

# #12060

## LISTEN TO WHAT I JUST HEARD!

SUNBURST VISUAL MEDIA, 2004

Grade Level: K–3

11 Minutes



### CAPTIONED MEDIA PROGRAM RELATED RESOURCES

[#12053 BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ: DID YOU HEAR ABOUT...?](#)

[#12054 LEARNING ABOUT HONESTY](#)

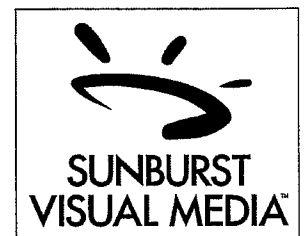
[#12056 DOING THE RIGHT THING: BUILDING CHARACTER](#)

[#12064 LET'S MAKE UP](#)

**Listen to What  
I Just Heard!  
Rumors and Gossip  
Grades K-2**

**health**  
**character**  
**respect**  
**drugs**  
**career**  
**harassment**  
**violence**  
**bullying**  
**responsibility**  
**alcohol**  
**conflict**  
**anger**

8636



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**Running time: approximately 12 minutes**

# Program Overview

## Why Should Children View this Program?

Young children are constantly being urged to tell the truth. The importance of honesty is stressed both at home and in school. But children often mistake rumors and gossip for the truth and feel no compunction about repeating the stories that they hear. **Listen to What I Just Heard: Rumors and Gossip** helps children to understand how rumors and gossip get started, how they spread, and how they can result in others being hurt by stories that are told about them. Short, realistic vignettes present specific problems for viewers to discuss and explore—problems that illustrate the ease with which untruths can be spread and the consequences that often arise as a result. By getting involved with these situations, children begin to grasp the idea that everything they hear from their friends is not necessarily the truth, and that they should be careful about repeating the things they hear. And in the process, they develop a better understanding of what's going on in their lives.

## Learning Objectives

After viewing the program and completing the activities in this Guide, children will:

- understand how rumors and gossip get started and spread.
- learn how to stop a rumor being spread about them.
- realize that telling a lie is not the only way to be dishonest.
- understand how people can be hurt by rumors and gossip.

## Program Content

- three short, realistic vignettes in which children are affected by unfounded rumors
- a host introduces and discusses the lesson in each situation
- songs at the end of each vignette reinforce the points that were made

### **Pre-Viewing Questions**

- Do you believe everything your friends tell you? Why?
- Have you ever heard a story about someone that turned out not to be true?  
What was the story? How did it affect the person it was about?

# Program Summary

## Introduction

The program opens with several children playing “telephone”—repeating a message until it ends up being completely different from the original. The host explains that this is the way rumors, or stories that aren’t true, can get started.

## Rumors Hurt

Mike brings his new car to school and he and Jeff are having a great time playing with it. Jeff accidentally breaks the car and feels terrible about it. He promises Mike that he will ask his dad to fix it. Grace sees the incident, but only hears part of it. When Stacey asks her if she knows what happened, Grace fills in the parts of the story she doesn’t know. She tells Stacey that Jeff bumped the car into the wall. Stacey tells Danny that Jeff crashed the car into the wall. Danny then tells Jennifer that Jeff smashed the car on purpose. When Jennifer refuses to let Jeff have a turn playing her game, Jeff finds out about the rumor being spread about him. He does the best thing that can be done to stop it—he tells the truth. He tells Jennifer that breaking the car was an accident and that he plans to ask his dad to fix it. When Jeff lets Mike know what the kids are saying about him, Mike tells everyone the truth.

## Stop the Gossip

Kaitlin overhears her mom talking on the phone to her friend Lucy’s mom. Since she can only hear half of the conversation, she comes to a false conclusion. Lucy’s family is going to England on a vacation, but Kaitlin assumes that they are moving there. When she gets on the school bus, she starts to spread the rumor that Lucy is moving to England. When all of the kids start talking about Lucy even though it’s none of their business, the rumor quickly becomes gossip. Believing the story, Morgan tells Susan that she’s sorry she can’t invite Lucy to her birthday party. Susan is surprised to hear that Lucy’s moving and says that they should check with Lucy to be sure the story is true. That’s what they do. Lucy explains that she’s going to England on vacation and she’s surprised that they know about it, since she just found out the night before. The story is traced back to Kaitlin and her misunderstanding of her mom’s telephone conversation. The lesson here is to be sure you have all the facts before you repeat a story to anyone else. That’s a good way to stop gossip.

## **Starting Rumors Is Mean**

Sometimes people start rumors on purpose. At Gregory's school, someone has been locking all the stalls in the boys' lavatory. No one knows who is doing it and it is becoming a real problem. One day Gregory decides that it would be funny to spread the story that Adam is the one who is locking the stall doors. So he tells Jennifer and Tyler that he knows Adam is the guilty one, because he saw it happen. When Tyler finds the doors locked again, he tells his teacher, Ms. Chow, that he knows Adam is the one who is doing it. She asks how he knows, and he says that Gregory saw Adam. So Ms. Chow speaks to Adam, who denies the story, and then to Gregory. Gregory is forced to admit that he lied about Adam, just because he thought it would be funny. Ms. Chow tells him that it's wrong to lie and it isn't funny to spread rumors about people and try to get them into trouble. The host reiterates what Ms. Chow says. She adds, not only can lies and rumors hurt someone's feelings and get them into trouble, when the truth comes out the person who started the rumor can get into trouble, too.

## **Conclusion**

The host summarizes the points made in the three vignettes, and a song ends the program.



# Guidelines for Discussion

Group discussion is an invaluable way to explore ideas and issues, foster creativity, and build communication and social skills. The following guidelines can help you maintain a “discussion-friendly” classroom:

## **Create a climate of openness and acceptance.**

Encourage students to show respect for the opinions of others and model this behavior yourself.

## **Establish ground rules.**

Students can participate in formulating the rules for discussion. Rules will vary, but should include some of these general principles:

- No put-downs, ridicule, or sarcasm
- Everyone may speak without interruption
- Everyone has the right to pass

## **Guard against inappropriate self-disclosure.**

An intense discussion may lead students to reveal inappropriate information about themselves or others. Sensitivity and vigilance can help you head off such revelations.

## **Probe behind the neat and tidy answers.**

Children are good at telling adults what they think adults want to hear. To find out what students really think, it is often helpful to prolong discussion time and encourage greater depth. Offer a “What if...?”; bring out issues such as fairness, justice, intent or lack of it, and so on. Children have a remarkable capacity to discern complexities and subtleties, and their discussions can be very rich.

# Discussion Questions

Questions with an asterisk \* appear on screen in the DVD format

## **Rumors Hurt**

- (1) Have you ever played the game “Telephone”? How does it work? What happens when a message is repeated over and over?
- (2) Was there anything Mike could have done to prevent his car from getting broken? Do you think the boys will still be friends? Why?
- (3) How do you think Jeff felt when he learned that everyone was saying things about him that weren’t true? Whose fault was it that Jeff was made to look bad?
- (4) Has anyone ever spread a rumor about you? What was it? How did it make you feel? How did you stop the rumor?
- (5\*) Did anyone ever spread a rumor about you? How did you feel?
- (6\*) Did you ever spread a rumor about someone else? How did you think that person felt?

