



- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes, or similar book
- A picture or drawing of Chrysanthemum (search Google Images or create your own)

WHAT TO DO

Activity 1

Read the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (or alternate suggestion) aloud to your students. Ask them, “How did the students in the class treat Chrysanthemum? What did her parents and music teacher do that made her feel better? How can our words affect others?” Focus your discussion on how to show care, concern and encouragement like Chrysanthemum’s parents and music teacher did in the story.

Activity 2

- Show students the picture of Chrysanthemum. Take turns saying mean and hurtful words to the print out or drawing of her (usually about her name and how it's so different) while also slightly crumbling her picture. Explain to students that hurtful words can stay with someone and they don't forget.
- Then, show care, concern and empathy to Chrysanthemum by saying kind things to her (such as "Let's play a game of Parcheesi!", "Your name is absolutely perfect.", etc.). Each time we show care and concern we attempt to smooth out the picture of Chrysanthemum.
- At the end of the activity, ask students "Does she look exactly the same as she started?" Many of the kids answer "No, she's wrinkley." We then go on to discuss how while she did look better each time someone was kind to her, she did not look the same as when we first started – before the teasing and saying mean things to her. In the end, students are better able to see that even though you can say "I'm sorry" for being mean, the words have still hurt the other person, so it's better just to be kind.

ENHANCE THIS ACTIVITY

To enhance this activity for older students, ask them to pre-create a list of mean phrases that they have heard spoken to them, or a friend – whether out loud or online (e.g. cyberbullying). Instead of using a picture or drawing of Chrysanthemum, ask students for a popular YouTuber, actor or actress and create or obtain a picture of this person. Then, have students say those mean phrases, and then kind words, to the picture. End by asking students, “Does she look exactly the same as she started?” and discuss the harm words can do.

ALTERNATE BOOKS

Look for stories that feature a character who gets teased, yet also has a source of encouragement in their life. An example is *My Friend Maggie* by Hannah E. Harrison. Visit the Bullying section on the First Book Marketplace for more titles to use for this activity. FirstBookMarketplace.org/bullying