

# Wrinkled Heart Lesson

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This is a great lesson to help get students onboard as a community of learners who care about each other and do their best to keep everyone safe and comfortable.

Materials needed: 9 X 12 piece of red construction paper, scissors. Copy of poem sized to fit on the cut-out heart.

Gather your students on the rug near you. While talking with them, you are going to cut out a simple heart shape from the construction paper. You can fold it in half and cut it that way or any way that appeals to you. Students will be curious, and you can show them that it is a heart shape, telling them that it's a lot like the heart we have inside our bodies. Tell your students that you want to talk to them about how hurtful words can be. Give a few examples of how people have hurt your feelings, and then invite all the students to tell you about one time that someone hurt their feelings. As each child tells you their hurt feeling, put another fold in the heart. It doesn't matter how you fold it, any way will work. After everyone has told his/her hurt feeling with you commenting, "Yes, that would really hurt your feelings," or "Wow, that was really unkind!" etc., tell them that you are going to unfold the heart; tell them that you put a fold or wrinkle in the heart for every hurt feeling they told you. When someone hurts our feelings, it leaves a wrinkle in our hearts that never comes out. Take the construction paper heart, unfolded, and show them that no matter how hard you try to straighten all the wrinkles, some always remain. Tell them the poem (see below) that goes with it, and have them recite it several times and plan to return on other days to recite it again and again or as often as necessary. Words can be very hurtful, and we need to be careful of what we say so that we never wrinkle another person's heart. If someone says something mean to you, it's okay to say, "Please don't wrinkle my heart!" or to simply say, "Ouch! That wrinkled my heart!"

Depending on your class you may not need anything more, or you might need to have some students come up and model how to let someone know that they've wrinkled their hearts.

Glue a copy of the poem onto the heart and hang the Wrinkled Heart up where you can refer to it often. I love how this makes SUCH an impression on them. For the rest of the year, I hear students saying, "\_\_\_ said something that wrinkled my heart" or "Ouch! That wrinkled my heart!"

*Before you speak,  
Think and be smart.  
It's hard to fix  
A wrinkled heart!*

