

Random Act of Kindness: Shining Stars

This lesson is designed to encourage students to think about those who selflessly give, without seeking the spotlight or reward, right there in school with them. These are the custodians, the food service staff, the bus drivers, and the support staff who work hard to ensure the school is clean, the kids are safe and healthy, and that everything is running smoothly. Often these people do not get gifts and “thank yous” because they are not the classroom teacher or administrators. This lesson gives students an opportunity to not only identify these people who are regularly performing important works of service in the school but also thank them through a random act of kindness.

Kindness Sub-Concept(s)

Vulnerability, Humility

Lesson Timeframe

30-40 minutes

Required Materials Star template (see below)**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:

- Understand what a random act of kindness is.
- Identify people in school who work hard but are not always appreciated.
- Design a symbol of appreciation for the identified school staff.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

As we head into the final week or so of the school year, the courage to respond with kindness leads us out of the classroom and back with our families and friends as summer vacation looms in the not so distant future. Do you have the courage to respond with kindness at home? At times, it can often feel harder to lean into kindness with those closest to you as they are also the people that know firsthand how to press your buttons and dampen your mood. However, the real test in your ability to respond with kindness is how you treat those in your inner circle. This week, and throughout the summer this year, use our namesake, Random Acts of Kindness, as a motto for how to treat others each day. Become more conscious of the people closest to you. Find one small thing you can do for each of them daily. Something small, but meaningful; something simple, but kind. No random act of kindness is too small to impact another. Your concentrated effort to make your immediate world a better place has a ripple effect on the larger world around you. How can you courageously respond with kindness on a daily basis?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Assist ESL students with writing their messages; encourage students to also draw/decorate the star to give it a personal touch, especially if the writing is limited.
- Allow students to type their messages and tape them to the back of the star.
- If students aren't comfortable closing their eyes (see Share section), invite them to look at the floor.
- Depending on your group, you may want to pre-select staff who should receive stars and decide how to get the stars to these people. If your group needs less direction, let them choose staff members and determine how to get the star to the right person without them knowing. Be mindful of which staff are getting stars and encourage one star per staff person (so there isn't anyone left out and/or a small handful of people getting all the stars).



Share

5-7 minutes

Close your eyes and think about a time when someone did something really nice and unexpected for you.

Give students a minute to do this.

Okay, now open your eyes. What were the feelings you experienced when you received that unexpected, nice surprise?

Invite students to respond.

Now, raise your hand if that nice, unexpected thing was a gift or something physical that person gave you?

Let students show their hands.

Raise your hand if that nice, unexpected thing was a gesture, like holding a door open or helping you pick up something you had dropped.

Let students show their hands.

Raise your hand if that nice, unexpected thing was a compliment; something they said.

Let students show their hands.

See? Kindness comes in many forms! We do not have to give or expect to get big, fancy, expensive things; we can make people feel good by a simple kind gesture or compliment.



Inspire

5-7 minutes

For today's lesson, we are going to do a random act of kindness. A random act of kindness is a fun surprise of kindness given to someone else without them knowing it was you or without them expecting it! These acts of kindness are not announced, not necessarily planned, and not rewarded. You are doing kind things for others just because you want someone else to feel good, not because you want anyone to notice you.

Let's read about one such act of kindness by someone who was actually quite famous. He is a professional football player in the NFL. Let's hear his story.

Read or invite strong student readers to read out loud, the article titled "Jermaine Gresham's Random Act of Kindness Saves Passenger From Missing Her Flight".

<https://www.cbssports.com/nfl/news/jermaine-greshams-random-act-of-kindness-saves-passenger-from-missing-her-flight/>

Okay! Let's summarize!

You can provide a concise summary of the events or have students do so. You can use the 5W+H to help students fill in just the main ideas, as shown below.

- **Who?** Jermaine Gresham and a passenger named Delilah Cassidy
- **What?** Delilah and Jermaine were on the same flight; Delilah couldn't get on because she couldn't pay her baggage fee. Jermaine paid the fee for her and didn't want to be repaid; she didn't even know who he was at first.
- **When?** (Unknown, exactly)
- **Where?** In an airport
- **Why?** He wanted to do something kind for someone else; he asked her to "pay it forward" which means do something kind for someone else in return for his kindness.

This is what a random act of kindness can look and feel like! It happens without pre-planning, without warning, and to the benefit of someone else. There isn't any expectation of repayment or of a big announcement (though Delilah was so moved that she posted about it on social media, which is pretty common anymore). But Jermaine didn't need any reward or acknowledgement; he just wanted to help and then get on the plane.



Empower

15-20 minutes

We are going to do our own random acts of kindness this week! And we are going to do it for those people in our school who show kindness to us each day but who are rarely in the spotlight or get much attention. I am thinking of those members of our school staff who work more behind the scenes but without whom we could not run our school!

Who are some of the important school staff people you can think of but who are not teachers or people you always see or talk to?

Let students brainstorm and take notes on the board: janitors, kitchen staff, office staff, crossing guards, bus drivers, technology staff, library staff, etc.

These people work hard every day to ensure we have a great school to come to and learn in. These people don't always get the appreciation they deserve because they aren't out in the spotlight like teachers, students, and principals. So, today we are going to show them that we think they are a shining star in our school.

For the activity, you will want to have a staff directory handy so students can write down the names of the people they are making stars for. Or, if you have an independent, self-directed group, you could let them find the names on their own; they can search the school website or the directory themselves.

Have each student pick someone to send a star to. They should complete their star, along with a note of thanks, and then devise a plan to get the star to the person without their knowing. This last part should be done with the teacher or as a large group. Determine the best time of day to send students out with their stars and then let their random acts of kindness shine!



Reflect

5-7 minutes

This can be done either after the stars are decorated or after they have been delivered. Discuss how it felt to appreciate someone they maybe have under-appreciated all year.

Did they get to know someone knew that they had never really noticed before? How did it feel to be sneaky in their delivery? Discuss the positive feelings they experienced from doing something nice for someone else.



Extension Ideas

- As a science extension, you could discuss the chemical reactions in our brains and bodies when we do something kind for someone else and, similarly, when we receive kindness. This will help students realize how good it must have felt to receive a star, just as it felt good to decorate and give it.
- Give a blank star to kids to bring home, complete, and leave for a family member to find.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED
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/>



