

Giving Compliments (Grades K-5)

Free Lesson for Grades K-5



Overview:

Compliments are most meaningful when they are heartfelt and specific. In this activity, students practice giving compliments that are specific and kind. Students will also explore the right way to respond to compliments.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- brainstorm specific and meaningful compliments for their classmates,
- reflect on the impact of hearing positive things about yourself, and
- discuss how to respond to compliments.

Materials:

- A sheet of paper with a star (approximately 8 inches) on it for each person
- Markers or pencils

Directions:

- Break students into small groups. Each group should stand in a circle.
- Provide each student with a paper star and ask them to write their name at the top of the star.
Students should pass their star to the person on their right.
- Ask students, "Think about the classmate whose name is on top of the star. What is their 'star quality? What's one of the best things about them?"
- Each student should write a compliment on their classmate's star.
- Encourage them to be honest and specific. Explain that the best compliments are the true ones! If needed, give suggestions as to the types of positive things they could say.
- Students can continue giving compliments as they pass their stars around the circle. Ask them not to repeat anything someone else has written. Remind them that they're looking for everyone's star qualities, not to decide who is the "star of the team." Once they have complimented everyone in their group, everyone has their own star back.
- **Note:** If your participants are young, you may need to talk first about how we each dream of being a "star of the show" and that our everyday qualities bring star qualities to our group.

Discussion Prompts:

- Why do we all need to hear positive things about ourselves?
- Why it is sometimes hard to accept a compliment?
- What should we say when someone compliments us? ("Thank you")

True Friends (Grades 6-12)



Overview: This lesson asks students to consider their current friendships. Having true friends is important and learning what healthy and trusting relationships feel like is imperative for a teen's social development.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- read a poem about a true friendship.
- share the elements of a true friendship.
- reflect on their own friendships to consider if they have true friends.

Materials:

- Poem: Alabi , A. 2017. My True Friend. FamilyFriendPoems. FFP Inc. <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/my-true->

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- Chart paper/markers or online wordcloud tool

Discussion:

Small Groups

- Read the poem *My True Friend*.
- Ask students to highlight key words from the poem that are needed in a friendship.

Whole Group

- Ask students to share the words they highlighted in the poem.
- Write the words on chart paper or in an online wordcloud tool.

Reflection

- Reflect on the words collected on the chart paper/wordcloud.
 - Do you have any friendships that are not represented by the words we collected?
 - What can you do about it?
- Think about the qualities of true friends. Do you represent the words on the chart?
- How will you change your behavior to improve or develop friendships?

My True Friend by Abimbola T. Alabi

You always answer when I call
And help me up if I should fall,
But you never complain at all,
My true friend.

You confront me when I am wrong
But will never scold me for long,

Instead, you try to keep me strong,
My true friend.

You know the funny things to say
To make me laugh my fears away.
Like the sun, you brighten my day,
My true friend.

You see in me gifts I deny
And urge me to give things a try.
You spread for me my wings to fly,
My true friend.

You always perceive what I need
And offer it before I plead.
Just like a book, my mind you read,
My true friend.

You value little things I do
But won't brag of what you do too.
How can I ever repay you,
My true friend?

And greatest of all I have found
When times are tough and I'm down,
You are the one who sticks around,
My true friend.

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/my-true-friend-4>

Gratitude in Challenging

Times

Navigating life's hardships (including a contentious election, a global pandemic, and the economic breakdowns caused by COVID-19) can be exhausting. However, there is still a lot that we can be thankful for.

Emotions (Grades K-5)



Overview: Students will practice caring by recognizing and showing compassion for the emotions of others.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- sort and label the different emotions on the Faces of Emotion Handouts.
- discuss how having compassion for another person's emotions shows you care.
- illustrate emotion and share it with a friend.

Materials:

- Faces of Emotion Handout (1-4)

1. Students will write in the emotion
 2. Students will trace the emotion
 3. Students will cut and paste an emotion
 4. Students will draw the emotion
- I Feel Handout
 - The teacher can also take pictures of familiar faces around the school posing with different faces of emotion to make the lesson more personal to the students in the building
 - Discussion prompts (below)
 - Family Connection Handout

Lesson Plan:

- Students work in a group or individually to sort and label the *Faces of Emotion Handouts* (5 min)
 - Depending on skill levels students can write, trace, or use a drawing or emoticon to label.
- Discussion Prompts (5-7 mins)
 - What emotion do you feel today?
 - Teacher: I feel happy because I get to teach you today.
 - What is hard about knowing how other people feel?
 - Why do some people cry, and some people yell when they are angry?
 - How can you show you care for someone when they are feeling (insert emotion)?
- Complete the I Feel Handout (5-7 mins)
 - Choose an emotion you feel.
 - Draw a picture of yourself when you feel that emotion.
 - Write (depending on skill level) what emotion you are feeling and why.
- Share your picture with a friend (1-2 mins)

References

Images are from: <https://www.pexels.com/> are free and

attribution is not required.

