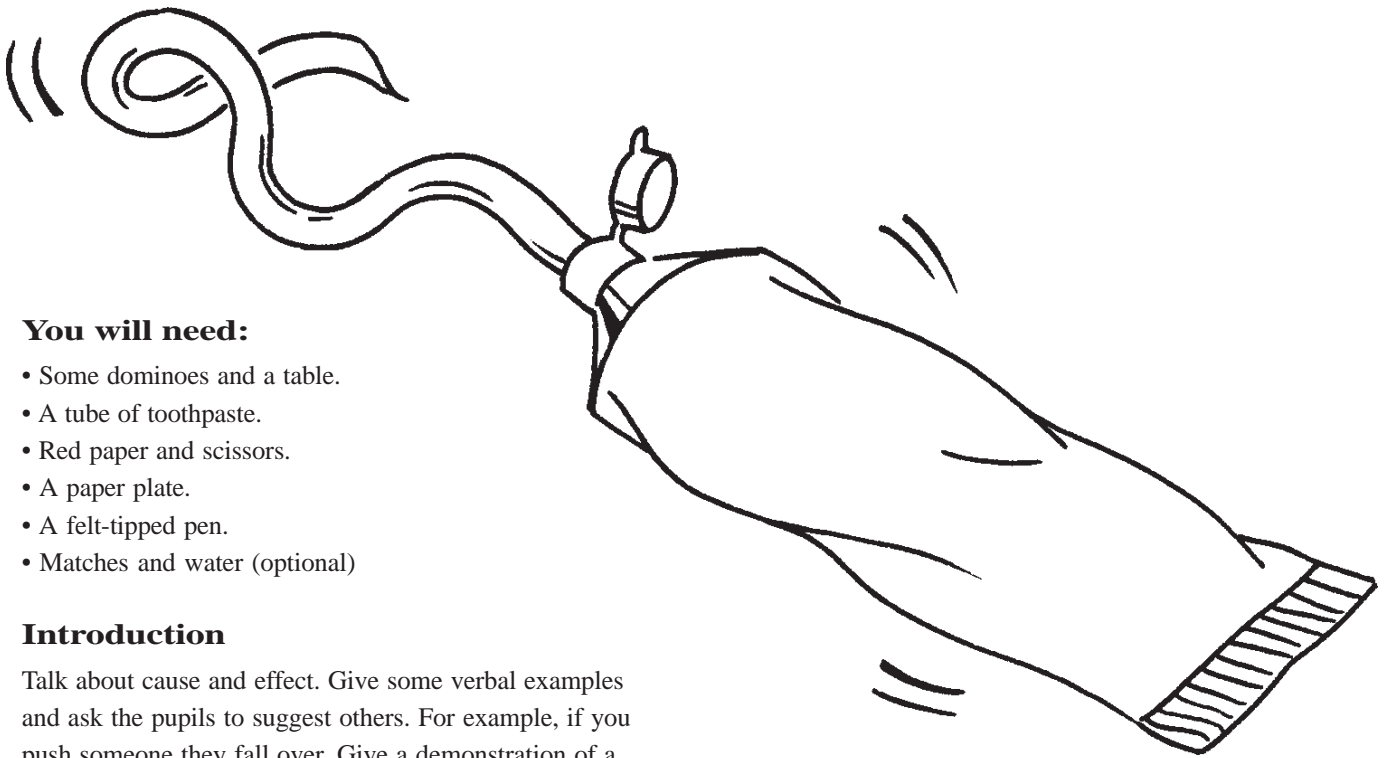


Consequences

Biblical Material: Proverbs 18.20-21

'People have to live with the consequences of what they say. Words can preserve life or destroy it, so people must accept the consequences of their words.'



You will need:

- Some dominoes and a table.
- A tube of toothpaste.
- Red paper and scissors.
- A paper plate.
- A felt-tipped pen.
- Matches and water (optional)

Introduction

Talk about cause and effect. Give some verbal examples and ask the pupils to suggest others. For example, if you push someone they fall over. Give a demonstration of a chain of effects with the dominoes. Ask pupils to set up a line of dominoes on a table so that if they push one they all fall down eventually.

Core Material

Read the Biblical Material. Just as actions have consequences, so do words. Talk with pupils about the consequences of some words such as, 'I hate you.' Christians see words as a gift that brings responsibility. It is impossible to pretend that words don't matter - they do. Words have consequences in our own and other people's lives. The New Testament writer James likened the tongue to a flame which can start a forest fire (James 3.5). Just as carelessly throwing away a match can have terrible consequences in the form of a forest fire, so careless use of words can create damage in human relationships. Ask some pupils to cut out some red flames. Write on them some pupil suggestions of words which have bad consequences.

Once the words are out, it's hard to take them back. It can be like getting toothpaste back in a tube. Demonstrate this using the tube of toothpaste and the

paper plate. If we do use words wrongly, we need to act quickly to put the situation right. It may be impossible to get toothpaste back into the tube, but it is possible to wipe up the mess afterwards.

Prayer/Reflection

Display the paper flames or ask pupils to hold them up. Ask pupils to look at the flame for a moment then close their eyes and listen to the prayer.

Like matches carelessly tossed in a forest, our words can cause great damage, destroying another person's hope and happiness. Help us, Father, to be responsible for our words.

Alternatively strike a match (preferably a long cook's match) and ask the pupils to listen to the prayer, eyes open, while the match burns.

Note. For guidance on prayers and reflections see pages 9-11.