## **Stop the Gossip**

- (1) What should Kaitlin have done before she told anyone that Lucy was moving to England?
- (2) Why did she get the story wrong in the first place?
- (3) Why do you think so many kids believed the story just because Kaitlin said it was true? Do you believe everything you hear from your friends?
- (4) Do you think Lucy was angry at Kaitlin for starting the gossip about her? What do you think she said to Kaitlin?

- (5\*) When someone gossips, they talk about another person “behind their back.” What do you think that means?
- (6\*) How do you think Lucy would have felt if she didn’t get an invitation to the party? What does that tell you about gossip?

### **Starting Rumors Is Mean**

- (1) Why did Gregory spread the lie about Adam? Do you think he wanted to get Adam in trouble?
- (2) Gregory said he thought the lie about Adam was funny. Do you think he would have thought it was funny if Adam made up a story about him? Why or why not?
- (3) How do you think Adam felt when he found out what was being said about him? What words do you think can be used to describe Adam’s feelings?
- (4) Do you think the teacher punished Gregory for lying? How? What do you think would be the right punishment?
- (5\*) Talk about how would you feel if someone made up a story about you and got you into trouble. Would you think it was funny?
- (6\*) Do you think Gregory treated Adam the way he would want Adam to treat him? Why or why not?

# Bulletin Board Starters



Ask students to choose one scene from the program and draw a picture of it. Display the pictures on the bulletin board.



Invite students to write and illustrate cartoon stories about characters who have started rumors about others and caused a problem as a result. Display the cartoon stories on a bulletin board with strategies for preventing and stopping rumors.



Ask students to write or dictate letters they would write to a friend whom they had hurt without realizing it by starting a rumor. Display these letters on the bulletin board. They may add a picture of their friend if they wish.



Write the word “MISUNDERSTANDING” on a large sheet of posterboard and tack it to the bulletin board. Tell students that many small words can be made from the letters in “misunderstanding.” Ask them to think of words that they can spell with these letters and write them on the posterboard. This can be an ongoing activity, with children adding new words to the list as they think of them.



Ask students to think of reasons why it’s important not to start rumors, either deliberately or accidentally. Then give them large cutouts of book jackets. Ask students to make up a name for their books about rumors and gossip. Have students write their titles on their book jackets and then decorate the covers. Display the jackets on the bulletin board.

# Suggested Activities

## **Language Arts; Art; Communication**

Have students create their own finger puppets with construction paper, felt, yarn and any other materials on hand. They can use the puppets to role play situations in which rumors and gossip get started and cause problems for others. Invite them to draw on their own experiences.

## **Creative Expression; Movement**

Choose one of the vignettes from the program, or let children make their own choices. Invite students to “act out” their own versions of the story, using their own words, movements, facial expressions, etc.

## **Language Arts**

Play a game of “Telephone.” Whisper a message to one of the children and ask him/her to whisper the message to someone else. Continue around the room until the last child has been told the message; then ask that child to repeat it to you. Compare the final version with the message you originally gave.

## **Reading; Language Arts**

Ask each student to read one of the books listed in the Suggested Reading section in this Teacher’s Guide, and to write or dictate a report on the book he/she has read.

## **Mathematics**

Give students the following problem: Suppose that Jeff’s father agreed to buy Mike a new car, but told Jeff he had to repay him out of his allowance. The car cost \$14.95. Jeff’s allowance is \$3 a week.

- How long will it take Jeff to pay his father back?
- How many cars could Jeff buy for \$50?

## **Creative Writing**

Give children practice in thinking up titles for stories. Have them imagine that each of the following was a separate story which needed a title: Jeff broke Mike's car and a rumor got started; Kaitlin misunderstood her mother's phone conversation and started some gossip; Gregory lied and started a mean rumor about Adam. Ask students to think of a title for each of these stories. Write the suggested titles on the chalkboard.

## **Music**

Work with students to compose an original song about rumors and gossip. Each child might contribute a different verse; the verses can then be set to music. Any musical instrument available in the classroom can be used to help the children "compose" their tune. Record the children singing their new song.

## **Language Arts**

Ask students to report on a movie or TV show in which one of the characters starts a rumor about another. They should tell what happened to each character as a result.

## **Language Arts; Writing**

Ask each student to make up one sentence about why it's not good to start, or spread, a rumor. Write the sentences on the board. As a variation, you can have the students write their own sentences on a sheet of blank paper and draw pictures to illustrate them.

## **Language Arts; Communication**

Ask students to listen closely as you say several pairs of sentences. They are to decide which sentence in each pair sounds like a rumor which should be checked out before they repeat it to anyone. Some suggested sentences are:

John is going to the movies this weekend.

John is going to act in a Hollywood movie.

Janet just won a million dollars in a contest.

Janet entered her picture in a contest.

Phil's father is a famous astronaut.

Phil's father is interested in astronomy.

## **Art; Creative Expression**

Have students construct a “Rumor Robot” that eats up false statements about people. Ask them to bring in used food containers, paper towel tubes, foil, fabric, buttons, ribbons and any other scrap material from home. Provide scissors, glue, and paint. You may divide the class into teams and let each team construct a robot; display all the completed robots prominently in the room.

# Send-Home Page

Dear Family Member,

Your child has viewed a program called **Listen to What I Just Heard! Rumors and Gossip**. This program was designed to help children understand what rumors are, how they get started, and how they can hurt people. Here are some ways you can help your child learn more about rumors and gossip.

- Ask your child to tell you about the stories in the program and the lessons that the various characters learned. Ask your child if he/ she has ever been in similar situations; discuss these situations with your child.
- Tell your child about some of the rumors you have heard and how they resulted in other people being hurt. Make sure your child understands that adults spread rumors, too, so it's a good idea to try to learn how to avoid this now.
- Here are some of the points about rumors that your child learned in the program. Reinforce these points by discussing them with your child.
  - A rumor is a story that people tell without knowing whether or not it's true.
  - Very often a rumor ends up hurting someone's feelings.
  - The best way to fight a rumor is to tell the truth.
  - Rumors can start when someone doesn't get the whole story.
  - Rumors often start gossip. Gossip is talking about someone even though it's really none of their business.
  - You should check the facts before you repeat a story about someone.
  - When people start rumors on purpose, it causes trouble for everyone.
- Role play different situations with your child, practicing the techniques he/she learned in the program.
- Set a good example for your child by banning rumors and gossip in your home.





# Take-Home Book

## Grades K-1



Cut and staple the pages to make a book. Then draw pictures to go with the words.

**Donny was mad at Alison.**

**1**

**He told everyone that she stole  
crayons.**

**2**

**Alison told everyone it wasn't true.**

**3**

**Boy, did Donny look bad!**

**4**

# Take-Home Book

## Grade 2



Cut and staple the pages to make a book. Then draw pictures to go with the words.

