



Back to School Toothpaste Activity

First, decide how you will group your students. This will help you to know what you will need in terms of supplies.

Items Needed

Tubes of Toothpaste for each group (get the cheap ones at The Dollar Store)

Toothpicks (at least one for each child)

Paper plates for each group (if they are thin, double them up)

Newspaper and paper towels, to keep this from getting too messy!

Teacher Directions

1. Students work in groups to squeeze an entire tube of toothpaste out as fast as they can on to the paper plate.
 2. Students will take the toothpicks and try to get as much toothpaste as possible back in to the tube. Allow 10-15 minutes, or until they realize that they aren't getting it all back in.
 3. Have a discussion about words. Have an open discussion about words or phrases that have been said to them that have hurt them. Write all of the acceptable words and phrases on the board (and if an inappropriate one comes up, don't freak out, just tell them that you are glad that they shared it, but the word is so hurtful that you can't even write it on the board).
 4. Take a step away from the board and say, "Students, these are toothpaste words. When I asked you to squeeze the toothpaste, it was like the words that sometimes come out of your mouth, some of which are hurtful. Then I asked you to put those words back in and what happened?" Students will recognize that they can't take the words back. You can connect this to how students won't forget hurtful words, even if they do forgive.
 5. Begin a discussion about how carefully we should choose our words, even when we are angry. Help students to understand that when we choose our words, we can have a more successful classroom where we respect one another.
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