LESSON 14
Compassion in Our Communities

Prerequisite: Completion of Lessons 1-13

Objectives  students will be able to...

* Describe what a community is.
* List examples of compassion in a community.
* Describe the positive outcomes of compassion in a community.

Materials

* Shelter by Celine Claire
* Pre-drawn tree on chart paper or pre-cut out tree on wall/bulletin board
* Pre-cut leaves for tree

Community is defined as a group of people who are joined by common interests, history, or location. Programs that address social-emotional learning have shown to: significantly improve school climate; help develop positive relationship skills among students; help strengthen schools, families and communities. When individuals act compassionately, and that compassion spreads, it helps create kinder, healthier communities. In this lesson, students will be able to identify how compassion benefits communities and list examples of compassion in a community.

Teacher Notes

Opening 5 min
Format: Turn and talk, activate prior knowledge

Debrief 5 min
Format: Whole group debrief

Show me with your thumbs how familiar you are with the word ‘community.’

Thumbs up means totally know what it is; thumbs down means never heard it before; thumbs in the middle means have heard it before but not exactly sure what it means. If lots of students know what it is, ask for a volunteer to define it. If not, define it for them: “A community is a group of people who live, work, and play together. Our community is...”

Discuss as a class:

* What was the community in this book?
* Who needed compassion? How did you know?
* Who had empathy for the bears and showed them compassion? How?
* Were the bears a part of the community at first? Did they become a part of the community later?
Debrief Cont.

Have students turn and talk to a partner:

- What is something nice or compassionate you have done for your community? Think about your neighborhood - that’s your community! Think about your neighborhood park or your neighbors - have you done something nice for them? You can even show compassion for the environment by cleaning up your park!

- How did that compassion make your community a better place?

After students have shared with a partner, allow a few students to share with the whole group.

Activity:
Compassion Tree
1 15 min
Format: Whole group debrief

1. Hang a big (pre-created) tree on your wall or bulletin board (it should have a trunk and branches, but no leaves) or use chart paper with one pre-drawn.

2. Talk about what communities look like and how they work (members need each other for support, safety, happiness).

3. Ask students to brainstorm types of communities (e.g. school, neighborhood, church, etc.). Write the different communities on each branch of the tree - one on each branch.

4. Divide students into partners. Hand out pre-cut leaves for students (each partnership should get approximately 5 leaves, or one for each community). Ask students to work with their partners to write on each leaf one way to show compassion in each of these communities. Ask them to consider including acts that involve those they don’t know.

5. When students are finished, have volunteers share with the class. Finally, attach the leaves to the appropriate branch.

After the tree is complete, distribute the Commit to Compassionate Action worksheets.

Evaluation
1 5 min
Format: Access Individually

Debrief and Closing
1 5 min
Format: Turn and talk, class discussion

Extensions

Turn and talk: Why should we show compassion in our communities? Why is it important?

Have a few students share out their answers.

Discuss:

- What compassionate acts are you most excited about trying in our different communities?

- What do you think might happen in our communities as a result of our compassion?

Post the Commit to Compassionate Action worksheets up somewhere visible.

Allow sharing time for students to follow-up with what they did to show compassion in their communities from the Commit to Compassionate Action worksheets.

Leave the tree up year-round as a reminder of ways students can show others compassion in their communities.

Provide extra leaves for students to add to the branches as they think of more ways to show compassion in different communities.

Additional Suggested Reading for Students:

- I Walk with Vanessa by Kerascoet
- Duck for a Day by Meg McKinlay
- Bear Says Thanks by Karma Wilson

Teacher evaluation on the next page
Learners needing support:

Learners ready for extensions:

Notes for next time:
Commit to Compassion Action

Name:

Date:

1. Choose someone in your house that you will show compassion to (parent, grandparent, brother, sister):

2. How will you show them compassion?

3. How do you think it will make your home a better place?

1. Choose someone in your neighborhood that you will show compassion to (neighbor, new kid):

2. How will you show them compassion?

3. How do you think it will make your community a better place (You might need to get mom or dad’s permission or help for this one)?

1. Choose a place where you can show compassion to the environment (park, playground, yard):

2. How will you show compassion to the environment?

3. How do you think it will help the environment?