Pete loved the taste of cough drops. 1

Tom saw Pete eating a cough drop. 2

Tom told Burt that Pete had a cold. 3

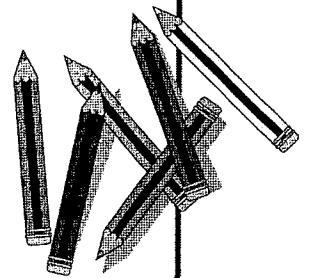
Burt told Lily that Peter was in the hospital. 4

Lily told Marge he went by ambulance. 5

Marge said, "Wait a minute! Here comes Pete!" 6

# Activity Sheet 1

A series of horizontal lines for handwriting practice. Each row consists of a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line. There are four such rows on the page.



## Listen to What I Just Heard! Rumors and Gossip

# New Words

## Activity Sheet 2



Write what you think the underlined word means. Then write a sentence using the word.

A rumor is...

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Gossip is...

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A misunderstanding is...

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# Accident...or On Purpose?

## Activity Sheet 3

Circle the words that tell how each thing happened.



George was reading a library book while he ate his breakfast. As he went to turn the page he knocked over his glass of milk. The milk got the book wet and ruined the cover. **George ruined the library book ...**

**by accident**

**on purpose**



Carey was making a poster for school. She was painting it in bright colors. When she wasn't looking her brother Andy spilled a jar of paint all over her poster. He thought it was funny. **Andy ruined Carey's poster...**

**by accident**

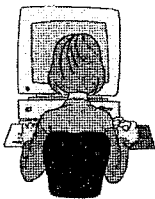
**on purpose**



Mickey wanted to help his mom decorate some cookies she made. He tried and tried but he didn't like the way his decorations turned out. Finally he got mad and smashed all the cookies. **Mickey smashed the cookies...**

**by accident**

**on purpose**



Jackie was learning how to use the computer. She wanted to write something on the screen, but she hit the wrong button. Everything on the screen disappeared. **Jackie erased what was on the computer...**

**by accident**

**on purpose**



Donald's family had a cat that was not allowed to go outside. One day Donald opened the door to take out the trash. He didn't see the cat right behind him. The cat ran outside and Donald had to chase her. **Donald let the cat out of the house...**

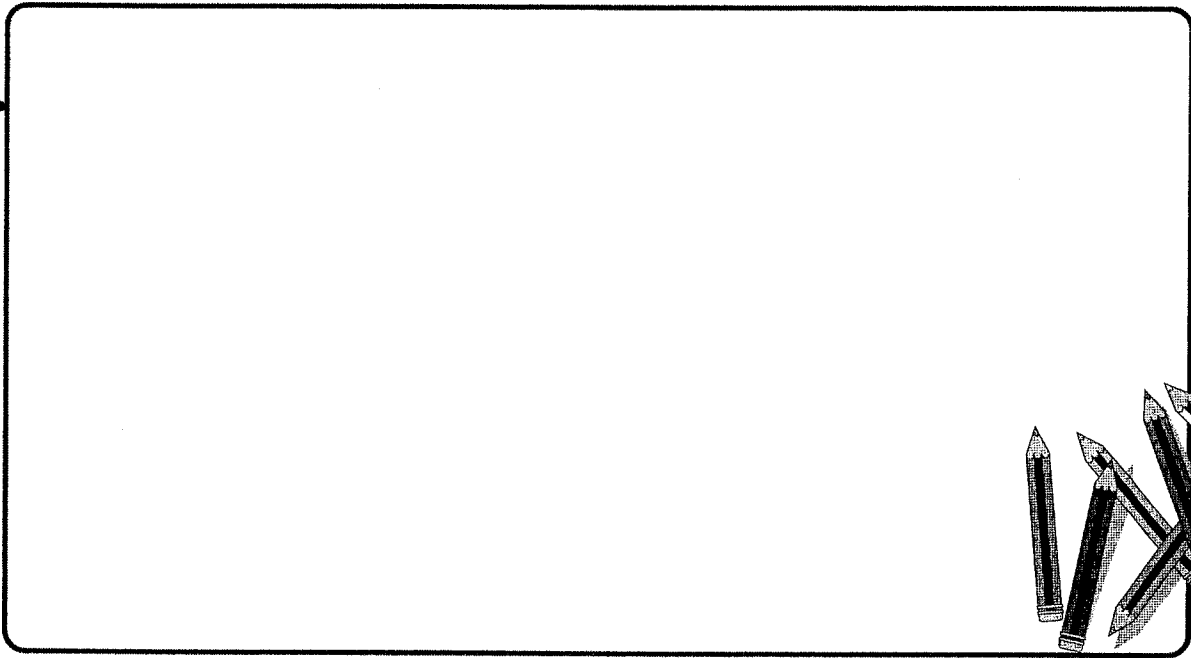
**by accident**

**on purpose**

# What's Your Story?

## Activity Sheet 4

Did anyone ever spread a rumor about you? Draw a picture about it. Then write about how you felt.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for writing.

# Word-Find Puzzle

## Activity Sheet 5

All the words in the box are hiding in the puzzle. Circle each word that you find. Then write a sentence using that word on the back of this page.

**FEELINGS**

**GOSSIP**

**HURT**

**MESSAGE**

**PURPOSE**

**REPEAT**

**RUMOR**

**SPREAD**

**STORY**

**TROUBLE**

**TRUTH**

**WRONG**



M	E	S	S	A	G	E	R	E	Z	C	T
S	T	P	U	R	P	O	S	E	T	E	R
S	R	U	S	G	O	G	Y	M	S	E	O
E	Z	U	I	T	F	S	F	L	P	X	U
R	A	O	M	F	B	T	E	N	R	C	B
T	B	G	E	O	N	B	E	I	E	R	L
I	L	O	E	I	R	K	L	T	A	E	E
W	E	S	H	E	S	A	I	E	D	P	M
R	O	S	K	U	B	E	N	T	R	E	P
O	N	I	N	D	R	C	G	C	O	A	T
N	A	P	R	S	T	T	S	O	A	T	O
G	S	T	O	R	Y	T	R	U	T	H	T

# Word-Find Puzzle

## Activity Sheet 5 - ANSWER KEY

All the words in the box are hiding in the puzzle. Circle each word that you find. Then write a sentence using that word on the back of this page.

