

Kindness and Compassion

Performing simple acts of kindness and compassion encourages your child to think of others and makes her feel good about herself—a one-two punch that also helps to prevent bullying. Try these ideas to inspire your youngster to be a kind and compassionate person.



AT HOME

What do kindness and compassion look like? Use these activities to help your child spot kindhearted actions in her daily life.

Make a reminder

Look up *compassion* and *kindness* in the dictionary together. Then, have your youngster collect quotations about these qualities from books or websites. *Example:* “Always try to be a little kinder than necessary.” —J. M. Barrie. Ask your child to invent



her own sayings, too, such as “Be a ray of sunshine and brighten someone’s day.” Next, let her use her favorites to create a placemat. She can write the quotes graffiti-style on construction paper. Slip the paper into a plastic sheet protector so her placemat lasts longer. *Tip:* Suggest that your youngster spread the compassion message by making a placemat for each family member.

Catch kindness

Show your child how much kindness happens around him every day—he’ll see ways he can be kind, too. Have him make a label to stick on a clean, empty jar. It might say “Be kind” or “We’re a kind family.” Place the jar in an easy-to-reach location

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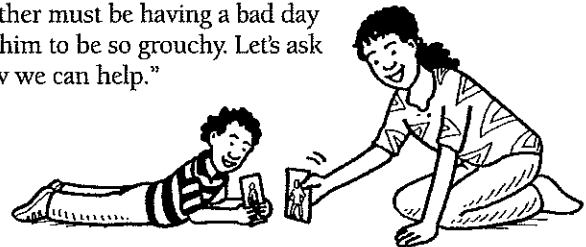
The anti-bullying connection

Empathy is a powerful tool against bullying. When children can imagine themselves in another person’s shoes, they’re less likely to be bullies and more prone to step in if someone else is bullied. These strategies will help your youngster consider how other people feel:

- Using pictures in magazines, take turns inventing scenarios that encourage you to put yourselves in another person’s place. *Example:* “Someone tripped this boy on the playground. How would you feel if that happened to you?”
- While watching videos or reading, point out when one character shows empathy for another. “George could see

how sad Lucy was when those kids were teasing her. I’m glad he stood up for her.”

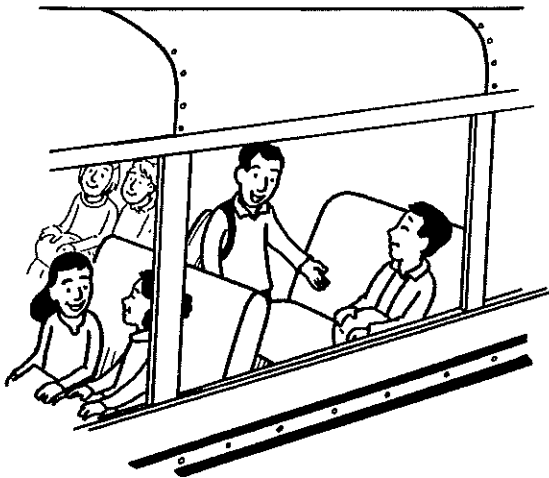
- Think aloud to help your child understand how to show empathy for people who act angry, rude, or mean. “Your brother must be having a bad day for him to be so grouchy. Let’s ask how we can help.”



along with slips of colored paper and a pen. Now tell everyone in the family to add a note to the jar when they “catch” someone being kind. For instance, “Dad made soup for me because I didn’t feel well” or “Jeremy cleaned up the dog’s muddy paw prints so Mom didn’t have to do it.” Once a week, read the slips aloud. Then, start a new batch.

AT SCHOOL

When students are kind and compassionate, there is more learning and less bullying. These ideas can help your youngster be a caring classmate.



Welcome someone new

Have your child think about what it feels like to be the new kid. You might remind him how he felt on his first day somewhere. Maybe he was afraid the kids at basketball camp wouldn’t like him or that he’d have no one to play with at an after-school program. Then, help him think of ways to make things better for a new student. For example, he could sit with the classmate on the bus or invite him to join a kickball game at recess.

Share a compliment

While your youngster doesn’t have to be best friends with everyone in her class, she does need to be nice to them. Encourage her to focus on each person’s strengths instead of reasons she might not like them. Try prompting her with questions like “Who is a good athlete?” or “Who draws cool pictures?” Suggest that she use those answers to give compliments. For instance, in art class, she can tell a classmate she likes his painting. After a spelling bee, she could congratulate the winner. She may be surprised to see that a few nice words will encourage others to be kind, too.

AROUND TOWN

When your youngster regularly puts others first, kindness and compassion become second nature. Take advantage of big and small opportunities for her to make a difference in the community.

