



NOTICING KINDNESS

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

— Aesop

OVERVIEW

Students reflect and write about ways they have been kind to other people.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Anytime throughout the school year; however, using it at the beginning of the year can help build a safe and caring classroom in which kindness and gratitude are social norms.

TIME REQUIRED

- 20 minutes

LEVEL

- 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 Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a moment to reflect on an act of kindness that you have done for another person. To whom did you show kindness and what did you do? How did you feel afterwards? If the person expressed gratitude, how did that make you feel?

INSTRUCTIONS

SUBHEADING 1

- 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 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?*
- 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 for it. Or write a short paragraph about it, using the following format:
 - I showed kindness to _____
 - This is what I did: _____

- I did this because_____
- This is how_____ showed gratitude to me:_____
- I felt_____

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 whether students are acting more kindly towards each other? Are they noticing acts of kindness more often?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

A study in which 9- to 11-year-olds performed [three kind acts](#) each week for four weeks found that both students' well-being and their acceptance by peers increased when compared to a control group.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Students who have good relationships with their peers tend to be [more helpful and cooperative](#), and show greater emotional stability. They also do better [academically](#) and are less likely to be bullied.

Hence, encouraging students to perform kind acts for other students can help cultivate more positive classroom and school climates. And when students are asked to reflect upon how a kind act made them feel, they are more likely to internalize the benefits of kindness--both giving and receiving--prompting them to continue acting kindly towards others.