FEELINGS

GOSSIP

HURT

MESSAGE

PURPOSE

REPEAT

RUMOR

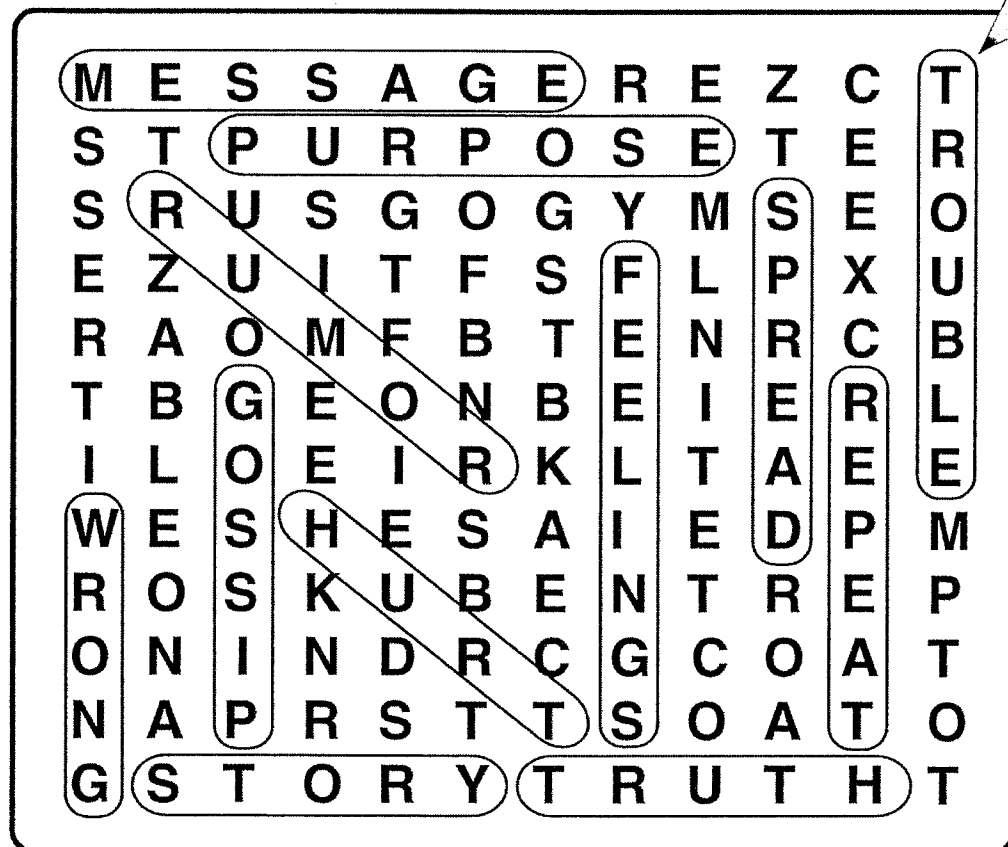
SPREAD

STORY

TROUBLE

TRUTH

WRONG





# What Do You Think?

## Activity Sheet 6



Check the best answer.

**1**

The best way to fight a rumor is to...

- ☐ a. get mad at all your friends
- ☐ b. start a rumor about someone else
- ☐ c. tell the truth

**2**

Rumors often start...

- ☐ a. cars
- ☐ b. fires
- ☐ c. gossip

**3**

A good way to stop gossip is to...

- ☐ a. tell more people
- ☐ b. ask questions
- ☐ c. change the story

**4**

Starting a rumor about someone is...

- ☐ a. mean
- ☐ b. smart
- ☐ c. funny

**5**

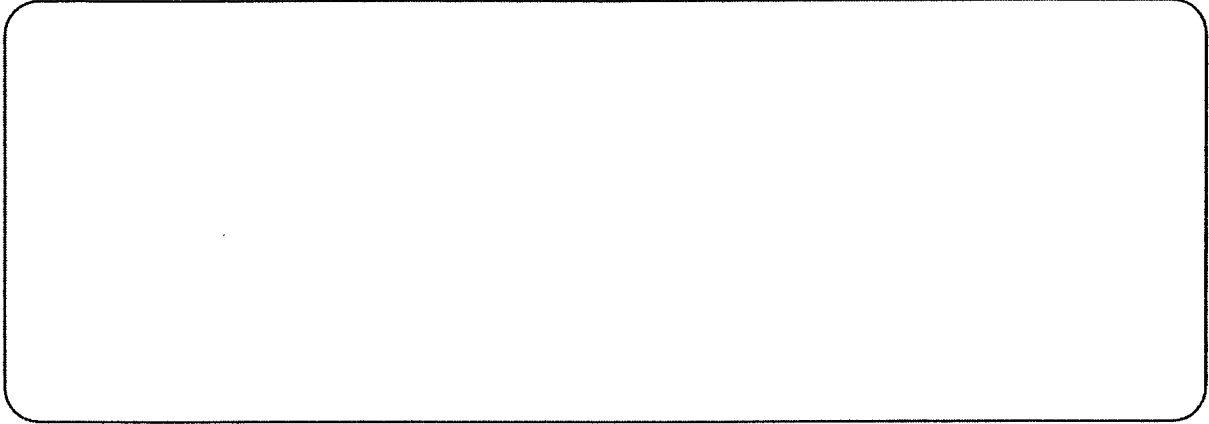
It's best to be careful what you...

- ☐ a. think
- ☐ b. say
- ☐ c. hear

# How the Story Changed

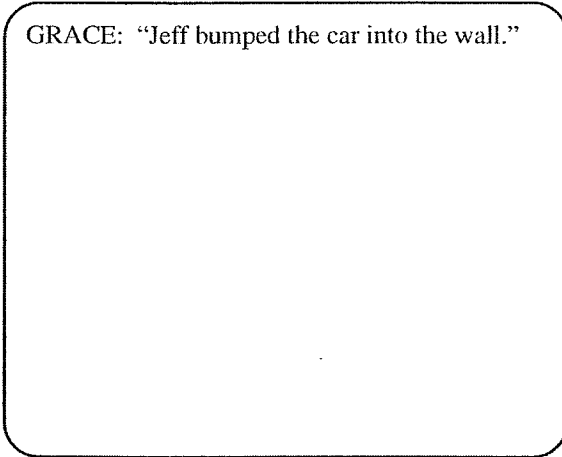
## Activity Sheet 7

Jeff was playing with Mike's car and it accidentally got broken. Draw a picture to show what happened.

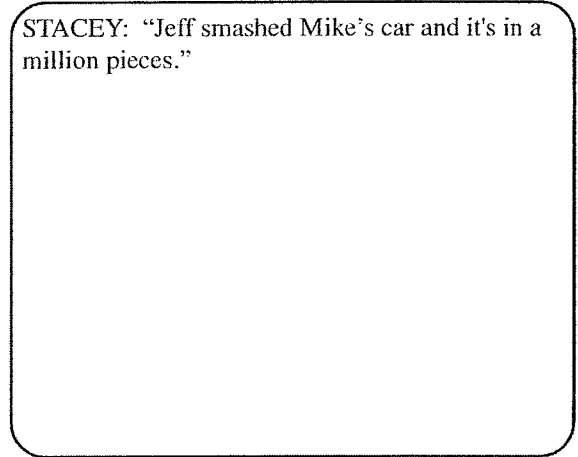


Now draw a picture to show how each person changed the story.

