



## WHAT FRIENDS DO

*"Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love."*

—Lao Tzu

### OVERVIEW

Students read *Splat Says Thank You!* and explore how kindness and gratitude strengthen friendship.

### PLANNING FOR IT

#### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Anytime during the year, but especially at the beginning of the year to help build a safe caring classroom climate

#### TIME REQUIRED

- 20-30 minutes

#### LEVEL

- Pre-K & Lower Elementary

#### MATERIALS

- [Splat Says Thank You!](#) by Rob Scotton
- Drawing/writing materials

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Understand that showing kindness to others often leads to others showing kindness to them.

- Realize the importance of expressing both kindness and gratitude in a variety of ways, including words and actions

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Reflect on a recent act of kindness that a friend did for you. How did this make you feel? Was your friendship strengthened as a result?

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### GETTING STARTED

- About the book: Splat the Cat and Seymour the Mouse are friends. When Seymour is sick in bed and covered in spots, Splat wonders how he can make Seymour smile. Splat pulls out a book he made for Seymour, which he calls the "Friendship Book." In it, Splat has written about the many caring and helpful things that Seymour has done for him. By the time he finished the book, Seymour has lost his spots and is no longer sick.
- Ask the class:
  - *What is a friend?*
  - *How do you know when someone is your friend?*
  - *How do you show someone that you are their friend?*

#### READING THE BOOK

- Tell the class that you are going to read them a book about a cat named Splat and a mouse named Seymour. Splat and Seymour are good friends; as you read, ask the class to watch for ways they show their friendship.
- Pause after the first page, which shows that Seymour is sick. After Splat wonders, "How can I make Seymour smile?" ask:
  - *If you had a sick friend, what would you do to make your friend smile?*
- Continue reading, noting the many ways that Seymour has shown caring and friendship to Splat. As each act of kindness is described, point to the words "Thank you" on each page, and encourage students to say them along with you and Splat.
- At the end of the story, point at the picture of Seymour. Ask:

- *What is different about Seymour now?*
  - *How do you think Seymour is feeling?*
- Students may notice that he is no longer covered in spots; he looks happy and is not sick any more. Ask:
  - *What do you think helped Seymour get better?*

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## DISCUSSING THE BOOK

- Have the class recall some of the ways that Seymour showed friendship to Splat. Write these ideas on the board. For example, students might mention:
  - Gave a flashlight so Splat could read in bed
  - Brought cupcakes
  - Woke Splat up when he overslept
  - Didn't tell Splat's secret
- With older students, point out that some of these ways of showing friendship involve giving things that Splat could touch; others involve actions that show caring and kindness, without material things. Have students identify these differences in the list.
- Finally, ask:
  - *Why did Splat read the "Friendship Book" to Seymour?*
  - *Why do you think Seymour did all the kind things for Splat?*
  - *If there was one more page in the book, where Seymour could say or do something that would show Splat how he feels after hearing the "Friendship Book," what would that be?*
- Have the class draw their ideas for a new last page of the book, showing how Seymour might respond to Splat. They can make a caption for their pictures, and/or include words that Seymour might say.
- Allow students to share their work. Point out how Seymour's kindness led Splat to show that he cared with Seymour was sick; and Seymour to respond with gratitude in return.

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## CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on what it feels like when someone is kind to you and when you are kind to someone else. What does it feel like when everyone in class is kind to each other? What can everyone do to encourage kindness in the classroom and in the whole school?

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## EXTENSIONS

- Have students draw a picture of a time someone in the class showed friendship or caring to them. Encourage them to write a sentence about their picture, in the style of Splat's "Friendship Book," ending with an expression of thanks.

## REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice if students are kinder to each other or talking about kindness more often after doing this practice?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

A study of nine to 11-year-olds found that those who performed [three acts of kindness](#), in comparison to those who created maps of places they had visited, increased their well-being and their popularity among peers.

### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Peer acceptance and a [sense of belonging](#) matter greatly to student success in school, both academically and socially. In comparison, students who are [rejected by their peers](#) often display more aggressive and less cooperative behavior, which can lead to greater failure in school.

Hence, intentionally teaching students what kindness is and how to offer it to others can help build classroom and school climates where all students succeed.

## 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](#).