

Kindness Mail

This second lesson in the Courage unit focuses on the courage to be kind to others by creating kindness letters for a different person every day for an entire week!

Courage Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes.

Required Materials

- Basic art supplies
- Giant manila envelope or shoe box decorated as a mailbox
- 5 Kindness Mail sheets for each student
- 5 basic white envelopes for each student
- Sheila Rae the Brave* by Kevin Henkes

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



**DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.**

See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Create 5 personalized kindness letters to courageously spread kindness to others in class.
- Explain how it takes courage to be kind to others.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Have you ever heard the phrase, “pay it forward”? It refers to the action of a person doing an unrecognized good deed for a stranger on the premise that the receiver will in turn “pay it forward” by doing a good deed for someone else. Perhaps the person in front of you has already paid for your coffee order or a positive note was left on your desk.

These are both terrific examples of this simple, yet powerful concept. This week, look for ways to respond with kindness by identifying three different ways to pay it forward to coworkers in some fashion. Spend some time brainstorming little surprises for those around you, adding a small note with the good deed that encourages them to keep the chain going by passing on a bit of kindness to another as well.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Allow students to draw a picture and then dictate the writing piece for each letter they send.
- Provide sentence starter prompts for each affirmation to increase understanding.
- Encourage higher level students to write 2-3 sentences after the sentence starter about how the other person was kind.
- When reviewing kindness with the class, lead them in a somatosensory ‘pay it forward’ circle time activity. Students sit in a circle and hold hands. The teacher will initiate a hand squeeze and ask them to pass it around the circle. The teacher can provide a rhythmic chant to maintain attention and provide structure. (KEEP THE KINDNESS FLOWING FROM YOUR HAND TO MINE. WHEN YOU FEEL A SQUEEZE, PASS IT DOWN THE LINE.) Explain how courageous it is to ‘pay it forward’ and do good deeds for others.



Share

5 minutes

Play “My Favorite Things”:

- Line up everyone on the right side of the room. Randomly select one student to stand on the left side of the room. Ask the student the following questions:

What is your favorite food?

What is your favorite subject in school?

What is your favorite color?

What is your favorite game to play at recess?

- After each question, have others that feel the same way join the person on the other side of the room.
- Repeat with 2-3 more students as time permits.

It takes courage to speak up about our likes. When we do, we learn that others around us feel the same way sometimes as well!



Inspire

5 minutes

The Courage to Be Kind to Others

Review the explanation of Kindness to Others that you introduced in the last lesson:

Kindness to Others: Sometimes it can be very difficult to treat others with kindness. You can be brave and use courage to focus your words and actions on kindness in any situation. Even if others are mean, you can choose to show courage through kindness. You may be surprised to see just how quickly others change when you shower them with kindness!

Read Aloud *Sheila Rae the Brave* by Kevin Henkes

YouTube Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTu6c9yAssY

What do you think being brave and showing courage looks like?

Sheila Rae thinks that being big, strong, and fearless is all that there is to having courage. However, her little sister shows her that it takes courage to be kind as well.

After the story use the following questions to guide a discussion:

- How does Sheila Rae use courage every day?
- What does she think brave looks like?

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
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- How does she treat her sister when she says she is scared?
- How does her sister use kindness to help her in the end?
- Do you think Sheila deserved her sister's kindness? Why or why not?



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that this week everyone will be creating kindness mail for others in the class. Every person will receive a new piece of kindness mail daily, which will be read aloud by the teacher and delivered to the student at the end of the school day. By the end of the week, every person will have received 5 pieces of kindness mail!

Instructions:

- Assign a manila envelope or shoebox as your kindness mailbox. Store it on the teacher's desk to discourage peeking, which will be very tempting knowing that there is a letter in there for each student! Students this age LOVE getting mail.
- Explain how to fill out the kindness mail sheet found below. Practice completing it using the teacher as an example. Read the sentence starter, "You make me smile when you _____" and allow students to answer. Model how to write the answer down on the page. Emphasize the importance of adding a detailed illustration below the sentence to help the person feel extra special!
- Call up each student and have them select one popsicle stick with another student's name on it (or use a different randomizing system you already have in place). Read the person's name they drew if they are still struggling with phonics.
- Label their sheet with the name of the person they selected. This will help you remember when you read them aloud later.
- Instruct every student to complete the sentence starter with an answer that relates to the person they selected. This may be hard if they selected a person they struggle to get along with. Encourage them to think really hard and find at least one example of a time when they made them smile.
- Provide a simple envelope for each student to place their mail in. Encourage them to decorate the envelope. Remind them to write the name of the recipient on the outside of the envelope.
- Have each student place their mail in the designated mailbox on the teacher's desk.
- At the end of the school day, call up each child as you take out the mail. Allow them to open their mail and then read the kindness statement aloud to the entire class. Give the mail to the student to keep as an affirmation they can look back on over the summer.
- Repeat this activity daily for an entire week to build up each child through kindness!



Reflect

5 minutes

At the end of the week, take some time to reflect on the activity as a class:

- How did it feel to receive the kindness mail every day?
- How did it feel to have it read aloud to the entire class?
- What will you do with your mail now?

Although it is important to have courage through bravery and fearlessness, the ultimate example of courage is kindness. When you are able to show kindness to others regardless of how they are treating you or how well you may know them, the world will be a better place. Let's spread kindness to others wherever we go!



Extension Ideas

- Consider sending kindness mail to other classes, other teachers, and the administrative staff as well!
- Home extension- have students create kindness mail for the people they live with.



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PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

You make me smile when...


