

Lesson Eleven – Acts of Kindness and Generosity

“

Don't you know yet? It is your light that lights the world.

– Rumi

”

CREATIVE ACTIVITY – Act of Kindness

Lesson Intention:

In previous lessons we explored how easy it is to jump to conclusions about people and rush to judgments that are possibly not true. If we knew other people's stories, or at least became more skilled at putting ourselves in other people's shoes, then it would be easier for us to come from a place of compassion. **Today's lesson is an extension of this idea and is about putting this newfound compassion into action.** As students practice a random act of kindness, they discover that kindness actually has a dual purpose: extensive research has illustrated that when we are giving and generous with our time and resources, we feel an increased sense of well-being in ourselves. In this way, kindness doesn't just benefit others, but also improves our own levels of happiness and satisfaction.

Social Emotional Learning Goals:

- Distinguish between kind, loving thoughts and critical, negative thoughts.
- Develop self-compassion by cultivating a more loving, wise “inner voice.”

Materials for Lesson:

- [Featured Videos \(3\) - Kevin Love, Chris Paul](#)
- Lesson Plan (this document)
- [Lesson PowerPoint](#)

In Preparation for Lesson:

Prior to teaching the lesson, watch the guest artist videos and perform your own random act of kindness to share with your students.

Featured Videos:

1. Kevin Love explains that helping others can be beneficial to the recipient and also to the person who is offering help. He shares that he felt inspired to give a donation to the people who work at the Cleveland Cavaliers stadium after games were canceled at the start of the pandemic.
2. Chris Paul shares the story of his late grandfather who modeled kindness and generosity in the way he treated the people who came to his store, often allowing them a reduced price for fuel or the ability to delay their payment.
3. Shreya and Saffron Patel describe the inspiration behind the organization they created called Letters Against Isolation, which uses letter writing to help ease loneliness in senior citizens.

Lesson Plan:

Display the 'welcome slide' from the Lesson 11 PowerPoint as you begin.

**Slide 1*

As discussed in the teacher training, remember to make the suggested language below authentic to yourself and meaningful for your students.

Launching the Lesson:

** Slide 2*

Explain that previous lessons emphasized feeling more compassion for ourselves as well as empathy for others, and today's lesson is focused on channeling those caring thoughts into action. Introduce the video clips of Kevin Love and Chris Paul.

Example of What You Could Say:

"In the previous lessons, we practiced feeling greater compassion for ourselves and others. Today's lesson is an extension of this idea. In addition to being more compassionate in the way we think about ourselves and others, we can also put these kind thoughts into action by helping other people. In his research, Harvard professor Michael Norton found that spending money on others made people happier than spending money on themselves. Does this surprise you to know?"

Kevin has spoken publicly about the way being generous with others has brought happiness into his life. And Chris Paul is another NBA player who speaks about how his grandfather modeled generosity – which impacted not only his own life, but had a positive influence on his community growing up. We are going to watch short videos from Chris and Kevin sharing about this link between kindness or generosity and happiness."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Play Guest Artist Videos:

In the first video, Kevin describes his donation to the people who work at the arena where the Cleveland Cavaliers play. In the second video, Chris Paul shares a story about his grandfather's generosity and kindness as he supported their community by offering discounts at his service station. Introduce the next video of an additional example of generosity and kindness. You could also use a video clip from your own local context that you feel will better resonate with the students in your classroom or school community.

Introduce Additional Example of Kindness:

Introduce the next video of an additional example of generosity and kindness. You could also use a video clip from your own local context that you feel will better resonate with the students in your classroom or school community.

Example of What You Could Say:

“Kevin and Chris’s video showed us big acts of generosity, but even smaller acts of kindness can feel really good. Here is one more quick example of a young woman who did something generous, and got an expected reward for her kindness.”

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Random Acts of Kindness Video Option (or choose your own):

**Slide 4*

A [video clip from CBS News](#) shares the story of a waitress' simple act of kindness and the surprising event that resulted.

Introducing the Creative Activity:

**Slide 3*

Reflect on the way the videos all illustrated how uplifting it can feel to be kind and generous, and explain that students will now plan and complete a random act of kindness themselves. Students can do this in a small group and record themselves, and then share it with the class. Or they could do this on their own and simply write about their experience. These random acts of kindness can be done during the class time or as a 'take home' project.

Example of What You Could Say:

"We just watched a few videos of people sharing kind and generous acts. This is something really wonderful about generosity and kindness; aside from improving the lives of others, it lifts your own spirits as well.

I did not want to ask you all to put yourselves out there without also trying this out myself, so I thought of an act of kindness that would feel sincere to me. (Share your example).

As a class, let's brainstorm a few ways that we can help other people in our community through acts of kindness and generosity."

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Creative Activity:

Encourage students to break into small groups to choose a random act of kindness. Explain that students can work together or individually to complete this random act of kindness and that they are encouraged to record themselves, but they should brainstorm in groups.

Example of What You Could Say:

“Now, let’s break into small groups of three or four to decide on the act of kindness and generosity that you want to accomplish. One of the group members should video record this act of kindness in hopes that when we come back together as a class, you can share it with us visually. If this is not possible, you can write down how the experience went, and how it felt to you, and share with us verbally. If you would prefer to work individually, that is okay as well – but still plan out your random act of kindness with your classmates.”

*If time and circumstance permits, students can leave the classroom and perform their random act of kindness at this time. Or, they can have a deadline set in which they have to complete their act of kindness by a certain time. This lesson will be completed at the start of the next lesson when students share their random act of kindness.

Notes on What You Plan to Say:

Lesson Closure

(to be completed at the start of the next lesson).

*see Lesson 12 for this section

Supplemental Information:

If you or your students would like to learn more about the ideas in this lesson, additional resources and third party links are included below.

1. In his guest artist video, Kevin Love described donating to the Cavaliers arena workers during the Coronavirus. Students can read more about his motivation for making this donation in this article: [“Kevin Love, Cavaliers Unite To Bring Relief To Arena Workers During Coronavirus Crisis.”](#)
2. If students want to read more about the research on generosity and happiness, the article [Money Spent on Others Can Buy Happiness](#) describes Professor Micheal Norton’s research on this topic.
3. Danny Wallace’s Karma Army is a website students can turn to for ideas as their group decides on their random act of kindness.
4. The website [Random Acts of Kindness.org](#) describes additional ideas to support students in being kind to others.