

Gossip/Rumors Activity

Supplies: **Two tubes of inexpensive toothpaste**, for this activity. (I buy mine at the Dollar Store. Any variety works.), **two inexpensive paper plates**.

Procedure:

1. Invite two students to the front of the room. Have them “race” to get the toothpaste out of their tubes onto the paper plates as fast as they can. Encourage everyone in the room to cheer them on.
2. After they are done, tell them that Part Two of the race is to get the toothpaste back into the tubes as fast as they can (be sure to cheer them on as they begin the futile effort.)
3. Debrief the events. The students will come to the conclusion that it was easy to get the toothpaste out, but impossible to get it back into the tube. Relate this to gossip/rumors – once information is put out there, it can’t be taken back. Relate this to our school. If someone is kind and thoughtful about their words and actions, they have no worries about taking words back. (The students will engage in a great discussion – allow them to come to conclusions – only lead them if you need to.)
4. Next, read the story (borrowed from *Chicken Soup For the Teenage Soul*.)

The Gossiper

A woman repeated a bit of gossip about a neighbor. Within a few days the whole community knew the story. The person it concerned was deeply hurt and offended. Later, the woman responsible for spreading the rumor learned that it was completely untrue. She was very sorry and went to a wise old sage to find out what she could do to repair the damage.

"Go to the marketplace," he said, "and purchase a chicken, and have it killed. Then on your way home, pluck its feathers and drop them one by one along the road." although surprised but this advice, the woman did what she was told.

The next day the wise man said, "Now, go and collect all those feathers you dropped yesterday and bring them back to me."

The woman followed the same road, but to her dismay the wind had blown all the feathers away. After searching for hours, she returned with only three in her hand.

"You see," said the old sage, "its easy to drop them, but it's impossible to get them back. So it is with gossip. It doesnt take much to spread the rumor, but once you do, you can never completely undo the wrong."

Allow the students to discuss and debrief the story. Discuss the connection between gossip/rumors and bullying. Also talk about how we can make our school a better place by not gossiping/spreading rumors.

