

Year 2: Acts of kindness

Learning objectives

- To understand what kindness is
- To know why it is important to be kind
- To know some simple ways to show kindness to others

Resources

- Flipchart
- Interactive whiteboard (optional)
- Sticky notes

Downloadable resources

- Star Awards Challenge: 'Acts of kindness' sheet

Curricular links

PSHE

- Essential skills: Empathy and compassion (including impact on decision-making and behaviour)
- Relationships: How to develop and maintain a variety of healthy relationships, within a range of social/cultural contexts
- Moral aspect of SMSC: Ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England; Understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions

Lesson

This lesson provides a starting point to explore and expand the children's understanding of kindness and empathy for people and other living things.

- 1 Make sure that each child has access to some sticky notes.
Write the word KINDNESS in the centre of the page/screen.
- 2 Introduce the lesson:
Today we're going to learn about kindness and how to practise it. We will also learn about empathy – that is being aware of other people's feelings.



Some of you will have read books by Roald Dahl – the author of *The BFG* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Here's what he has to say about kindness:

I think probably kindness is my number one attribute in a human being. I'll put it before any of the things like courage or bravery or generosity or anything else.

An attribute is another word for a character quality or virtue, and kindness is obviously very important to Roald Dahl because he goes on to say:

Kindness – that simple word. To be kind – it covers everything, to my mind. If you're kind that's it.

So we know that kindness is very important to some people. But what is kindness?

- 3 Encourage the children to share their ideas, using the notes below as prompts to guide the discussion.

When we practise kindness we:

- show that we care about people and living things
- think of ways to show we value people and other living things
- choose words that make others feel good about themselves.

Without kindness:

- no one would attend to people or animals that needed help
- everyone would think only of themselves
- many people would become lonely and unhappy.

Sometimes we can be kinder to people if we know how they are feeling inside.

This is called empathy. Empathy means trying to put yourself in another person's position and thinking about how you would feel if you were them. We can also show empathy towards other living creatures by imagining what life is like for them and thinking about their needs and how you could help them.

- 4 *On one of the sticky notes, write down the kindest thing you have seen somebody do. It doesn't matter whether it was something big or something small. For example, I saw Grandma putting out food for the birds when the snow was falling.*

Allow some time for the children to complete this and then ask for some volunteers to read their examples and then place their sticky note on the flipchart.

- 5 *Think about a kindness that has been shown towards you and how it made you feel. Write this down on your second sticky note. For example, Grandad repaired my bicycle when it had a puncture. I felt happy and grateful.*

Allow some time for the children to complete this and then ask for some volunteers to read their examples and place their sticky notes on the flipchart.

- 6 *Kindness is not just something that other people do. You can practise kindness yourself. Can you think of something kind you have done for somebody, or something kind that you would like to do for someone? Write this down on your third sticky note. For example, I did the washing up last night, even though it wasn't my turn.*

Allow some time for the children to complete this and then ask for some volunteers to read their examples and place their sticky notes on the flipchart.

Are there any examples of empathy? Did anyone consider how someone was feeling before they showed them kindness?

7 *Thank you for sharing the examples of kindness that you have noticed in others. Kindness feels good. When people are kind to us we feel grateful and appreciated. We are also using empathy when we understand how someone is feeling and understand that they need kindness from us.*

8 *One of the ways in which people are often unkind is by saying hurtful things to someone. This is often called a 'put down'.*

Ask children to help you write a short list of common 'put downs' that they have heard.

One of the easiest ways to be kind to someone is to say something kind, appreciative or encouraging. This could be called a 'put up'.

Give some children in the class some 'put ups'. For example:

- *I notice that Jill always has a smile on her face and is ready to help anyone with anything at all.*
- *Fred listens so peacefully to everything I say. Thank you, Fred.*
- *Yasmin was so helpful in tidying up the classroom today.*

Explain that you want to create a classroom list of 'put ups'. Ask the children to work in pairs to write one or two sentences together of kind things to say to each other.

Write the heading 'Put ups not put downs' on the whiteboard or flipchart. Slowly circulate around the tables and collect five to ten examples of 'put ups' – add these under your heading.

Read each of the 'put up' phrases to the class and ask the children to memorise some of their favourites from the list. Cover the list and ask for volunteers to see how many 'put ups' they can remember. (Keep this list of 'put ups' for the further development session.)

Bringing it together – what have we learned?

Ask the children to share at least one thing that they have learned about kindness today. For example:

- We can be kind in the things we do, and also in the things we say.
- One of the easiest ways to show kindness is to say something encouraging to someone.
- Kindness helps people feel connected to each other.
- Kindness makes people feel valued and appreciated. Empathy helps us to understand how other people might be feeling. Empathy helps us to show kindness to all living things.

Character coaching

It is important to acknowledge and encourage any examples of **kindness** that you see in the children during or following the lesson.

Praise:

I appreciate your kindness in helping Sally with her work.

Your kindness and encouragement really helped your partner make progress today.

You showed great empathy towards your friend today because you understood how they were feeling.

Guidance:

Our new class member will need some empathy from you all today. Can you imagine what it feels like on your first day in a new school? How will we show our kindness to him/her?

Treat your friends with kindness and they will do the same for you.

Correction:

The words you used were very unkind. How could you say that in a kinder way?

Excluding people makes them feel isolated. Can you imagine how that feels? How could you put things right with kindness?

What kindness do you think your friend needs from you to make amends?

Star Awards Challenge

Give each child a copy of the 'Acts of kindness' sheet. Explain that their challenge is to plan and then carry out as many acts of kindness as they can over the next seven days. They should use the sheet to plan several kindnesses and draw a picture of these in the boxes. Remind the children that they can include 'put ups' or encouragement to others at home or at school. They can also use the sheet to record any unplanned kindnesses that they are able to do for others.

Further developments

The following week the children should return with their completed 'Acts of kindness' sheets and share them with as many people as possible.

While the children are looking at other people's sheets they should look for examples of:

- kindness to animals or living things
- kindness to people
- kindness to the environment
- kind words or 'put ups' / verbal encouragement.

What categories of kind acts were the most popular?

If time permits, the children could see how many 'put ups' they can recall from the class list when it is covered up.

Can they add any further 'put ups' to the list?