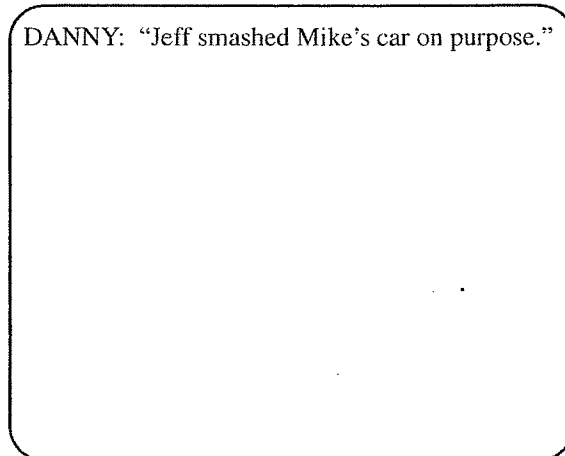
GRACE: "Jeff bumped the car into the wall."



STACEY: "Jeff smashed Mike's car and it's in a million pieces."



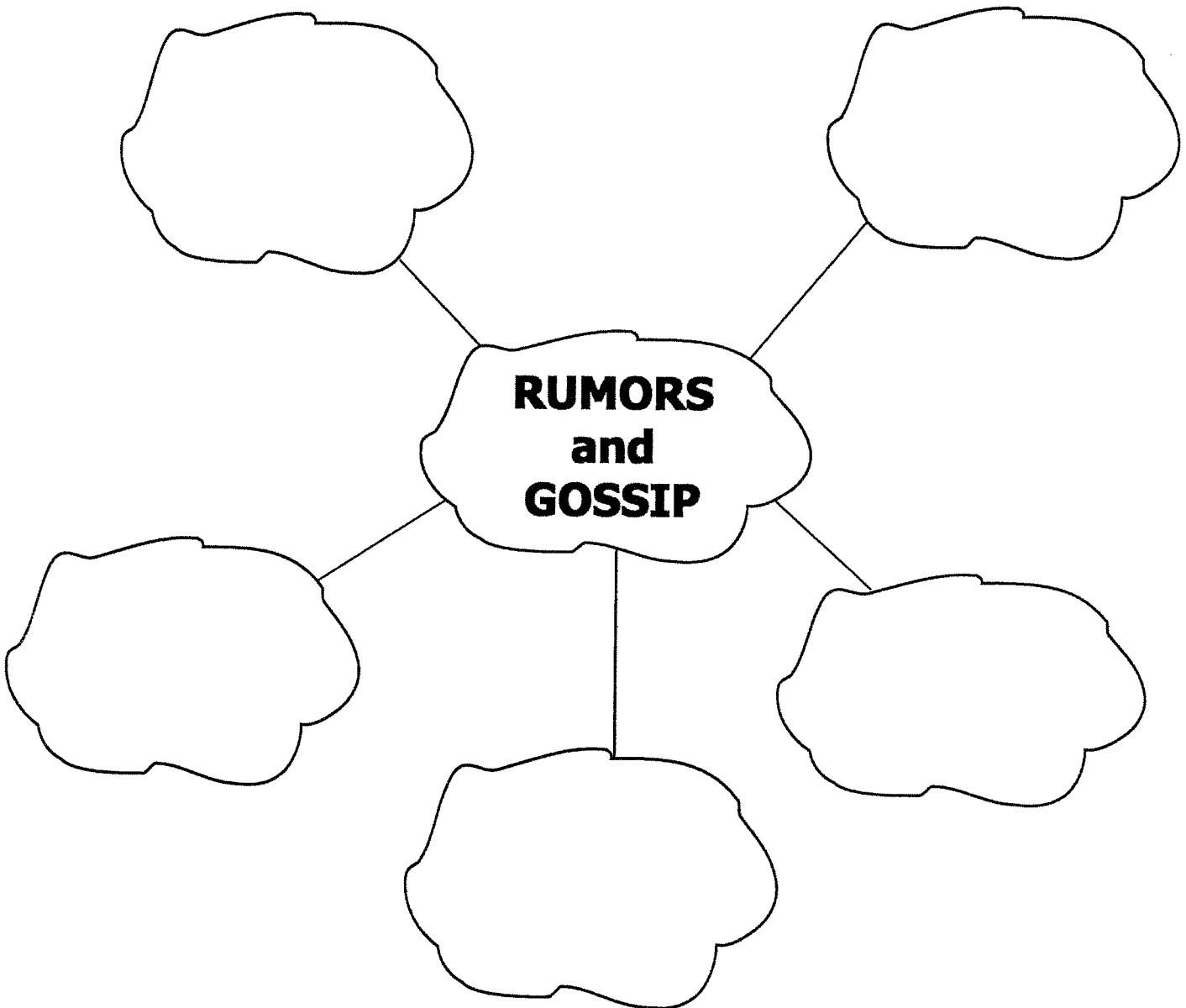
DANNY: "Jeff smashed Mike's car on purpose."



# Thought Bubble

## Activity Sheet 8

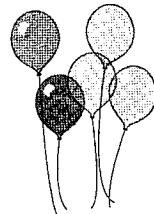
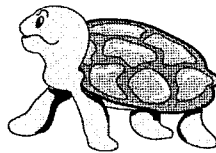
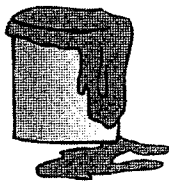
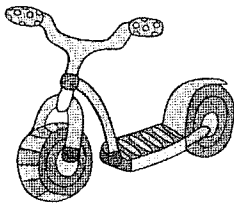
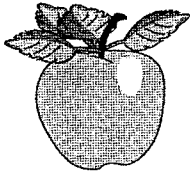
Think about what you have learned about rumors and gossip. Fill in all your thoughts around the Thought Bubble below.



# Does It Spread?

## Activity Sheet 9

In each row there is something that can spread. Put an X on the right picture.



What happens when something spreads?

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# Help!

## Activity Sheet 10

Read the letter from Gwen.



Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (write in your name)

Yesterday I was getting on the school bus. I looked down and saw a dollar on the ground. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. Kenny saw me pick it up.

Later on, Kathy told some kids she had lost a dollar. Kenny heard her and started telling everyone that I stole Kathy's dollar. The gossip is all over the school and it's just not true. What can I do about it?

Your friend,  
*Gwen*

Can you think of something to say to Gwen that might help her?  
Write a letter.

Dear Gwen,

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Your friend, \_\_\_\_\_

# Word Scramble

## Activity Sheet 11

Unscramble the letters to make a word that fits in each sentence. Use the words in the box as clues.

**GOSSIP**

**TRUTH**

**LAVATORY**

**RUMOR**

**TROUBLE**

**VACATION**

**BROKE**

Jeff accidentally \_\_\_\_\_ Mike's new car.

**E K O B R**

Grace started a \_\_\_\_\_ that Jeff broke it on purpose.

**U O M R R**

Lucy was going to England on \_\_\_\_\_.

**A C O V N I A T**

The other kids started to \_\_\_\_\_ about Lucy.

**P G S I O S**

Gregory started a rumor that Adam was locking the doors in the

\_\_\_\_\_.

**R Y O T L V A A**

Starting rumors can cause \_\_\_\_\_ for people.