Pay it forward

Make it a family policy to do two kind things for each one done for you. Be sure to let your child know that even small things count. Someone might hold the door open for her to enter a restaurant, for example. To pay the kindness forward (twice), your youngster could hold the door for another person—and offer to get an elderly couple’s order when it’s called.



For times when she can’t pay it forward right away, your child can watch for chances to catch up during the day.

Encourage a can-do attitude

In tough situations, your youngster may want to show compassion but feel that his actions won’t make a difference. For instance, he might want to help a neighborhood family who lost everything in a house fire. Remind him that while some things are too big for him to fix completely, there’s still plenty he can do. Then, brainstorm ideas together. His list could include everything from donating clothes from his own closet to bigger things like having a yard sale to raise money for the family.



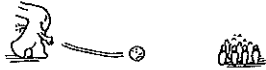
Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October 2017

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School

Jenny Hetzler, School Counselor



SHORT NOTES

Speak clearly

To boost your child's communication skills, let her introduce herself when she meets people rather than doing it for her. Also, encourage her to be clear and specific when asking for help. If she says, "I can't do this," you might respond, "What are you asking for help with?"

Rested and ready

When your youngster wakes up easily and feels ready to start the day, that's a good sign he's getting enough sleep. But if he's too groggy in the morning or he's sleepy in school, try slowly adjusting his bedtime until he feels alert in class. *Note:* Experts recommend 10–11 hours of sleep per night at this age.

DID YOU KNOW?

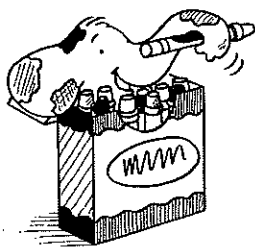
Repetition helps your child's brain form new connections. Say she wants to improve her soccer dribbling skills. She might practice for a certain number of minutes every day. Or if she'd like to learn origami, she could check out a library book on the topic and work on her favorite designs.

Worth quoting

"The whole world opened to me when I learned to read." *Mary McLeod Bethune*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why did the elephant paint himself different colors?



A: So he could hide in the crayon box!

Consequences that work

Matthew was supposed to put away his toys and games, but he didn't. So when his mom tripped over a block, she thought carefully about what an appropriate consequence for him might be. Consider the following ideas to set consequences that encourage your youngster to listen and follow rules.

Make it logical

A consequence should relate to the situation at hand and promote the behavior you want. If your child, like Matthew, doesn't put his things away, you might say he has to store them away for a period of time. Living without them may make cleaning up more important to him.

Keep it reasonable

Take into account your youngster's age and stage of development. A little one may lose screen time for a day if he won't turn off the TV when you ask him to. An older child might have to go



without electronics for a week if you see him posting on a social media site he's not allowed to use.

Allow natural outcomes

Let your youngster learn from what happens naturally. Say he wants to wear his school T-shirt on Spirit Day, but he didn't put it in the hamper. The result? He will need to wear something else. Or if he forgets his trumpet on band day, he won't be able to play his instrument with the rest of the class.♥

Attention! Attention!

Staying focused during class will help your child do her best work. Here are strategies that can make a difference.

Role play. Pretend you're the teacher, and have your youngster show you what a student who is paying attention looks like. She might sit quietly with her eyes focused on you.

Stretch attention span. Suggest that your child do activities that require concentration. Examples include putting together jigsaw puzzles or building a house of cards.

Remove distractions. Encourage her to keep only what she needs on her desk. For instance, she should put away art supplies during a social studies lesson.

Note: If your youngster has trouble focusing at home, ask her teacher how well she focuses during school. The teacher can share what she notices and offer advice.♥



Pumpkin power

What's orange and round and full of opportunities to learn? A pumpkin! Your child can try these activities.

Math

Have your youngster estimate how many "stripes" (ridges) are on a pumpkin and count to see how close she came. She could paint each stripe as she counts it, switching colors to create a pattern. The colors will help her keep track of the number of stripes—and she'll have a pretty pumpkin to display!



Writing

Suggest that your child design a brochure for an imaginary pumpkin festival. Encourage her to give her festival a name and describe features, such as mini-pumpkin hunts, pumpkin catapults, or hayrides.

Science

Your youngster may be surprised to discover that pumpkins float. Let her try making boats out of them. She could start with a whole-pumpkin boat (cut off the top and scrape out the insides). Then, help her carve boats of different sizes and shapes, perhaps deep and wide or shallow and narrow. How does the design affect whether they float or sink?♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

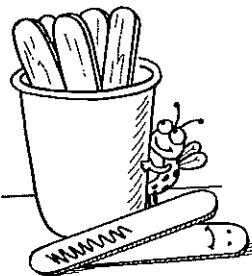


"Sticky" vocabulary

Play this game with your youngster to help him learn vocabulary words.

