

Random Acts of Kindness has brought more meaning into my life, and I am committed to help spread the word.

— Carol, State Parent Facilitator, HI

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These Lesson Plans are a culmination of school-wide activities and classroom activities, ranging from grades K-12.

Lesson Plan

Kindness Feels Good/Reading Kindness Books

Submitted by Pat, Harrisburg, PA

Purpose:

Children will experience the pleasure of doing acts of kindness and will therefore increase the frequency of kind actions.

Age Range: Kindergarten through grade 5

Subject: Reading and Art

Materials:

- Various seasonally shaped hole punches
- Construction paper
- Small bulletin board space low enough for children to reach
- Glue stick
- Small deli container with a lid
- Books - see suggested list at the end.

Procedure:

During the first days of school read several of the books listed above or read your personal favorites that feature acts of kindness. Discuss with students how it feels when one has acted kindly, "Even if no one else sees what you do, you have that good feeling inside of you." Invite students to share orally about a time when they felt good about a good deed. Older students could write about a time when they were proud to have been kind. Younger children could draw a picture of the incident and dictate a sentence about it. (You may wish to sum up each day by savoring moments of kindness or even have students periodically make entries in a kindness journal.)

Then introduce the "I Feel Good" board. For **September**, make a simple green tree with a brown trunk out of construction paper. Punch out lots of apples from yellow, red and green paper. Place them in a deli container along with a small glue stick. Tell students that whenever they are caught doing something kind, they can be recommended for posting an apple on the tree. They simply walk to the board and glue an apple on the tree. It is an efficient way to recognize small acts of kindness,

noting the good feeling and encouraging further kindness. Any adult may recommend them to post the apple. Other students may also recommend them to post an apple. However the child may not recommend himself or herself. Address the situation by saying "Yes, some good deeds will go unnoticed, but you still have the good feeling inside."

I send children to post apples when they help a classmate, when they spontaneously share, when they encourage someone who is discouraged, when they show concern, when they are honest about needing to fix a problem, when they resist a situation in which they might have responded angrily but chose to work out a problem... Soon they know when to recommend each other. It is such a simple process -you can never post too many apples. Students beam and others admire and emulate. It only takes a moment to celebrate something of great and lifelong importance. Kindness is a skill that is as crucial to living as reading, writing and math.

I do not have children put names on the apples they post, as it should not become competitive. "I posted more than you did." While each class in this school could do the activity, there again, it should not become competitive from one class to another.

In **October**, paint bare tree branches and cut out leaf shapes with a hole punch. Now students post fallen leaves. Read a few more stories to keep the discussion alive.

In **November**, we talk about a Native American legend that said that the stars are holes poked in the night sky by the good deeds of the ancestors, letting rays of daylight shine through. Simply post a sheet of black paper. Allow students to poke a hole with a push pin for each good deed. Then hang the paper in the window at the end of the month and let students see the light shine through.

In **December**, it can be multicolored circular hole punches on a green pine shaped tree, representing a Christmas tree with lights. It could be yellow dots on dozens of vertical lines to be candles of Hanukah or Kwanzaa ...

January can be snowflake hole punches on a blue background.

Heart hole punches can be used in **February**. During this month, we study Black History and realize how much courage it took for people to risk their lives and well being to participate in the Underground Railroad. We talk about Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman and Jackie Robinson being "strong on the inside" to face injustice and respond with integrity. All year long, we are on the lookout for heroes who did what was right and kind.

The more conscientious the teacher is in recognizing acts of kindness, the better the system works. The more you recognize students for kindness, the more often they will repeat it. Soon they encourage each other by recognizing each other's good deeds. The more literature you explore featuring kindness and caring extending to many kinds of people in many kinds of situations, the broader the definition of kindness becomes. You will find students pointing out moments of kindness in books they read and in people they study. The more often you tie in kindness to other lessons like Black History the more students think about its many forms. Students can see kindness as a priority and cultivate it as a lifestyle.

March can be bird hole punches on a blue sky, birds flying back north.

May can be flowers on green grass.

June can be bare footprints on grass.

