

Got Kindness?

By: Heather Stofer, Lindsay Ray and Erin Philps

The Project:

We wanted to create a program in which students learn how to be kind to others. The program is intended to help students turn their focus from themselves on to doing kind acts for others. This program can be adapted to any age or time span. For the purposes of this project we had one week in a grade 2/3 class.

Materials:

- Got Kindness Poster
- Letter to parents (see sample attachment)
- Strips of paper for the kindness chain
- Got Kindness? Circles
- Got Kindness? Pins
- Certificate of recognition (see attachment)
- Song worksheet (see attachment)
- Response worksheet (see attachment)

Lesson One: see attachment

Reflection after lesson one:

The students were very excited about the project and offered many ideas about how to show kindness to others. Even the most behaviourally challenged students actively participated in the thought process and were enthusiastic about doing kind acts.

At the end of the lesson we left Mrs. Erdem, the sponsoring teacher, with instructions for completing the kindness chain. We felt it was important for the students to have tangible evidence of their progress, so we created a kindness chain. Every time a student did a kind act they wrote it down on a strip of paper and added it to the kindness chain. Over the course of the week this chain grew and grew and reached down the hall to the principal's office. Mrs. Erdem commented on the progress of this chain saying "I am thinking it would be fun to challenge the other classes to join in and we could get the chains going around the school."

Mid-week we received an email from Mrs. Erdem to let us know how the project was proceeding. She was very excited to inform us of the following:

"[The kindness notes/sparkle grams went over really well...everyone received a sparkle gram. [They] had to write a compliment or two on it. I put the sparkle grams in the Easter Baskets...the kids were thrilled, there was hugging. I will try to do that once a month now."

More about the Kindness Chain:

Our intention with the chain was to create a healthy competition among seating groups using different colours for each group. Mrs. Erdem had each group hang their chain above their desks visibly showing each group's individual progress. She quickly discovered that this approach created some feelings of discouragement among groups as some chains were much longer than others. "I took them off the ceiling and joined the

chains together; they are now heading down the hall to [the principal's] office." In this setting it was important to integrate each colour into a multi-coloured chain so that students were not so fixed on their team colour but the project as a whole.

Lesson Two: see attachment

Reflection on lesson two:

It was clear upon entering the school that the students had really gotten on board with the project and had been working on extending the chain throughout the week. Clearly, Mrs. Erdem had been supporting their efforts and ideas by providing opportunities and time to complete more strips for the chain.

The students themselves were excited to share their favourite acts of kindness and showed that they were inspired to continue performing random acts of kindness. Our goal of turning their focus from themselves was clearly being achieved through the students' participation in the project. The principal even visited the room during our second lesson to thank and congratulate the class on their acts of kindness. He was impressed by their spirit and the length of the chain they had made in one short week.

We realized that we had to adjust our expectations for what kind of acts the students would end up completing. Many students reported completing an act that an adult would consider to be common courtesy, however at their developmental level they were clearly still learning basic manners and social etiquette and not ready to move on to higher order thinking and behaviour.

The song, certificate and pins were a great booster for the project and will hopefully aid in the continuation of the Got Kindness? project.

Extensions can be found at: www.actsofkindness.org/classroom

Video ideas can be found on Youtube.com

Lesson One:

Tell kids about our class and the project – “We need your help...”

- Hook activity: read a story, watch a video clip, tell a personal experience etc.

What is a random act of kindness? What does it *look like? Feel like? Sound like*

- Nothing in return, it was secret, it took effort, planning and thought, it made someone happy, it wasn't for our best friend
- “Let's come up with some of our own ideas”

YOUR STREET

- Bake cookies for neighbour
- Walk a dog
- Make a card
- Yard work for neighbour
- Spend time with a who is lonely

SCHOOL

- Person on the playground – invite to play

EXTRA-CIRRICULAR

- Sports team
- Girl guides
- Piano teacher
- Out of school care

Think Pair Share: What will your random acts of kindness be?

Now you've decided...write down on the kindness circle what act you have chosen.....you will take it home and show your Mum and Dad.

*Note: The kindness circle is a coloured paper circle with the words got kindness printed on the front and on the back the students write “I have chosen to _____.”

*Attach kindness circle to parent letter.

Take kindness pledge – teach song and hand out song worksheet.

Lesson Two:

Greeting and separate into groups

Share favourite act of kindness in small groups

Complete worksheet – What was the act? How did the person respond? How did you feel?

Bring back to whole class and teach/sing song

- Read through rhythmically
- Sing through

Extend

- create actions
- sing at different volumes, speed

Hand-out buttons and certificate one seating group at a time

Name: _____

The Kindness Song

(To the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

I pledge to myself on this day,
To try to be kind in every way.

To every person, big and small,
I will help them if they fall.

When I love myself and others too,
That is the best that I can do.

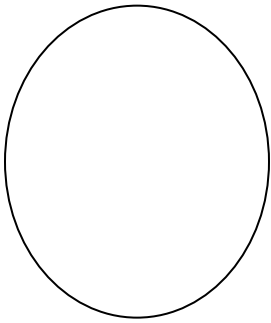


Draw a picture of what kindness looks like to you and write one sentence to explain your picture.

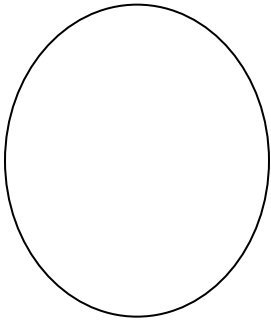
My kindness picture shows _____

My random act of kindness:

My favourite random act of kindness was when I _____



How did the person respond?



How did you feel?

Draw your act of kindness below

A large empty rectangular box, intended for drawing the act of kindness.

Dear Parents and Guardians of Div. 11 students,

Although I am finished my practicum, I am very excited to have the opportunity to come back to Mrs. Erdem's class and once again work with your children. As you know, I have returned to the University of Victoria to complete my final coursework. The requirement of this course is to create a project that focuses on social responsibility. Together with two other classmates we will be visiting the class this week to generate some service ideas and challenge the students to complete at least one act of kindness over the course of the week. We will be returning to the class on Friday to give students an opportunity to share their experiences and what they have learned.

We ask that students participate in the project to the best of their personal ability. For some, this might look like making a card or baking cookies for an elderly neighbour. For others, they might create encouragement cards for their sports team or coach. Please discuss this project with your child and help them carry out their plan.

If possible, we would greatly appreciate a photo or 30 second digital video of your child completing an act of kindness. These digital files can be emailed to the address below or brought to school with your child no later than Friday, March 14th. When emailing the photos please send them in the highest resolution possible. The photos and video will be used to create a video presentation. If you would prefer that images of your child do not appear in our presentation please fill out the box below to indicate this and send it with your child to school no later than Friday, March 14th.

Thank you for your participation in this project. We look forward to hearing from your child on Friday.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Ray
Heather Stofer &
Erin Philips
Pre-Service Teachers – University of Victoria

*email digital files to: mstofer@*****

Please **do not** use any images of my child _____ in your presentation.
(Name of child)