Materials: marker, craft sticks, cup, dictionary or textbook

Let your child write each vocabulary word (or boldface word from a textbook) on the end of a craft stick. On three more sticks, he should draw "frowny faces" instead of writing words. When he's finished, have him place all the sticks in a cup, printed ends down.



Take turns pulling out a stick and using the word in a sentence that makes its definition clear. Check the dictionary or textbook—if you're right, keep the stick. If not, return it to the cup. But be careful: Draw a frowny face and you lose all your sticks! (Set each frowny face aside after it's drawn.)

When all sticks have been claimed, the player with the most wins.♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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PARENT TO PARENT

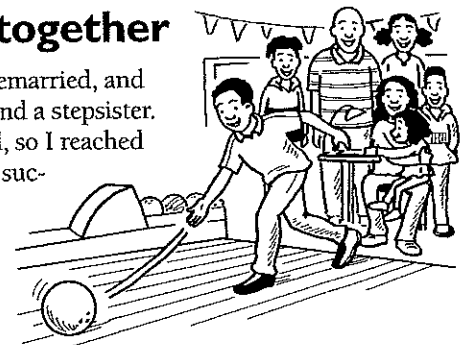
Blending together

I recently got remarried, and my children now have a stepbrother and a stepsister. My husband and I want us all to bond, so I reached out to a coworker to see how she had successfully blended her new family.

Nancy recommended that we find pastimes everyone can enjoy together. That way, the children will get to know each other in a more relaxed way. We asked the kids for ideas, and they thought of bowling, skating, and playing board games.

My friend also mentioned the importance of respecting each other's space and belongings. So my husband and I made sure to talk to our kids about knocking before entering each other's rooms and asking for permission before borrowing items.

For now, we're taking one day at a time. Recently, we went bowling and had some good laughs. Feeling like a family may not happen overnight, but at least we're on our way.♥



Q & A Healthy after-school snacks

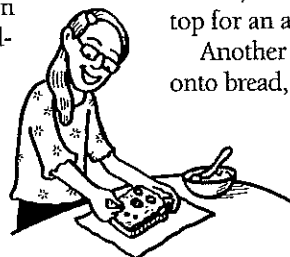
Q: My daughter is hungry after school, but it's hard to come up with nutritious snacks that she's excited about eating. Any recommendations?

A: Add a fun twist to healthy sandwiches by presenting them in a whole new way. Try a sandwich-on-a-stick, for example. Help your child cut whole-grain bread and cooked turkey into small pieces. Then, she can thread them onto a toothpick or bamboo

skewer along with cheese cubes and cucumber slices.

Or core an apple and slice it into rounds. Let her spread peanut or sunflower butter on one slice, sprinkle with raisins, and place a second apple slice on top for an apple sandwich.

Another idea is to scoop tuna salad onto bread, and your daughter can create a smiley face on top. She might use sliced green olives as eyes, a grape tomato for the nose, and chickpeas for the smile.♥



Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

Call on counselors

Your middle grader's school counselor is there to help students *and* parents. Contact the counseling office with questions about your tween's schedule or for advice to help your child deal with a difficult situation like bullying or divorce. The counselor might meet with her or suggest a support group.

Comparatively speaking

Stretch your tween's thinking with this analogy game. Choose two things with something in common (two states, for instance), and give him an analogy to fill in: "Virginia is to Richmond as Oregon is to _____. Answer: Salem (Salem is Oregon's state capital, like Richmond is Virginia's capital). Take turns, and see how many analogies you can come up with.

Promptness matters

Being on time for activities and other commitments shows respect for others. For one week, suggest that your middle grader jot down anything that makes her run late. *Example:* "Couldn't find matching socks." Then, she can put solutions in place to avoid the problem (roll socks together before putting them away).

Worth quoting

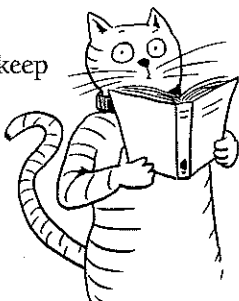
"The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better."

Robert F. Kennedy

Just for fun

Q: How do you keep someone in suspense?

A: I'll tell you tomorrow.



Discipline for tweens

Handling your tween's behavior may be a challenge as he outgrows "little kid" discipline methods. Strategies like these can help.

Use "I" messages

A sentence that starts with "You always..." or "You never..." might make your middle grader feel more defensive and less apt to listen. Instead, try starting with "I." ("I worry when I don't hear that you got to your friend's house safely" rather than "You didn't call like I asked!") At the same time, make sure he knows the consequences of not doing what you ask. ("I'll have to ask you to come straight home from school if you can't remember to call.")

