

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")

Making Assumptions and Respecting Others (Grades 6-12)



Overview: This lesson focuses on the importance of respecting the differences of others, the impact of making assumptions about others, and how respecting each other's differences can make relationships stronger.

Character Education Objectives:

Students will:

- watch a video about respecting the differences of others,
- discuss how to recognize and respect each other's

differences,

- reflect on experiences when they made assumptions,
- reflect on how making assumptions impacts our ability to respect differences

Materials:

- Video: UNeek Productions. 2017. *Different*. Youtube. <https://youtu.be/yu24PZIbkoY>

Opening Reflection:

- “We do not see the world as it is, we see the world as we are” – Andy Stanley
 - What does this quote mean?
 - How do our assumptions impact the way we treat others?
 - How do our assumptions affect relationships?

Watch Video:

- UNeek Productions. 2017. *Different*. Youtube. <https://youtu.be/yu24PZIbkoY>

Discussion:

- How were these two different from each other? You? Me?
- How did their differences impact their relationship in the beginning?
- What did they learn about one another’s differences?
- How can changing your perception help you to respect differences?
- In what ways can you show someone that you respect their differences?
- How can respecting someone’s differences help you develop stronger relationships?

Reflection

- Write about a time when you made an assumption about

someone. Describe how you discovered that your perception of them was wrong once you got to know them.

Our Differences Make Us Stronger (Grades K-5)



Overview: Our differences are our greatest strengths. Learning about what we have in common gives us a sense of belonging, but embracing and respecting our differences makes us a stronger community.

Objectives:

Students will:

- explore the similarities and differences of their classmates.
- discuss what it means to recognize and respect each other's differences.
- reflect on how it feels to be excluded for your differences.

Materials needed:

- Large sheets of paper—write 1, 2, 3, or 4 on each
- Marker
- One die with the 6 and 5 covered up
- List of questions (*see below*)

Directions:

1. Place one numbered sheet of paper in each corner of the room.
2. Gather the group in the middle of the room and point out the four corners.
3. Read a set of choices (use suggestions listed below or create your own) and ask students to go to the corner that best represents them. For example: "Which drink do you like the best? Go to corner 1 if you like soda the best, corner 2 for juice, corner 3 for milk, or corner 4 for water."
4. Once the students move to the corner that represents them, ask each corner to briefly discuss why they selected their answer.
5. Ask a few students from different corners to share with the large group.
6. After a brief discussion, roll the dice. The number it lands on is the "unlucky number." Eliminate the students in that corner. If you need to move the game more quickly, use the dice to choose the "lucky number" and that corner stays.
7. Keep playing until only a few participants are left. Play through at least two times.

8. Following the activity, ask:

- How did it feel to be with others who are just like you?
- How does it feel when you are different than everyone else?
- What can we do to show respect to those who are different than us?
- How could our differences make us a stronger group?
- What did it feel like when you were eliminated from the game because of your differences?

Question Suggestions:

- Which music do you like best...rock, rap, country, or classical?
- Which do you wear most often...tennis shoes, sandals, bare feet, or boots?
- Which drink do you like the best...soda, juice, milk, or water?
- Are you most like a...square, triangle, circle, or oval?
- What type of movie do you like best...action, romance, comedy, or science fiction?
- Where would you most like to go on vacation...the beach, mountains, an amusement park, or camping?
- What color do you like best...green, purple, pink, or blue?

Adapted from Team-Building Activities for Every Group

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-friend-4>
- 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>

Connection, Character, and Role Models



In our CHARACTER COUNTS! workshops, we discuss how being a positive role model is a key part of teaching good character. Think about a role model who made an impact on your life. Then, consider how that person was able to make such a positive impact on you. The answer we hear often is that the people who impact us take the time to learn about and connect with us. Connection is an important element of being a good role model and making a positive impact on others. Connection helps others trust us and believe in our integrity.

We hear amazing stories about people who make a positive impact because they connected with others and built trusting relationships. We learn about coaches who taught athletes how to overcome adversity in their lives, mentors who guided important, life-altering decisions, and teachers who inspired their students to become educators themselves.

Meaningful, sustainable connections aren't just the key to building relationships. Connecting with others also builds a positive culture, whether it be at home, work, school, or another organization. An easy first step in building connections is asking questions. Be curious and engaged about the other person. Look for commonalities and express interest

in your differences.

How can you make a positive impact on others? Get started by asking yourself these three questions:

1. Who made a positive impact on your life? In addition, how did that person make a difference in your life?
 2. Who could you positively impact by making a deeper connection with them?
 3. How can you make a deeper connection with those individuals?
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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.

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.

Fun Ways to Help Kids Learn the Power of Kindness

Studies firmly support the theory that by practicing small acts of kindness, people are often guided to perform more widespread acts of compassion even though that may not have been their original intention.

Embracing Diversity (Grades 6-12)

Learning about other traditions and holidays is important to promote acceptance not just tolerance of other viewpoints, religions, belief systems, and perspectives. This lesson will discuss having integrity with a focus on fairness to promote a classroom that embraces diversity.