**U L O T E B R**

You can stop rumors by telling the \_\_\_\_\_.

**T U R T H**

# Crack the Secret Code

## Activity Sheet 13

Study the key. Then figure out the secret message below. Write the words on the lines.

### KEY:

1 = a	8 = h	15 = o	22 = v
2 = b	9 = i	16 = p	23 = w
3 = c	10 = j	17 = q	24 = x
4 = d	11 = k	18 = r	25 = y
5 = e	12 = l	19 = s	26 = z
6 = f	13 = m	20 = t	
7 = g	14 = n	21 = u	

### SECRET MESSAGE:

9, 20

9, 19

23, 18, 15, 14, 7

20, 15

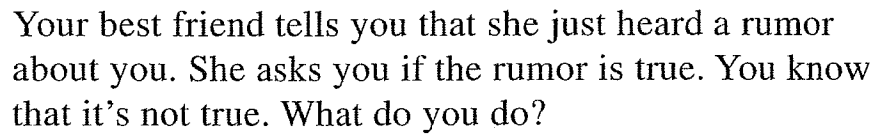
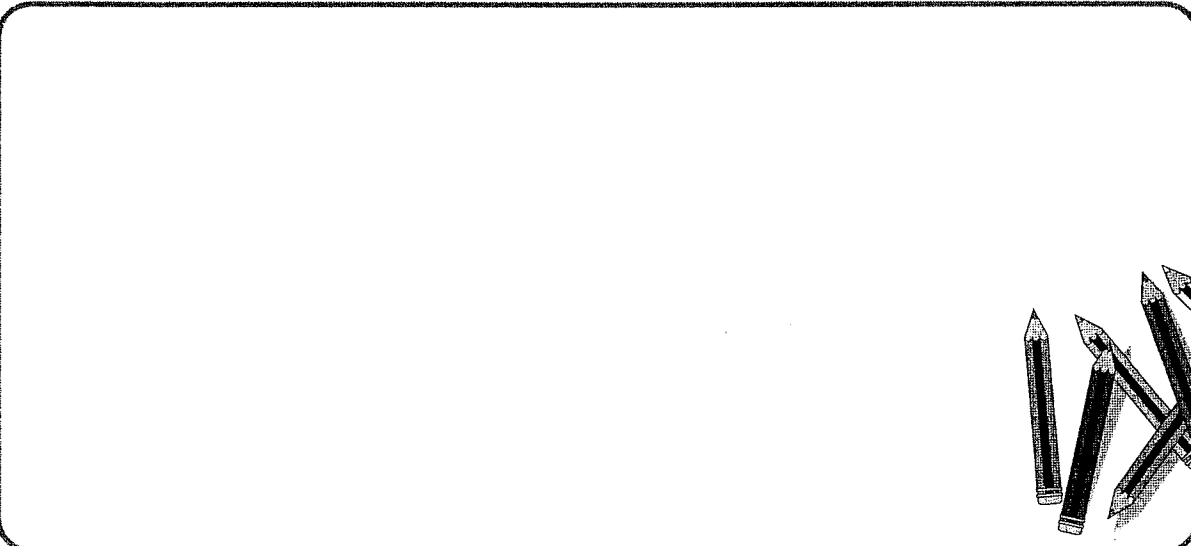
19, 16, 18, 5, 1, 4

18, 21, 13, 15, 18, 19

1, 14, 4

7, 15, 19, 19, 9, 16

## Activity Sheet 14

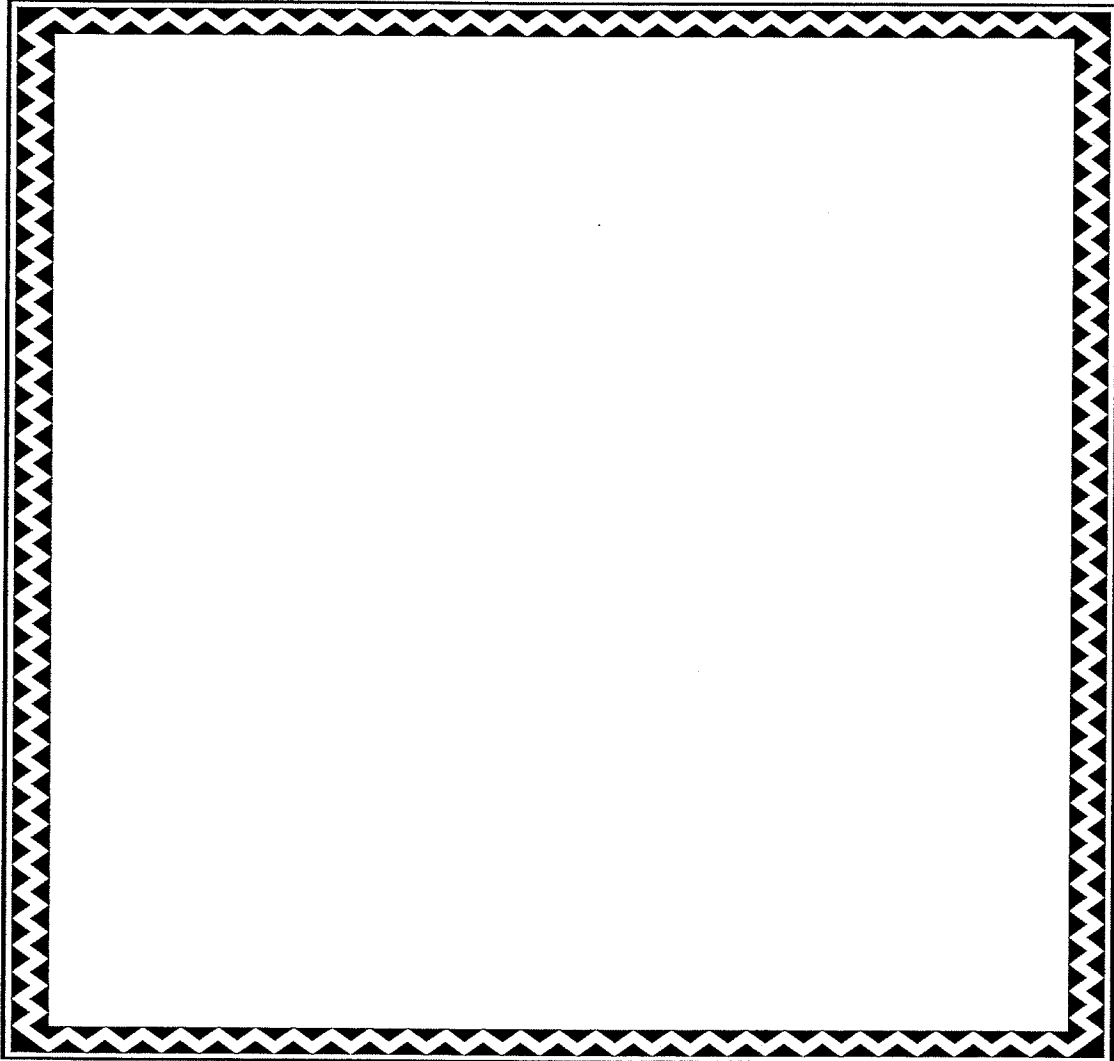
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# You Can Be An Artist

## Activity Sheet 15

Make a poster about what you learned in this program. Write a slogan to go with your poster.