Positive Impact (Grades 6-12)

Overview:

A critical component of citizenship is doing what you can to engage with your community. Everyone has the power to use their interests and passions to make a positive impact on their community, the country, and the world. In this lesson, participants will reflect on how their interests and passions can be used to make their community a better place to live, work, and go to school.

Character education objectives:

- Study how Amanda Gorman's passion for poetry allowed her to positively impact her country.
- Students will explore how their own interests and passions can make a difference in their community.
- Put the citizenship Pillar into action by crafting a plan to use their interests and passions to positively impact their school or community.

Materials:

- Amanda Gorman's 2021 Presidential Inauguration speech
- Written text of Amanda's poem
- Goal Map tool

Lesson Plan:

Discussion Prompt: With a partner, share your interests and passions. Examples could include: music, animals, sports, video games, reading, and so on.

Activity: At the conclusion of the partner discussion, introduce students to Amanda Gorman, the young woman who wrote and delivered the poem “The Hill We Climb” at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration Ceremony.

Watch Amanda Gorman’s speech at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration (5:47)

Optional – have students read the written text of her poem.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss the following questions in pairs, small groups, or as a full group.

Discussion Questions:

- Which of the Six Pillars of Character does this poem/speech align with? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think Amanda wrote this poem?
- How did Amanda use her passion for poetry to positively impact her community and country?
- How could you use your passions and interests to make a positive difference in your community?

Ask students to write down how they could use one of their passions or interests to make a positive impact in their community. Then, direct them to use the Goal Map tool to create a plan to put their passion to work.

For example, if a student is passionate about caring for animals, they could use that passion to volunteer at the Animal Rescue League. Action steps to put that plan into action could be:

1. Locate an animal shelter in need of volunteers
2. Fulfill any requirements necessary for being a volunteer at their facility
 - Fill out application
 - Ensure my availability and skill set matches their

needs

3. Schedule time to volunteer

- Make sure I have transportation to and from the facility

Follow-Up: Several weeks after the completion of this lesson, ask students to share whether they have put their plan into action. If so, how much progress have they made on their plan? How are they positively impacting their community? If not, why?

Conflict Resolution for Kids

Although we can't protect our kids from problems, frustrations and heartaches, we can arm them with tools to better handle them. The more we help them learn to resolve conflicts peacefully, the greater the likelihood they'll develop into more self-sufficient, and resourceful individuals able to deal any issue—and do so without our guidance.

The Treasure of Old Friends

Communicating with “old friends” can enrich our lives by bringing our pasts into the present, reminding us of who we were and how we became what we are.

Resilience and Overcoming Obstacles (Grades 6-12)

Students need to embrace resilience as they care for one another during conflict. This lesson focuses on the caring Pillar while supplying a resource to problem-solve and build resilience.

Caring (Grades K-5)

Reflecting on your own character is important to grow and stay accountable. This lesson is designed for students to reflect on the character trait of caring and the ways they display it to others. It also allows students time to discuss on how they can continue to show care towards others and how they can make changes to become even more caring.

Tips for Educators: An Introduction to Caring

Teachers care about the relational aspect of teaching. They take time to establish a trusting and caring connection with students, who in turn become more receptive to what's being taught. Caring is at the heart of our character and will help in creating a positive school climate. Here are our tips for educators: an introduction to caring:

Questions to ask:

- What are your thoughts on teaching caring, kindness and empathy in the classroom?
- In what way are our students already upholding the Pillar of caring?
- Are there examples of where we could improve in words or actions on the part of students toward the Pillar of caring? How about as a staff?
- What can we do to teach students to be more caring and kind to others?

Activities to do:

1. Write 3 classroom key beliefs around the Pillar of caring that you would like to instill in your students.
2. Write 2 key beliefs you would like to instill in students throughout the school, hallways, lunchroom, etc.
3. What instructional strategies or classroom management techniques could you use to be intentional and explicit in instilling these beliefs?
 - Positive Sticky Notes – Leave sticky notes with positive messages
 - Thank You Letter – Write (and send!) an anonymous letter to someone you respect in your school, workplace, or other community space.
 - Caring Bulletin Board – Create a bulletin board in your school and provide plenty of paper in fun shapes or designs where adults and students can write down the acts of kindness they have received or benefitted from.

Project to explore:

One of the effective ways to implement CHARACTER COUNTS! in a school is the creation of a school-wide project. As this lesson is on the Pillar of caring, a school could consider as

a project a Campaign of Kindness. As a staff, brainstorm the following:

- Slogan for the campaign
- Agree upon at least four action items that would help to implement the Culture of Kindness campaign
- Assign responsibilities for staff, students and parents
- Establish a timeline with a specific target date for the Kindness project

For additional ideas, a great resource is Random Acts of Kindness – <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org>

Join our CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition to have access to more videos like this!