



THE BENEFITS OF CARING

Focus: Youth demonstrate how caring and uncaring behavior affects their attitudes

Activity Instructions:

Form two groups of youth and separate the group from each other. Quietly talk with one group so that youth from the other group can't hear. Say that you want each person to choose an affirming comment to make, such as "You're great" or "I like your smile." Encourage them to make it personal, and suggest that each person choose a different comment.

Then quietly talk with the other group so that youth from the first group can't hear you. Say that you want each person to think of a discouraging comment to make, choosing one of the following: "Stop that." "Is that the best you can do?" "I don't like that." (If you add other comments, make sure they aren't hurtful in personal ways.)

Explain to everyone that you want the two groups to break up and mingle around the room. When you say, "Stop," each person should pair up with someone nearby and take turns saying their encouraging or discouraging comment to the other person. Each time you say, "Stop," youth should find new partners and repeat the same message they chose originally.

Do the activity four or five times.

Discussion Questions:

- Which people did you enjoy talking with? Why?
- Which people did you not enjoy exchanging comments with? Why?
- How do the people at your school interact with each other? How does this affect how you feel about your school?
- Overall, do you care about your school? Why or why not?
- Why are students more apt to care about their schools when they're in positive, encouraging environments?