

Educator Directions: The Folded Paper

Materials: One sheet of plain paper

Prompt: Today we're going to talk about hurtful words and how that can affect us and other people.

- Can you think of a time that someone said something to you that hurt your feelings?
- Is there a time that you have said something to someone else that wasn't nice?

** hold up the piece of paper **

- I have a piece of paper. See how smooth it is? It's a nice piece of paper with no rips or folds in it.
- I'd like you to raise your hand and share something that either someone has said to you or maybe you've said to someone else that has not been nice.
- I'll start. (give an example of something such as "Mrs. XX I don't like your dress".
- Every time we share something hurtful, I'll fold the paper.
- Start by folding the paper in half after your example.

** take time and have students share other hurtful things **

- Keep going until the paper has many folds in it and it's small.

Walk around the room so all of the students can see how small the paper has been folded.

Prompt:

- How do we all feel after sharing those things that are hurtful?
- Let's take some time now and share some nice things. Every time we say something nice, I'll unfold the paper one fold at a time.

** as a class, share nice things about each other or other people. Keep going until the paper is completely unfolded **

- You can have a quick discussion about how they feel after sharing nice words. I'm sure much better than the first part where we shared hurtful words.
- My paper is completely unfolded, but you can still see the folds are still there.
- When you say something that hurts someone else's feelings, even when you apologize, the pain may still be there. The folds represent all of those mean things we said and how they make someone feel.

For older students: use the example of text messaging and social media. You can't take back a message once you send it, so think before you send the message. Once you say something, it's permanent.

** Tape the paper to the top corner of your board or some place visible **

- Explain to students how you are taping this piece of paper as a reminder. A reminder to think before doing or saying something that may hurt someone else.

Additional resources:

<https://www.centervention.com/think-before-you-speak/>

<https://www.centervention.com/bullying-lesson-apples/>