



WISHES FOR THE WORLD: A LOVING-KINDNESS ACTIVITY

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

-Aesop

OVERVIEW

Students "fill" an imaginary ball with friendly wishes and "send it off" to the world.

LEVELS

- PreK/Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Daily or weekly
- At the start of a school day, to close a class, during a classroom meeting, or as part of a mentoring-buddy program
- When you or your students are experiencing tension, anger, or anxiety
- To help students get along better with others
- To cultivate a positive classroom and school climate

TIME REQUIRED

- 10-15 minutes

MATERIALS

- None

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- Students will practice extending positive wishes and kindness to 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

- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a few deep breaths and consider colleagues, friends, students, and strangers you might send good wishes to before you begin. If you like, you may try this [Loving-Kindness Meditation](#) that includes a script and audio recording.

INSTRUCTIONS

This practice, from Susan Kaiser Greenland's [Mindful Games](#), is a wonderful adaptation of [Loving-kindness meditation](#) for older children and adults.

- Ask students:
 - *What does it mean to visualize or imagine something? What are friendly wishes?*
 - *We're going to imagine that we're sending our friendly wishes to the world in a big, floating ball.*
 - *Let's start by pretending to hold the ball together. Put your hands out and help me hold the ball, like this.*
 - *What does the ball look like? What color is it? Is it sparkly? Does it have polka dots or stripes? Close your eyes and see if you can picture it.*
 - *Now we'll take turns putting our friendly wishes in the ball. Who has a friendly wish for the world? (Help children name their wishes and mime putting them in the ball. Explain that with each wish, the ball gets bigger and heavier.)*
 - *Let's count to three and then throw the ball up into the sky together: one, two, three. Wave good-bye and imagine that the ball is bringing our wishes to everyone, everywhere.*

CLOSURE

- Invite students to describe their experience with this activity. Ask them what they noticed when they imagined sending good wishes to others. Ask students to discuss the reasons why this activity might be worth doing again in the future.

EXTENSION

- Consider using this practice in conjunction with mindfulness activities, including a [body scan practice](#) and [mindful breathing](#).

FURTHER READING

- For more information on how to adapt loving-kindness meditation for younger children, see the following [article](#) by Christine Carter, Ph.D.

SOURCE

Excerpted from Mindful Games by Susan Kaiser Greenland © 2016 by Susan Kaiser Greenland. Illustrations © 2016 by Lindsay DuPont. Reprinted in arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc. Boulder, CO. Shambhala.com

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

How did students respond to this practice? Do you notice if they are expressing more positive emotions or are more optimistic as a result?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND IT

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Researchers have discovered that toddlers as young as 14-months demonstrate a [natural capacity for kindness](#), but this capacity must be nurtured through healthy relationships with adults and peers—the foundation of a positive school climate.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Studies have found that kind students who are [well-liked by their peers](#) are helpful, cooperative, and emotionally well-adjusted. In addition, students who show kindness at a young age achieve [greater academic and social success](#) in the long-run.

This practice, inspired by loving-kindness meditation (which has been found to have a [positive impact](#) on adults' empathy, compassion, and social connection), cultivates young students' innate kindness by asking them to send friendly wishes to the world.

TERMS OF USE

Thank you for downloading this resource! Please feel free to share it with friends, teachers, colleagues, and anyone else who might benefit from it.

Greater Good in Education is a free online resource produced by UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. Visit our website at ggie.berkeley.edu to choose from more than 300 practices that can be incorporated into all aspects of a school community, from academic instruction to staff meetings to engagement with parents.

Please email us at ggsceducation@berkeley.edu with any questions about our programs and resources for educators.

With gratitude,
Greater Good in Education