Create details based on what hole punches you find, but keep the process simple so that you are sure to follow through all year long. Continue to read books of kindness and reinforce the process frequently. At the end of each month, you may wish to tally the score and see whether the numbers show an increase. Scores can be recorded on graphs for monthly comparisons.

Note: When I first began this technique, I did not have holiday hole punches. We just plunked a marble in a jar for each kind deed. It was a beautiful sound. It is still an economic way to do the same job. When the class reached 25 marbles we celebrated momentarily with a song, cheer, game or extra recess.

Tape: Teaching Peace by Red Grammer

Recommended Books:

Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister.

- Best for grades K-2. A fancy fish is reluctant to share his shiny scales, but finally finds friendship by doing so.

It Takes a Village by Jane Cowen Fletcher. New York; Scholastic, 1994.

- Grades K-5. In an African village, many in the market place care for a lost child.

Louie by Ezra Jack Keats. New York: Macmillan.

- Grades K-3. Louie is different from other children, but reaching out in kindness touches his lowliness.

The Quarreling Book by Charlotte Zolotow.

- Grades K-5. Anger gets passed from one person to another until the dog reverses the trend and sets a chain of good will in motion.

David and Dog by Shirley Hughes. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1978.

- Grades K-3. A young boy loses his favorite stuffed toy and his sister gives up a prize to regain it.

Apartment 3 by Ezra Jack Keats. New York: Macmillan. 1971.

- Grades K-5. Suspicions overcome by getting to know a neighbor who is blind.

Now One Foot, Now the Other by Tomi dePaolo. New York: Trumpet, 1981.

- Grades K-5. When Bobby's grandfather has a stroke, Bobby is able to reach him through common bonds of kindnesses returned.

The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes: New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1944.

- Grades 3-5. A poorly dressed girl is the object of ridicule until understanding is achieved, but it is too late to make amends.

Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney. New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1986 .

- Grades K-5. As a child, Alice promises her grandfather that she will make the world more beautiful, but it takes a lifetime to figure out just how she will do it.

Mirette On the High Wire by Emily Arnold McCully. New York: Putnam and Grosser, 1992.

- Grades K-5. Mirette learns to walk to the tightrope and reaches out to restore her teacher's courage.

The Rag Coat by Lauren Mills. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991.

- Grades K-5. A miner's orphan wears a patchwork coat to school and is teased until she touches hearts by sharing the stories behind each patch.

The Balancing Girl by Berniece Rabe. New York: Trumpet, 1981.

- Grades K-3. Tommy and Margaret, a child in a wheel chair, resolve their differences with mutual admiration.

The Drinking Gourd by F.N. Monjo. New York; Harper and Row, 1970.

- Grades K-5. Tommy helps his father as a conductor on the Underground Railroad and learns about courage and compassion and what is right.

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

- Grades K-5. This African version of Cinderella shows the difference between beauty inside and out.

Rough Face Girl

- Grades K-5. This Native American Cinderella also contrasts inner beauty with superficial beauty.

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox. New York: Kane/Miller Book Publishing, 1985.

- Grades K-5. A little boy befriends an elderly woman and helps her find her memory.

Thy Friend Obadiah by Brinton Turkle. New York; Viking Penguin, 1969.

- Grades K-5. Obadiah does not appreciate a bird that follows him until he responds to what it needs.

Angel Child, Dragon Child by Michele Maria Surat.

- Grades K-5. A Vietnamese girl and an American boy dislike each other until they learn each other's story and work together to overcome a problem.

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry. New York: Dell Publishing, 1989.

- Grades 4-8. IN a gripping historical fiction, a Danish family smuggles a Jewish family to safety in Sweden, Underground Railroad style.

Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco. New York: Scholastic, 1992.

- Grades K-5. Three children try to surprise Aunt Eula with a gift, but must befriend a hurting Jewish survivor to do it.

Mrs. Katz and Tush by Patricia Polacco. New York: Scholastic.

- Grades K-5. A kitten helps bridge gaps of age and religion.

Thank You Mr. Faulker by Patricia Polacco. New York: Scholastic.

- Grades 1-5. Patricia feels so worthless as her friends learn to read. She struggles with words and with cruel taunts, until Mr. Faulker understands and helps.