



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

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making a Practice Trauma-Informed](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Think of a kind act you did recently for someone. What did you do and why did you do it? How did it make you feel? Did the person express gratitude to you? If so or if not, how did that make you feel?
- How do you think [kindness](#) is relevant to your students' lives, both in and out of school? Would they agree?
- Does this practice privilege your values over theirs in any way? For example, do you [express kindness differently](#) than your students or their families?
- If your beliefs differ, is it possible to honor these differences in a way where none are viewed from a deficit lens?

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.
- Invite students to close or open their eyes—whichever is more comfortable—while they begin by taking 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 students to open their eyes (if closed) and then to draw attention to the front of the classroom. 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

- What worked or didn't work for you in leading this practice? How did the students respond to the practice? Would you change anything for next time?
- Do you notice if you are more aware of both receiving and offering kindness in your own life and at school as a result of this practice? Are students expressing more kindness and gratitude to each other after engaging in this practice?
- What adjustments were made to the practice based on student and family input? How did it go? (We encourage you to share your experience with other users in the comments section.)
- Did students discuss how this practice might relate to or be helpful or unhelpful in their lives?

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](#).