

# Brush Up On Respect

## Overview:

When studying the Respect pillar, we talk about how respect sounds and what it looks like: tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. This activity provides a great visual about how important using respectful language is, how quickly words can come out, and the importance of thinking before we speak because of how difficult it is to take words back.

## Materials:

- A tube of toothpaste
- One 4" x 6" index card
- A marker pen
- A popsicle stick
- A toothpick

## Procedure:

1. Draw a big, black "R" on the index card
2. Tell students "We're going to brush up on our respect by covering that R, which stands for respect, with toothpaste."
3. Give the toothpaste to a volunteer and ask him or her to squeeze out the paste to completely cover the R, as if painting it.
4. As they're covering it, make a connection to the cleansing power of toothpaste and speaking good words, using good manners, and using a respectful tone of voice.
5. After the student has hidden the R under the paste, say that this black R actually stands for Rude, and we don't want to brush up on Rudeness.
6. Have the volunteer take back Rudeness, un-painting the R by putting the toothpaste back in the tube.

## Brush Up On Respect

7. He or she will try, but it won't work very well.
8. Offer your volunteer a popsicle stick or toothpick to keep trying, all the while discussing how easily the R was covered by the paste.
9. Correlate the activity with how quickly our words are spoken, but how difficult it is to take back disrespectful, hurtful, and rude words.
10. Follow up by discussing the steps you would have to take to fix it when Rudeness happens.
11. Then role play how to give a genuine apology, complete with, "Will you please forgive me?"
12. This activity also lends itself to teaching "I" statements as a strategy for reacting when someone is rude or disrespectful to us. Have the students practice using this formula:  
I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_. I need \_\_\_\_\_.  
It's very empowering, for example, when a child is able to look someone in the eye and say, "I feel hurt when you call me names. I need you to stop." This activity was submitted by Barbara Gruener, Counselor, Westwood Elementary, Friendswood, Texas. It is an adaptation from an idea by Tom Jackson's book, *Activities that Teach*.

### McREL standards

#### Working With Others

**Standard 2.** Uses conflict-resolution techniques

**Level Pre-K Benchmark 1.** Uses acceptable methods to resolve conflicts and disagreements with peers

<http://www.mcrel.org/Standards-benchmarks/>