may be lonely; which students may be going through a hard time; which student is getting bullied; which student is being a bully.

Since the Columbine shootings, this teacher has been hoping to prevent children from growing up thinking they are all alone.

The teacher's system is not rocket science. All of us in education can reach out to the children we teach every day and ensure that they know they're not alone.

Read the full article at [www.rd.com/advice/parenting/stop-bullying-strategy/#ixzz3EixWP2Vo](http://www.rd.com/advice/parenting/stop-bullying-strategy/#ixzz3EixWP2Vo).

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