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# Match-Up

## Activity Sheet 16

Here are some words that have been chopped in two. One half of each word is on one side of the paper and the other half is on the other side. Draw a line to show the parts that belong together. Use the word box below if you need help. The first one is done for you.

**gossip**

**message**

**heard**

**rumor**

**truth**

**spread**

**trouble**

**feelings**

**hurt**

**story**

**listen**

**said**

**tru**

**mes**

**feel**

**sto**

**ru**

**gos**

**hu**

**trou**

**lis**

**hea**

**sa**

**sp**

**rd**

**ings**

**ten**

**id**

**ble**

**rt**

**th**

**mor**

**sage**

**ry**

**read**

**sip**

# Suggested Reading

## General Reading for Educators and Parents

Coles, Robert. *The Moral Life of Children*. Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986. A searching inquiry into the moral awareness of children.

Eyre, Linda and Richard. *Teaching Your Child Sensitivity*. Fireside, 1995. Explores the concept of sensitivity, provides parents with a practical guide for teaching and reinforcing sensitivity skills in their children.

Neubauer, Hans-Joachim. *The Rumour: A Cultural History*. Free Association Books, 1999. A wide-ranging tour of the historical and cultural manifestations of rumors that exposes the mechanisms that lend rumors their dynamism.

Pike, Kathy, et al. *Teaching Kids to Care and Cooperate: 50 Easy Writing, Discussion and Art Activities That Help Develop Self-Esteem, Responsibility and Respect for Others*. Scholastic Professional Book Division, 2000. Easy to adapt for any grade level, offers activities and ideas that focus on caring and cooperation.

Schulman, Michael and Eva Mekler. *Bringing Up a Moral Child: A New Approach for Teaching Your Child to Be Kind, Just, and Responsible*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1985. A guide for parents and educators.

## Grades K-2

Brenner, Barbara. *Good News*. Bantam Books for Young Readers, 1991. The good news about Canada Goose's newly laid eggs gets hideously distorted as one animal relays the news to the next animal.

Hodgson, Mona Gansberg. *Smelly Tales*. Concordia Publishing House, 1998. Rosie the skunk and her desert friends learn the hard way that gossip hurts.

Ketteman, Helen. *Armadillo Tattletale*. Scholastic, 2000. Armadillo uses his big ears to overhear everyone's conversations, but then repeats what he hears, giving it a little twist that makes everyone feel bad.

- Kraus, Robert. *Mert the Blurt*. Simon & Schuster, 1988. A blabbermouth with whom no secret is safe finds a special niche in the news world.
- Krulik, Nancy. *Doug's Vampire Caper*. Disney Press, 1997. When Connie spreads the rumor that there's a Bat Master in the halls, Doug and Skeeter learn a valuable lesson in friendship.
- Love, Ann. *The Prince Who Wrote a Letter*. Child's Play International, 1995. In this entertaining story, news about little Prince Paul's letter gets embellished by each person who receives and passes it on, almost causing a war between two countries before all is set right.
- Macdonald, Alan. *Snarlyhissopus*. Tiger Tales, 2002. As Pelican's news about a "spottyhippomus" spreads from animal to animal, the facts get hideously distorted, making it evident that the game of "telephone" is hard at work in the jungle.
- Martinband, Gerda. *The Blabbermouths: Adapted from a German Folktale*. Greenwillow, 1992. When a farmer's quick thinking in effecting a rescue earns him a chest of gold pieces, he's not allowed to tell anyone about his riches, but trouble ensues because everyone is spreading rumors.
- Meres, Jonathan. *The Big Bad Rumor*. Orchard Books, 2000. A wolf is really coming, but as this message is passed from animal to animal, it gets terribly distorted.
- Talley, Linda. *Feathers at Las Flores*. Marsh Media, 2001. Trouble ensues at the Café Las Flores when the opinions of Feathers the parrot, who only repeats what he hears, get more and more embellished as more people spread them.
- Weigelt, Udo. *Alex Did It!* North South Books, 2002. To keep themselves out of trouble, three boisterous little hares think nothing of blaming all the mischief they cause on an imaginary hare named Alex, until the day that a new hare named Alex really does show up.
- Weigelt, Udo. *The Wild Wombat*. North South Books, 2002. A story spread by a parrot about the new addition to the zoo gets so embellished as it is passed along that the zoo animals fear they are getting a monster.

## **Related Materials from Sunburst Visual Media**

“‘How Would You Feel?’ Learning About Empathy”

14-minute program for Grades K to 2

“Learning About Honesty”

18-minute program for Grades K to 2

“Doing the Right Thing: Building Character”

16-minute program for Grades K to 2

# Script

## **LISTEN TO WHAT I JUST HEARD! Rumors and Gossip**

### **HOST**

Did you ever play a game called "telephone"? Here's how it works. I whisper a message in someone's ear. "I like chocolate cake and ice cream." And then they whisper the same message to a third person. And that person whispers it to someone else person.

Remember what my message was? I said "I like chocolate cake and ice cream."  
Now let's listen to what the last person heard.

### **LAST KID**

I like ice skates and chocolate sauce.

### **HOST**

I like chocolate cake and ice cream. I like ice skates and chocolate sauce.  
They're not the same! They're different.

And sometimes that's what happens to things we say. A story starts out one way and it changes a bit every time someone repeats it. And that can cause a problem. It can really cause a problem if the story that's being spread is a rumor. A rumor is a story that people tell without knowing whether or not it's true. And very often a rumor ends up hurting someone's feelings. That's what happened to Jeff.

## **RUMORS HURT**

### **HOST**

One day when Jeff was walking into school, he saw that Mike had a new toy car with him.

The boys were having a great time. They got the car to walk around and do all kinds of things.

### **JEFF**

Hey, let's see if I can make it spin.

**MIKE**

Okay, let's try it.

You broke it!

**JEFF**

I'm sorry. It's my fault. I'll talk to my dad. I'll bet he can fix it. He can fix anything.

**GRACE**

Wow! I saw what happened.

**MIKE**

Yeah, Jeff broke my car.

**GRACE**

Too bad.

. . .

**STACEY**

Look, Mike's new car is broken.

**GRACE**

I know.

**STACEY**

I wonder how it happened?

**GRACE**

Jeff broke it.

**STACEY**

He did? How?

**GRACE**

Uhm.....the wheels fell off.

**HOST**

Grace knew that Jeff broke the car. That part of the story was true. But she wasn't sure how it happened. So she told Stacey what she *thought* sounded right.

**GRACE**

Uhm.....he bumped it into the wall.

**HOST**

What Grace just said was the beginning of a rumor—because she’s telling a story that she isn’t sure is true.

