

Character Education: Grades 3-5

November / December 2013

Kindness

1. Introduction

- a. If this is your first session, introduce yourself and your family (if your child is in that class).
- b. If you have taught this class before, bring in a picture or souvenir of your child to share with the class.

2. Character Education – what it's all about:

- a. Remember, this is about helping you learn to make good choices – even when you're having a difficult time. This will help you grow into mature, successful and caring adults.
- b. Recap Respect: Everyone deserves respect. When you respect others – you earn their respect too.
- c. Now today, we're going to talk about one very important character trait – respect

3. Define Kindness

Ask the students to say some words that define or are the same as kindness(write them on the board)

THEN SHARE THIS DEFINITION

- a. Being considerate and courteous
- b. Being helpful and understanding
- c. Treating others how you would like to be treated
- d. It's about your ACTIONS not your thoughts

4. Discussion questions:

- a. How can you show kindness to other people?
- b. Who treats you with kindness?
- c. Can you think of a time when someone was kind to you in a way that you did not expect?
- d. What's the kindest thing you have done for someone? Why did you do it?

5. Literature Suggestions: (Time will probably only allow for one story)

If you have a book at home that you would like to read to the students then please do so. Before reading, think through what you want the students to learn and make a note of questions you intend to ask them. Below are 4 recommended books (two with suggested questions).

a. The First Thanksgiving, by Jean George (can be borrowed from Greensboro Library).

- i. Who was Squanto?
- ii. Was he treated with kindness by the first Europeans he met? What happened to him?
- iii. How did those people eventually show kindness to Squanto?
- iv. Do you think the pilgrims felt they were treated with kindness by King James I? Why?
- v. Was the first year for the pilgrims easy or hard? Why?
- vi. Did Samoset and Squanto treat the pilgrims with kindness? How?
- vii. After being attacked and being kidnapped by Europeans, would you treat the pilgrims with kindness or not?
- viii. In what ways did Squanto help the pilgrims?
- ix. Were the pilgrims grateful to Squanto and his friends? How do you know?
- x. Do you think Squanto was happy he showed kindness to the Pilgrims? Why?
- xi. Do you think the pilgrims were happy they trusted Squanto and his friends? Why do you think so?

b. The Selfish Giant, by Oscar Wilde (Printed on the last page)

- i. Why did the Giant build the wall?
- ii. Why didn't Spring come to the Giant's garden?
- iii. Why did Spring come back to his garden?
- iv. Why did the children run away from the Giant?
- v. Why did the children come back?
- vi. Was the Giant happier when the children were playing in his garden?
- vii. Why do you think he was happier when the children came to his garden?
- viii. How do you feel when you do something kind for others?

c. The Ugly Duckling, by Hans Christian Anderson (can be borrowed from Greensboro Library).

d. The Crane Wife, by Odds Bodkin (can be borrowed from Greensboro Library).

6. ACTIVITIES (Choose one or 2 activities depending on time)

a. **Kindness starters...** Read the following sentence starters and ask students to finish the sentence for you. Students can either write down their responses or raise their hands and call out responses.

- i. Once I helped a friend by...
- ii. When someone is sick, I...
- iii. Tonight, I can show kindness to my family by...
- iv. I can show kindness to a new classmate by...
- v. Tomorrow, I can show kindness to my classmates by...

b. **Making Thanksgiving cards:**

- i. **PREPARATION:** Make enough blank cards with envelopes for each student in the class. This can be done by cutting letter size card stock in half then folding each piece in half, these will fit nicely in invitation size envelopes.
- ii. Give a card and envelope to each student.
- iii. Have the students write the name of someone they are thankful for on the front of the envelope.
- iv. Each student should write a note in the card to that person telling them why they are thankful.
- v. Have each student give their card to the person they are thankful for after class.

c. **Kindness Acrostic:** Have the class write an acrostic poem using the word 'kindness'

- i. Write the word kindness vertically on the board making sure to use a capital letter for each of the letters.
- ii. Have the students come up with a work or phrase that begins with each of the letters that represents kindness.

7. Reminder: Being kind to others is not just about making someone else happy – it makes you happy too!

The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde

Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.

It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. 'How happy we are here!' they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

'What are you doing here?' he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.

'My own garden is my own garden,' said the Giant; 'any one can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.' So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board.

TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED

He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside.

'How happy we were there,' they said to each other.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still Winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. 'Spring has forgotten this garden,' they cried, 'so we will live here all the year round.' The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-

pots down. 'This is a delightful spot,' he said, 'we must ask the Hail on a visit.' So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

'I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming,' said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; 'I hope there will be a change in the weather.'

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. 'He is too selfish,' she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. 'I believe the Spring has come at last,' said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.

What did he see?

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still Winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. 'Climb up! little boy,' said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the little boy was too tiny.

And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. 'How selfish I have been!' he said; 'now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever.' He was really very sorry for what he had done.

So he crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became Winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant stole

up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. 'It is your garden now, little children,' said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.