

THE POWER OF PAYING KINDNESS FORWARD



Grades 8-12 The Power of Paying Kindness Forward English Language Arts & Health Education

Purpose of the Lesson:

When we spread kindness, we are supporting not only the mental wellbeing of the person we are being kind to, but ours as well. Additionally, acts of kindness often have a ripple effect known as “paying it forward.” In this lesson, students will engage in acts of kindness and track the ripple effect of their actions. Once they have done this, they will give an oral presentation about their experience and how it impacted their mental wellbeing and the mental wellness of those around them. The closure of this lesson explores this further by allowing for students to engage in a conversation with their peers about the power of kindness.

Curriculum Competencies:

Health and Physical Education

- Propose strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grade 8/9)
- Create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grade 8/9)
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grade 8/9)
- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others (Grade 8/9)
- Develop skills for maintaining healthy relationships and responding to interpersonal conflict (Grade 10)
- Analyze the potential effects of social influences on health (Grade 10)
- Evaluate and explain strategies for promoting mental well-being (Grade 10)

After Grade 9, Physical and Health Education becomes an elective and divides into more specific courses. However, this lesson plan can still be used in classrooms for Grades 10-12.

English Language Arts

- Use and experiment with oral storytelling processes (Grade 8/9)
- Exchange ideas and viewpoints to build shared understanding and extend thinking (Grade 8/9)
- Transform ideas and information to create original texts (Grade 8/9)
- Express an opinion and support it with credible evidence (Grade 9)

After Grade 9 Language Arts divide into a more specific curriculum. This lesson could be used in Creative Writing or Spoken Language 10/11/12

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First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Video

Kindness - Orly Wahba

Guiding Questions:

- How would you define “paying it forward?”
- When have you seen instances of the ripple effect of kindness?
- How does it make you feel when you see kindness getting passed on?
- What benefits can paying it forward have on the mental wellbeing of those around us?
- How can paying kindness forward support your own mental wellbeing?

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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Preparation: Queue up video/set up projector

1. Have the students watch the video “Kindness” This can be found [HERE](#).

2. Pause the video and use the Guiding Questions to spark discussion.

3. Have your students right down experiences they’ve had with paying kindness forward.

These can be small things, like someone opened the door for you and you opened the door for someone else. Or they can be bigger things, like seeing a friend volunteering for a charitable organization and deciding to sign up as well.

4. Ask your students how these experiences impacted them. Get them to really reflect on how these big or small gestures and acts of kindness impact their day, their week, their month, their year, their lives. Have them write down the feelings they felt when these experiences happened to them and when someone showed them acts of kindness. You can use this comprehensive list of emotions to help spark deeper connection to their feelings. Sometimes it can be hard to think of emotions beyond “happy”, so this can help support them in making deeper connections:

Source: [Feelings List](#)

Connected / Loving Accepting Affectionate Caring Compassion Empathy Fulfilled Present Safe Warm Worthy Curious Engaged Exploring Fascinated Interested Intrigued Involved Stimulated	Aliveness / Joy Amazed Awe Bliss Delighted Eager Ecstatic Enchanted Energized Engaged Enthusiastic Excited Free Happy Inspired Invigorated Lively Passionate Playful Radiant Refreshed Rejuvenated Renewed Satisfied Thrilled Vibrant	Tender Calm Caring Loving Reflective Self-loving Serene Vulnerable Warm	Grateful Appreciative Blessed Delighted Fortunate Grace Humbled Lucky Moved Thankful Touched
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Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

5. Have your students share their experiences and their feelings with partners or in small groups. Encourage your students to reflect with each other on the random acts of kindness they've experienced and how these acts of kindness made them feel. Once they've had a chance to share with each other, provide them the opportunity to share with the class if they feel comfortable doing so.

6. Discuss with your students how paying kindness forward can support both your mental health and the mental health of the person receiving the kindness.

7. Explain the curriculum connections to your students. Inform your students that they are going to be doing the "kindness cards" activity outlined in the video they watched. You can have them work collaboratively or independently on this, whatever works best for your class. They are going to write an act of kindness on a card. Then they are going to make a conscious effort to complete these acts of kindness. Once they've completed the act, they are going to give the card to the person they were kind to to encourage them to pay the kindness forward. If they need help thinking of ideas, brainstorm what this could look like as a class before they do it on their own.

Accommodations/modifications:

Students who are visually impaired can you can act as a scribe

Students whose first language isn't English can write their cards in their first language first and you can help them translate it to English

8. Have your students document this experience and write about it. Once some time has passed, and they've given out all of their kindness cards, they should write a summary of their experience. Once they have written this summary, they can present it to the class as an oral presentation.

9. Lesson Closure. Have your students reflect on how this experience made them feel. Get them to reflect on their initial conversation about how paying kindness forward can support their mental health and the mental health of those around them. Have them think about how they can promote more paying kindness forward in their school environment, their community and the world at large.