projectheart

Handwritten from the Heart: Creating Kindness Cards

Time Commitment:
30-40 minutes

Grade Level:
3rd-5th

3Ts Used:
Time
Talent
Treasure

OVERVIEW

Students will have the opportunity to use their own time and talent to create two written cards or letters for someone. This lesson is meant to inspire students to get involved in a community outside of their immediate circle.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

We believe that intentionally teaching kindness sets a strong foundation for the philanthropic journey. Kindness stems from empathy—our ability to understand the feelings of others. Showing students that one simple act of kindness can make a big difference will help lead to more significant contributions using their time, talent, and treasure for other individuals and communities.

MATERIALS:

- *Unstoppable! 15 Inspiring Stories of Kids in Philanthropy* (provided).
- Blank note cards and envelope (provided)—one (1) per student.
- Project Heart postcard (provided)—one (1) per student.
- Encouragement cards for teachers to pass out to students (provided)—one (1) per student.
- Project Heart stickers (provided)—one (1) per student.
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.

CONNECTION TO CAREERS:

- Nursing home workers
- Pediatric doctors and/or nurses
- Veterans
- Nonprofits that serve refugees
- The Red Cross



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INSTRUCTIONS

- Hand out the provided encouragement cards to your students a week before this project so students get to experience the feeling of receiving a kind written note.
  - Positive and fun quotes are provided on each card, but the back is blank for you to fill in if you'd like! Not sure what to write to your students? Here are potential note card starters:
    - I love having you in our class and think that you add so much to our culture with your . . .
    - You certainly know how to brighten a room with your . . .
    - Having you in our class means we have . . .
    - Our class would be so different without your sense of humor/kindness/etc.
    - I noticed in class the other day that you helped . . .
- Start by reading a book. Options include:
  - *Unstoppable! 15 Inspiring Stories of Kids in Philanthropy*
  - *Dear Dragon: A Pen Pal Tale* by Josh Funk
  - *The Snail and the Whale* by Julia Donaldson
  - *If You Come to Earth* by Sophie Blackall
- Brainstorm a list of people who might be socially isolated or going through a difficult time (a list of possible recipients is provided on page 56).
- Tell the students that they will each be creating two cards—one for a group of people they will determine before they begin, and one for someone of their choosing.
- As a class, decide which group will be the focus of your card-writing campaign.
- Read through the organization's guidelines for writing and sending the cards.
  - Several organizations have specific topics and ideas for students to write, be sure to check those out!
- If the organization you picked does not have examples, brainstorm a list of sentences students might use in their card writing.

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INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED

- Have students write a rough draft. Check the rough draft for accuracy or have students peer edit.
- Write final drafts of cards.
- Send cards/letters based on the organization's guidelines.
- 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 think of others.

WEBSITE RESOURCES:

- Possible places to send cards to:
  - DOROT—older adults
    - bit.ly/3ZFHdhl
  - Love for our Elders—older adults
    - bit.ly/41BrBxR
  - GladysLoveProject—seniors and caregivers
    - bit.ly/3Boeeqn
  - Letters Against Isolation—seniors
    - bit.ly/3DfCETi
  - Miry's List—welcome letters for new arrival refugee families.
    - bit.ly/4iE26SJ
  - Letters of Love—kids in children's hospitals battling chronic illnesses.
    - bit.ly/4iHXuuY
  - Cards for Hospitalized Kids
    - bit.ly/3VKP4ZU
  - Operation Gratitude—military
    - bit.ly/4ghTDmx
  - Project Smile—seniors, veterans, and frontline workers.
    - bit.ly/3P0Pdo8

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WEBSITE RESOURCES CONTINUED

- Color a Smile—Anyone in need of a smile
  - bit.ly/3VE9yTR
- A Little Help
  - bit.ly/3ZW1bpw
- Meals on Wheels
  - bit.ly/3VFEpQb
- Your local nursing home or senior center.

WRITING PROMPTS OR IDEAS

- You are amazing! Remember that!
- You are wonderful! Yes, you!
- You are capable of amazing things!
- YOU are amazing! YOU are important! YOU are special!
- ANIMALS: Tell the person about your pets and ask if their family has/had any pets. Mention your favorite animal or share a fun fact (giraffes have the highest blood pressure of any animal, zebras are white with black stripes, and pigeons can recognize human faces).
- MAKE 'EM LAUGH: Include simple riddles or jokes.
- SHARE A QUOTE: Find and share a positive quote.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- This project kicked off with a note from your teacher. How did that personal touch make you feel?
- What thoughts and emotions did you have about the project and your card/letter writing?
- How do you think the person who received your card/letter felt when they got it?
- How would you feel if you received a letter from someone out of the blue?
- Thinking about the loneliness that isolation can bring, how do you think your card/letter helped the recipient feel more connected?

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

- Have you ever thought of doing a kind thing for a neighbor or friend but decided not to out of nervousness? How could you overcome your shyness in the future?

EXTENTION OPPORTUNITY

- If you'd like to give students the opportunity to make more cards, feel free to use our kindness cards template on our website, or have students design their own!

SKILLS ALIGNMENT

Entrepreneurial Skills:

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

Personal Skills:

- Initiative/ Self-Direction: Demonstrate personal skills through self-awareness, initiative and self-direction, personal responsibility and self-management, adaptability and flexibility, and perseverance and resilience to pursue opportunities to engage and learn interests.

Civic/Interpersonal Skills:

- Civic Engagement: The student demonstrates civic/interpersonal skills through collaboration and teamwork, strong communication skills, global and cultural awareness, civic engagement, and strong character, and can recognize how members of a community rely on each other, considering personal contributions as applicable.