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## TWO APPLES

**Grades:** All ages

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Materials:** Two apples and a knife

**Relevant Subjects:** Social Studies and Language Arts

This activity can serve as an icebreaker for many topics. You could segue into what happens to people who've been abused and mistreated and how to reverse cycles of violence, bigotry, bullying, etc. It could also serve as an opening activity when discussing what happens to other animals who are abused or treated cruelly (such as dogs, bulls, farmed animals, circus animals, etc.).

**Preparation:** "Prepare" one apple ahead of time by cutting it in half longitudinally and then wrapping a rubber band firmly around it to keep it together.

1. Have the group stand in a circle. Explain that you will pass around two apples, one clockwise and one counterclockwise. When each person gets the apple with the rubber band around it, they should say something mean to the apple and drop it on the floor before passing it to the next person (e.g., "I hate you." "I don't want to be around you." "You're a bad apple." etc.). When they get the other, rubber band-less apple, they should say something nice to it and carefully hand it to the next person, rather than drop it (e.g., "You're a beautiful apple." "I like you." etc.).

Pass around the apples and wait until they come back to you.

2. After both apples have circled the group, take the rubber band off of the "bad" apple to show what has happened to it (it's discolored, bruised, etc.). Ask the group, "If this apple could feel, what might it feel? If it could speak, what might it say? If it could act out in the world, what might it do?"

Take the other apple and cut it in half horizontally (which reveals a star in the center where the seeds are). Show this unbruised apple with a star in its center to the group.

3. Discuss what happens when we treat others the way we treated the “bad” apple. What happens to them, to their sense of themselves, to the way they treat others? What would need to change for people treated in such a way to reveal the star inside themselves in their relationships and behaviors?

**Activity adapted from an Operation Respect activity by Christian Stevenson (M.Ed. Student)**