projectheart

Planting the Seed: An Acorn of Kindness

Time Commitment:
30-45 minutes

Grade Level:
3rd-5th

3Ts Used:
Time
Talent
Treasure

OVERVIEW

After reading the introduction to the book, *Unstoppable! 15 Inspiring Stories of Kids in Philanthropy*, students will have the opportunity to use their own time, talent, and treasure to personalize two acorns—one to keep and one to give away as part of a ripple of kindness. This lesson is meant to get students thinking about different ways they can use their 3Ts to send a ripple of kindness into the world and make a positive change.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

We believe that kindness is the springboard for philanthropy. Both stem from a desire to help others and make a positive impact on those around them. Kindness might involve smaller, everyday acts, while philanthropy looks more into long-term, systemic change. Together, they encourage students to understand and respond to the needs of others.

MATERIALS:

- Wooden acorns—two (2) per student (provided).
- *Unstoppable! 15 Inspiring Stories of Kids in Philanthropy* —"Introduction: An Idea Is Never Too Small to Make a Difference" (provided).
- Project Heart sticker—one (1) per student (provided).
- Bookmark—one (1) per student (provided).
- Paint or markers.
- Googly eyes or other fun things to add to the acorns.
- Glue.

CONNECTION TO CAREERS:

- Local philanthropists
- Botanist
- Biologist
- Red Cross
- Local nonprofits



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INSTRUCTIONS

- Read *Unstoppable! 15 Inspiring Stories of Kids in Philanthropy* introduction, "An Idea is Never Too Small to Make a Difference."
- Discuss the story using cooperative learning strategies.
  - Suggested questions to ask throughout the discussion:
    - Read the title and ask, "What do you think you will learn in this story?"
    - "Who do you think is a philanthropist?"
    - "What's something you know started small and grew into something big and beautiful?"
    - "What is your understanding of philanthropy now?"
    - "How do you see yourself becoming a philanthropist?"
- Brainstorm with students what some of their talents are, how they use their time to help others, and how they could use or help find treasures to share with others.
- Explain to students that they will be decorating two acorns—one for themselves to keep to remind them about being a philanthropist, and one to share with someone outside of the classroom so that it starts a ripple effect.
- Brainstorm what students want to put on their acorns. Possibilities include:
  - Positive words or a positive message.
  - A smiley face that shows what they will look like when they spread kindness.
  - Decorations.
- Decorate the first acorn to keep as a reminder to be kind to those around them. Use markers, paint, etc.
- Brainstorm a list of people to whom they could give their acorn, and have them think why they want to give it to that particular person. Have you noticed that they've been sad lately? Did they have a bad day?
- Have students think about how they want to decorate it before starting, maybe doing a rough draft on a blank piece of paper first.

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INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED

- Decorate the second acorn to be given away.
- Tell the students that they will each receive a Project Heart sticker at the end of today's lesson. They can put this sticker on a water bottle, the front of a folder – anywhere that will help them remember to be kind to people.

RIPPLE OF KINDNESS SENTENCE STARTERS

- I see your potential to grow into a big, mighty oak tree by the way you . . .
- I see you becoming something big and beautiful when you . . .
- You show kindness by . . .
- I appreciate that you use your time to help me . . .

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Why did you decorate your acorn the way you did?
- How did you use your creativity when decorating your acorn?
- Who will you give your "ripple of kindness" acorn to and why?
- What impact do you think this will have on your life? On the community? On the world?
- Describe how you would feel if you received one of the acorns from someone.
- What did you learn from this?
- How will you share your kindness today?

EXTENTION OPPORTUNITY

- Have STEM teacher/class 3D print acorns.
- Have students decorate and personalize one of the kindness bookmarks using one of the kindness sentence starters or by creating their own message.
- Want to make more to pass along? Have students pick up other "seeds"—pine cones, seed packets, or rocks to paint messages on!

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SKILLS ALIGNMENT

Entrepreneurial Skills:

- Creativity/Innovation: Demonstrate curiosity, imagination, and eagerness to learn more, and build on personal experience to specify a challenging problem to investigate, engage in novel approaches, moves, directions, ideas, and/or perspectives, and synthesize ideas in original and surprising ways.

- Informed Risk Taking: Demonstrate a willingness to try new things, demonstrate flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness in taking on tasks and activities, innovate from failure, connect learning across domains recognize new opportunities, and act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution.

Civic/Interpersonal Skills:

- Civic Engagement: Identify and reflect upon personal connections to community systems, connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from personal ideas and understandings to civic engagement, participate in social or community activities, and "participate effectively in civic life."

Professional Skills:

- Leadership: Model positive behaviors for others, demonstrate leadership skills (e.g., organizing others, taking initiative, team-building), demonstrate confidence while recognizing that personal actions impact others, and educate and inspire others to realize their potential.