

## The Paper Tale

An Audience-Participation/Anti-Bully Script by Lois Walker

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### **SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY**

#### **EMAIL MESSAGE:**

"A teacher in New York was teaching her class about bullying and gave them the following exercise to perform. She had the children take a piece of paper and told them to crumple it up, stamp on it and really mess it up but do not rip it. Then she had them unfold the paper, smooth it out and look at how scarred and dirty it was. She then told them to tell it they're sorry. Now, even though the students said they were sorry and tried to fix the paper, she pointed out all the scars they left behind and that those scars will never go away no matter how hard they tried to fix them. That is what happens when a child bullies another child, they may say they're sorry, but the scars are there forever. The looks on the faces of the children in the classroom told her the message hit home. Copy and paste this if you are against bullying."

**STORY BACKGROUND:** The above story came to me as an email message and was only a paragraph long. No name was given for the teacher who actually used this Anti-Bullying lesson in her classroom, nor was credit given to the person who wrote the descriptive paragraph about it. When I read the message, I was struck by the inventive method used to illustrate how harmful bullying behavior can be and how impossible it is to "fix" the injured person after bullying happens. It occurred to me that "performing" this story might be an even better way to spread the word about the consequences of bullying behavior in our schools and in our communities.

The following short script can stand alone, but might also be useful when performed in concert with other Anti-Bully scripts that actually identify and describe bullying behavior and suggest ways to deal with a bully. You can find a number of these scripts on the Scripts for Schools web site: [www.scriptsforschools.com](http://www.scriptsforschools.com)

**FORMATTING:** This script was written as a choral reading/speaking piece and is formatted for ALL, ALL GIRLS, ALL BOYS, an ALL CHORUS and lines for 7 SOLO READERS and a Paper Leader (as described below).

**BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE:** All audience members will be given a sheet of paper. This can be scrap paper of any kind, but should be smooth and not

wrinkled. You might want to hand out the sheets as the audience enters the room, or have the papers already placed on audience desks or chairs.

**PAPER LEADER:** Director will appoint a "Paper Leader" to stand on stage as the reading is being performed and demonstrate the actions being read by the readers. The audience members are asked to take their sheets of paper and follow the Paper Leader's cue. You may want the Paper Leader to announce this before the performance begins.

**ESTABLISHING THE RHYTHM:** To find the proper rhythm, first read-aloud and clap through the piece as you go. Each underlined word or word part falls directly on a beat. As you read, clap on each underlined word, keeping the rhythm steady. Be careful not to read too fast! This is a rehearsal technique and readers will not clap throughout the entire piece during performance.

(Sample script text can be found below):

**SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY**

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**ALL CHORUS:** Oh, listen to our Paper Tale  
And move on down the story trail.  
On that trail there just might be  
A lesson meant for you and me!

SOLO 1: Let's tell a paper story,  
A paper tale to tell.

SOLO 2: A detailed inventory  
Of something we know well.

ALL GIRLS: And since you all have paper,  
Seamless, slick, and thin,

ALL BOYS: We'll pull a paper caper -  
And here's how to begin:

SOLO 3: Hold up your sheet of paper,  
All flat and smooth, and straight.

*(Reader pauses as "Paper Leader" holds up paper as a demonstration for the audience. Audience will follow this lead and also hold up their sheets of*



ALL GIRLS: Next comes the most important part,  
So follow these directions:

ALL BOYS: Unfold that crumpled work of art  
And try to make corrections.

*(As readers read the lines below, Paper Leader demonstrates the procedure).*

ALL GIRLS: Press, pound, and flatten  
This scared and dirty mess.

ALL BOYS: Try to make it smooth as satin  
Punch, pound, and press.

*(Readers pause for a short moment as audience members try to smooth out their papers and realize it can't be done. Paper Leader cues reader to continue).*

SOLO 5: "I'm sorry!"

**CONTINUED...**

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