Meet halfway

Your child will be more likely to follow rules if he understands the reasons behind them. Maybe he complains that he's not allowed to go out on school nights. Explain that he needs to finish homework, spend time with family, and get to bed on time. Then, you could



consider letting him go out one evening a week and give him a chance to show you he can meet his obligations.

Keep it in perspective

Save serious consequences for serious circumstances (*example:* your youngster cheats on a quiz). But for something minor, try using humor. It may keep a situation from growing into a full-blown argument. If your child frequently misplaces the remote control, say something like, "I think the dog lost the remote again. Can you find it?" You might get a laugh—and a more cooperative tween. 🍷

Inspire curiosity

Being curious about a topic she's studying can motivate your child to dig into it. Suggest these ways to pump up her curiosity.

■ **Looking ahead.** Your middle grader might scan her syllabus or textbook to see what's coming up next. What would she like to know more about? What questions come to mind? ("How did the Gilded Age get its name?")

■ **Choosing topics.** When your middle grader has a choice on a paper or project, encourage her to pick a topic that interests her (say, what schools were like in Colonial times). That way, she'll naturally want to jump in. As she researches, suggest she jot down questions and watch for answers. That will build curiosity and add to her knowledge. 🍷



On task from start to finish

Middle school students are expected to manage multiple assignments and deadlines. Your child can stay organized with these practical tips.

Get started. Recommend that your tween start on each project the day it's assigned. A good first step is to list the tasks required (get supplies, do a rough draft), along with a deadline for each. She can add to her list as she gets



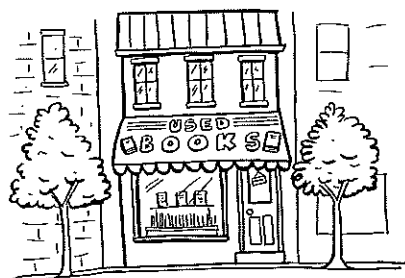
additional projects so everything is in one spot. *Idea:* Your tween and a classmate could check in daily on each other's progress to stay on track.

Turn in assignments. If your middle grader leaves completed work at home, she'll lose valuable points for turning it in late—or even receive a zero. Encourage her to immediately place finished work in her

backpack. Before bed, she should put her backpack and other needed items by the door. *Idea:* Suggest that she put a sticky note on her dresser or bathroom mirror as a reminder. ("Take my math poster!") 👍

Fun family reading

At this age, children can lose interest in reading as friends and activities take center stage. But reading for pleasure is important at every age! Encourage your tween to enjoy reading with ideas like these:



■ Keep an audiobook going in the car, and fit in bits and pieces when you run errands or drive your child to activities. You might discover he can't wait to get in the car to find out what happens next.

■ Scope out used-book shops during family day trips. There may be interesting ones in historic districts or tourist areas. Browse together so he can find books that interest him. Or explore library branches around your city or county to look for cozy reading spots and good books on display. Your tween will probably want to bring books home—and continue the reading there. 👍


Q & A Ward off drugs and alcohol

Q Now that my son is in middle school, I worry that he'll be exposed to alcohol or drugs. How can I keep him from trying them?

A Starting a discussion—and bringing up the topic regularly—is the best thing you can do to help your son say no.

Let him know how much you care about him and that you want him to stay safe and healthy. Explain that this includes not drinking alcohol, using drugs, or taking prescription medications that aren't his—not even once. Also, make sure he's aware of outcomes that go beyond the health dangers. For instance, he could get kicked off a team or out of a club if he drinks or uses drugs.

It's also wise to team up with other parents. You might agree to share concerns, like letting each other know if you hear the kids mention drugs when they're in your car or hanging out at your house. 👍



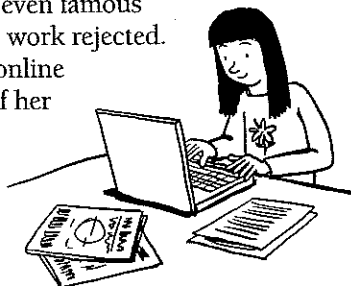
Parent to Parent Believe in yourself

My daughter Madison wanted to submit a story she had written to the school literary magazine, but she was afraid it wouldn't be accepted.

I told Madison that even famous authors have had their work rejected. To illustrate, I looked online and learned that one of her favorite books, *Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery, was rejected several times before it was

published. She was so surprised that she did a search herself and discovered that rejections are really common.

Madison decided to take a chance. Her work wasn't published in the fall issue of the magazine, but the editor told her they would consider it for the spring issue. That gave her the confidence to try sending another of her stories to a national kids' magazine—now she's waiting to hear back from them! 👍



O U R P U R P O S E

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