Then when Stacey told Danny what Grace told her, the rumor was on it’s way. Only like the telephone game we saw before, the story kept changing a little bit.

**STACEY**

Listen to what I heard....Jeff threw Mike’s car into the wall. It’s in a million pieces.

**HOST**

Then Danny told Jennifer. And the story changed some more.

**DANNY**

Listen to what I heard. Jeff smashed up Mike’s new car—on purpose!

**HOST**

In no time at all, the rumor was all around the classroom. Pretty soon, it made it’s way to Jeff.

**JEFF**

Hey Jennifer. Can I take a look?

**JENNIFER**

No way! Not after you broke Mike’s car on purpose.

**JEFF**

What?

**HOST**

Jeff was really hurt by the rumor. He didn’t like it that the other kids thought he had broken Mike’s car on purpose. But what could he do? Well, the best way to fight a rumor is to tell the truth. So that’s what he did.

**JEFF**

That’s not true. I didn’t do it on purpose. It was an accident.



**JENNIFER**

It was? That's not what I heard.

**JEFF**

Well it was. I'm even going to ask my dad to fix it.

**JENNIFER**

You are?

**JEFF**

Yeah, I am.

**HOST**

When Jeff told Mike about the rumor, Mike told other kids the truth, too.

**MIKE**

It wasn't on purpose. It was an accident. That's the truth.

**HOST**

Telling the truth. That's the best way to put an end to a rumor.

**SONG**

*You won't believe what I just heard...*

*Listen, did you get the word?*

*Rumors hurt, 'cause they're not true.*

*Rumors can hurt, both me and you.*

*Rumors can hurt, both me and you.*

**STOP THE GOSSIP**

**HOST**

Sometimes rumors can start when someone doesn't get the whole story. They only get part of it. And that's what happened one morning when Kaitlin was having breakfast.

Kaitlin's mom was talking to her friend on the phone. Her friend happened to be the mother of Lucy, a girl in Kaitlin's class.

**MOTHER**

You're going to England? How exciting! That sounds wonderful. You're going next week? So soon. What about Lucy?

**HOST**

When Kaitlin got on the bus, she couldn't wait to tell the other kids what she heard.

**KAITLIN**

Guess what I found out?

**DANNY**

What?

**KAITLIN**

Lucy's moving to England.

**MORGAN**

She is?

**JOEY**

When?

**KAITLIN**

Uh....soon. Her mom's going first. She's staying here with her dad. Then they're going too.

**DANNY**

How come she didn't tell anyone?

**KAITLIN**

I don't know.

**JOEY**

Where will they live?

**KAITLIN**

In an apartment.

**ALL**

Wow!

**HOST**

There's a word for the story Kaitlin is telling. It's called gossip. Gossip is when people talk about other people even though it's really none of their business. Rumors often start gossip.

**MORGAN**

Here are the invitations to my birthday party...it's in two weeks. I guess I won't give this one to Lucy.

**SUSAN**

Why not?

**MORGAN**

Cause she's moving to England.

**SUSAN**

Huh? Where'd you hear that?

**JENNIFER**

Kaitlin told us.

**SUSAN**

You know, just because Kaitlin said so, doesn't mean it's true. Hey, there's Lucy. Let's go ask her.

Are you moving?

**LUCY**

What?

**MORGAN**

We heard you were moving to England.

**LUCY**

No. We're going on vacation. My mom's going first for some business stuff, then me and Dad are going to meet her.

**SUSAN**

Why didn't you tell anyone?

**LUCY**

I just found out last night....how did you hear?

**MORGAN**

Kaitlin told us.

**LUCY**

Kaitlin! Who told her?

**SUSAN**

I don't know.

**MORGAN**

I know. She heard your mom and her mom talking on the phone.

**LUCY**

Well, she didn't hear right.

**MORGAN**

I'm glad I didn't throw this away. I hope you can come to my party.

**HOST**

If you hear a story about someone, you just can't be sure it's true. So before you tell anyone else, check to be sure you have all the facts. Because misunderstandings happen all the time. So do what Susan did. She found out the truth. That's a good way to stop gossip.

**SONG**

*You won't believe what I just heard...*

*Listen, did you get the word?*

*Gossip isn't always true.*

*Question stories, find the truth.*

*Question stories, find the truth.*

## **Starting Rumors Is Mean**

### **HOST**

Sometimes, as we saw, rumors start because of a misunderstanding. But other times, people start rumors on purpose. That's what happened at Lincoln Elementary School.

You see, there was someone at school who was locking all the stalls in the boys lavatory so other kids couldn't use the bathroom. But no one could figure out who it was. It became a serious problem.

But then one day, Gregory thought it would be funny to spread the story that Adam was the one who was locking the stall doors.

### **GREGORY**

Want to know who's locking the doors in the boys room?

### **JENNIFER**

You know?

### **GREGORY**

It's Adam.

### **TYLER**

Adam?

### **GREGORY**

Yes.

### **JENNIFER**

How do you know?

### **GREGORY**

I saw him.

### **JENNIFER**

Really?

**HOST**

Jennifer didn't check to be sure the story was true. She just repeated it and the rumor about Adam started to spread all over the school.

Well, a few days later, when Tyler went to the bathroom and the doors were locked again. He was really fed up. So he decided to tell his teacher that he knew who was doing it.

**TYLER**

Mrs. Chow, I know who's locking the doors in the boys bathroom.

**TEACHER**

You do?

**TYLER**

It's Adam.

**TEACHER**

Are you sure?

**TYLER**

That's what Gregory said.

**TEACHER**

How does Gregory know?

**TYLER**

He saw him.

**TEACHER**

Well, thank you for telling me.

. . .

**HOST**

So the next day, Mrs. Chow spoke to Adam. And Adam told her that it wasn't him. Then she decided to talk to Gregory.

**TEACHER**

Now Gregory, I understand that you saw Adam lock the doors in the lavatory. Is that true?

**GREGORY**

Ummmm. Well.....

**TEACHER**

Is that true, Gregory?

**GREGORY**

No.

**TEACHER**

Then why did you say that?

**GREGORY**

I thought it would be funny.

**TEACHER**

Well, it's not funny to lie and spread rumors about people—and try to get them in trouble.

**HOST**

Mrs. Chow is right. It's wrong to lie and it's not funny to spread rumors. It's mean. People can get into trouble and their feelings can get hurt. And when the truth comes out...the person who started the rumor can get in trouble, too.

**SONG**

*You won't believe what I just heard...*

*Listen, did you get the word?*

*Starting rumors is not nice.*

*It causes trouble all the time*

*It causes trouble all the time.*

**HOST**

Did you hear? Rumors and gossip aren't nice. But you can stop rumors by telling the truth. You can stop gossip by asking questions. And you should never start a rumor, because starting rumors can cause trouble for everyone.

## **SONG**

*You won't believe what I just heard...*

*Listen, did you get the word?*

*Rumors hurt 'cause they're not true.*

*Rumors hurt both me and you.*

*Rumors hurt both me and you.*

## **THE END**