



FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY
Episode 6. Better Together
FAN/HFLE - Ashe Project

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

GRANNY B

Nothing nicer than the sound of youth. That's what they say but is not always the truth. Sometimes young people can be so unkind. Repeating words from their parents' minds. I think all young people want to be nice. But sometimes the space don't give them the choice. All of us know what good habits bring. Just one step at a time can change everything.

There is the sound of classroom chatter which makes it clear that we are listening in at a primary school.

TEACHER

Students, I must say I am really, really proud of you all. Everybody pulled through with good grades for their presentations last week on careers. Has anyone given thought to what they want to be when they grow up?

STUDENT 1

Me Miss. Me Miss. I want to be a Doctor.

JOSHUA

Miss Ruggs, I am going to be a fireman.

SIDNEY

Miss I want to be an accountant like my father.

TEACHER

How about you Roger?

ROGER

Miss, I...

JOSHUA

He wants to be a garbage man like his father...

There is snickering and laughter in the class and we hear the teacher's voice rising above to calm them down.

TEACHER

Stop. Stop. Stop the talking class.
First of all, there is nothing wrong
with being a garbage man. And secondly
the only person who can tell us what
they want to be is Roger. What do you
want to be Roger?

ROGER

I want to be a teacher like you
Miss...

JOSHUA

And a garbage man like his father.

Once again there is a bout of laughter, but this time it is
more pronounced.

SIDNEY

Joshua Johnson why don't you just shut
up?

JOSHUA

Hey idiot girl.

TEACHER

Hello. Both of you stop. Sidney, what
is the meaning of this?

SIDNEY

Miss him always picking on people and
he needs to stop it.

JOSHUA

Wait till after school and you see
what going to stop.

TEACHER

If you both don't stop, both of you
will have detention for a week. As I
was saying, there is nothing wrong
with Roger's father being a garbage
man. He is helping to keep our
environment clean. And if we don't do
that, then the whole human race won't
survive. Is that what we want?

The class in chorus responds.

CLASS IN CHORUS

No Miss!

TEACHER

So what do we want class?

ROGER

Me Miss. Me Miss.

TEACHER

Yes Roger.

Roger does an impromptu DJ using the environment as his topic.

ROGER

Miss, we want clean air, and clean clean breeze. So we have to plant and take care of di trees. Keep water clean for the birds and di bees. Help Mother Nature, help us please. Don't throw di rubbish on the ground or in the seas. Clean is better put your mind at ease. Talking about it will not solve it. Don't have to do it in big big amounts. Talking about it will not solve it. Every little action counts.

The class bursts out in spontaneous applause and sounds of jubilation and congratulation of Roger.

TEACHER

That was beautiful Roger.

Student 2 mimics the teacher in a soft voice to Roger.

STUDENT 2

"That was beautiful Roooogeeer." Just beautiful like a garbage pan and yuh father is a garbage man.

SIDNEY

So sad, that's the best you can do.

JOSHUA

Hey...

TEACHER

Everyone close your eyes for me please. Just stop what you are doing and close your eyes. Good. No peeking. Good. Now I want all of you to just think of your community and homes

there and the streets on which you live. Now imagine if there were no garbage collectors in your community. Imagine how dirty your streets would be. Imagine how dirty your homes would be after a month. Think about a whole year without garbage collectors. We wouldn't have space to walk and people would be getting sick all the time because the garbage collector helps to keep our community and homes clean and healthy. And that helps to keep our bodies healthy. Remember, all of this is related to how we treat the environment. Everyone has a role to play. And as Roger's song says, Every little action counts. So class, what did you see and learn from that little imagination game?

BOY

Miss, I saw lots of rats running in and out from the streets into the houses and carrying lots of germs.

GIRL

Miss I could just imagine how bad it would smell if the garbage collector was not around. Rotting garbage and other bad stuff all over the place.

TEACHER

Good, I think we all agree that the garbage collector is an extremely important part of our community so I don't want to hear ANYBODY putting down anyone for being a garbage man

There is the sound of an alarm ringing.

TEACHER

Ok class, it's break time. When we come back we will talk some more about the steps that we can take to protect the environment.

The sound of children talking as if on a playground comes into focus.

ROGER

Sidney, what we going to do now? I bet

you that Joshua is going to want a fight.

SIDNEY

He is just a big ole bully.

ROGER

Yes, a bully that can fight.

SIDNEY

Yes, maybe he can fight but I also talked to my mom and dad about him and they say that there are ways of dealing with a bully.

ROGER

The best way I know is to run.

SIDNEY

Yes. That is one of the ways for real. But is not the only way. We can also let him know how we feel when he calls us names.

ROGER

Him don't care about that.

SIDNEY

Well, we just have to use all the ways till we get the right result.

ROGER

And what if nothing works?

SIDNEY

Well we have to go tell somebody older to come deal with it.

ROGER

And let everybody call us informer?

SIDNEY

Everybody suffer from the bully. So if one person has to report it, then my daddy says that, that person is a hero. And my mommy said that we should never just accept being teased or picked on.

ROGER

Well, I don't want to play hero now. I

love my life.

SIDNEY

Let him come, we can't run and hide every day and forever and ever. Plus, mommy and daddy talked with me a lot about it and we even practiced some of the things I could say. See him here now too...

JOSHUA

Hey garbage kid and blakki tutus.

SIDNEY

As Miss said, there is nothing wrong with being a garbage man and my mother say there is nothing wrong with being black. We all different shades of black and different races in this class.

JOSHUA

Yea but you extra black and ugly too...

SIDNEY

Joshua, why you don't stop calling people names? You know how it feels for somebody to call you names?

JOSHUA

What? What that have to do with anything?

SIDNEY

When you call me names I just feel so bad like is the end of the world sometimes.

JOSHUA

And so what? That's your business.

SIDNEY

That's how you really want me to feel? So bad? like is the end of the world for me?

JOSHUA

I don't business with you...

SIDNEY

So if you don't business with me why you come all the way over here just to say something to me then. We that special?

JOSHUA

No. Yuh not special.

ROGER

I am special.

JOSHUA

No yuh not...

SIDNEY

Of course yuh special. Me too. That's why Joshua come all the way over here just to talk to us.

JOSHUA

No. No. No... I never come over here to talk to you... because... because...

SIDNEY

But is us yuh come to call names. So we must be special cause you never choose anybody else.

JOSHUA

What? That's not what... That's not it... Blacky Tutus don't mean that you're special.

SIDNEY

That is not my name. And I will never answer to that name...

There is the sound of the bell again. Class is about to start again.

JOSHUA

Yuh lucky. Saved by the bell.

There is the sound of retreating footsteps.

ROGER

The bell really save us for true.

SIDNEY

Is not the bell save us. Is what my mommy and daddy tell me to do to deal with the bully.

ROGER

Well, whatever save us, I am just glad he is gone.

SIDNEY

But Roger, he is going to come back and keep on being a bully. So you better learn some of what I just did. Maybe if we keep it up long enough things will change. But if they don't change we just going to have to report it.

ROGER

Ok. So tell me what your mother and father tell you.

SIDNEY

You were there a while ago. You see what I did. Tell me what you see.

ROGER

Hear this... Don't make the bully make you feel bad. Tell him how yuh feel if it make you feel sad. Don't make the bully see your face with tears. Don't make a bully, fill you with fear. If the bully start put you under attack, run if you can don't try fight back. Dem might talk but hear what I say, is better to live and win another day.

The sound of an ethereal gong signals the return of Granny B.

GRANNY B

I couldn't say it better myself.

END OF EPISODE