ACTS OF KINDNESS

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”
—Mother Teresa

OVERVIEW
Students think of ways they have acted with kindness towards others and then draw and write about it.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE
- Anytime during the year

TIME REQUIRED
- 15-20 minutes

LEVEL
- Pre-K & Lower Elementary

MATERIALS
- Drawing/writing materials

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Students will:
- Identify ways that they have acted with kindness and caring toward others

SEL COMPETENCIES
- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Consider that when we choose to do something that benefits others, we often benefit ourselves emotionally.
- Think of a kind act you did recently for someone. What did you do and why did you do it? How did performing the act make you feel? Did the person express gratitude to you? If so, how did that make you feel?

INSTRUCTIONS

REMEMBERING ACTS OF KINDNESS

- Explain to students that we often feel grateful when others do things for us that show kindness, caring, and helpfulness.
- But there are also times when the students themselves have done things that are kind, caring, and helpful to someone.
- Ask students to close their eyes, and take a few deep breaths. Then, ask them to visualize a time they showed kindness to someone else, using these prompts:
  - Think of someone that you have been kind to...or someone you helped...Maybe it is someone who said “Thank you” to you recently...Try to see a picture of that person in your mind...Silently raise your hand when you have thought of someone...(Be sure each student has raised their hand before continuing).
  - Now remember what you did for that person that was kind or caring or helpful...See yourself doing it...How do you feel inside?...What is the other person saying or doing when you are kind to them?...How does that feel to you?

SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES

- Invite the class to open their eyes. Ask for a few volunteers to share:
  - Who did you show kindness to?
  - What did you do?
  - Why did you want to do this?
  - Did the other person show gratitude in some way? How?
  - If that person showed gratitude, how did it make you feel?
- Ask students to draw a picture of what they visualized, and write a caption or a short paragraph for it.

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on what it felt like to visualize and write or draw about a kind act they have done for someone else. How might they remember to be kind to others, and how might they encourage others to be kind?
EXTENSIONS

- Encourage older students to keep a journal about times when they show kindness to others, the reasons they do this, and their feelings about it.
- Discuss with the class an act of kindness that they could do for someone in the school. Help them carry it out. Afterwards, have students describe how that person reacted, and how the students felt when they did the act of kindness.

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

- Do you notice if students are being kinder to each other after this practice?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Nascent research has discovered that K-2 students see kindness as helping others both physically and emotionally, including others, and sharing. For instance, helping a student who has fallen or comforting a lonely student or inviting a student to join in a game.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Kindness has been found to benefit students by increasing their well-being and peer acceptance, both of which lead to greater academic achievement, a stronger sense of belonging, and better relationships with peers and teachers.

In addition, encouraging students to be kind to each other has a ripple effect that can spread throughout the school, improving school relationships among all stakeholders, leading to a more positive school climate.

SOURCE

“Nurturing Gratitude From the Inside Out: 30 Activities for Grades K–8” was originally developed by The Inner Resilience Program, in partnership with the Greater Good Science Center and the John Templeton Foundation.

For the entire curriculum, click here.