

## Teacher Guide

Welcome to our new High School Curriculum! We are thrilled that you are teaching this class! We can't wait to hear back about how it goes. This guide is designed to offer the following:

- [Class Overview](#)
- [Lesson Overview](#)
- [Project Overview](#)
- [Project Purpose](#)
- [Project Reflection](#)
- [Project Presentation](#)
- [Grading Recommendations](#)
- [Distance Learning Modifications](#)

Please also reference [The High School Curriculum Syllabus](#) for additional details; you are encouraged to share this syllabus with your students on the first day (or in the first week) of class.

We hope you enjoy teaching this course as much as we enjoyed creating it for you!

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## Class Overview

**Class Description:** In this course you will have an opportunity to gather new and deeper insights about respect, caring, integrity, inclusiveness, and courage and to begin to apply them in new and more meaningful ways. Through the development and deployment of a community service project, you will build self-initiative, critical thinking, and community networking skills. Each week will provide new ways to increase your capacity for kindness. *\*This course meets the state community service graduation requirement for up to 50 hours.*

### Class Objectives:

1. Apply the kindness concepts in daily tasks.
2. Gain skills in research and analysis.
3. Evaluate the impact of kindness in real-life situations.
4. Design and execute a community service project.

### Class Materials:

- There is no required textbook.
- Links to external resources (articles, videos, podcasts) have been provided in each lesson. In many cases, you will need to be able to play a video or share/print articles for students. Preview each lesson in advance so you can plan ahead for technology and/or printing needs (you could also email or share via the school's learning management system (LMS) the required articles and ask students to read them in advance).
- Students will need a journal or notebook for journaling.
- Worksheets and other student-facing lesson assets are provided in the associated lessons.

### Class Structure:

- Weeks 1-7 are dedicated to learning the six kindness concepts: Respect, Caring, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Responsibility, and Courage, and to evaluating the local community for its prevalence of each concept.
  - Weeks 8-16 are dedicated to planning, executing, and reflecting on a community-based project that addresses at least one kindness concept that students have determined is low or missing in their community. They will make these decisions based on community data collected in Weeks 2-7.
  - There is a lesson for each day of the week (Monday-Friday), and we feel each one is essential. However, you are welcome to modify, skip, or combine as necessary to suit your school calendar and student needs.
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## Lesson Overview

Each lesson has the same elements:

- List of objectives
  - List of required materials and linked resources
  - Assessments (point values to be determined by you)
    - There may not always be a homework assignment or worksheet, but there is usually a daily journal prompt. You can determine how often you want students to journal.
  - Three core components: Share, Inspire, Empower
    - **Share:** These are designed to be initial connection points/anticipatory sets to prepare students for learning; they introduce the kindness concept or lesson topic.
    - **Inspire:** These are designed to take the concept or lesson topic a bit deeper and prepare students to actively engage with the concept or topic.
    - **Empower:** These are designed to give students action items or active discussion topics around the concept or topic; they prepare students for any homework assigned or to integrate their learning into their daily life.
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## Project Overview

**What:** As part of this course, students will develop and execute a **Kindness Capstone Project** (hereafter “Project” or “The project”) that will involve a combination of planning and execution hours (totaling up to 50 hours). They will do this in **small groups** (four groups total for the class).

**Why:** This will give them an opportunity to not only help others, but also earn service hours which may be a graduation requirement and *will* be valuable in building their resumé, applying for college or other post high school training, and gaining new life experiences.

**How & When:** This is the structure and timeline for the development and execution of the projects:

- **Weeks 1-7:** The project will be introduced in Week 1; in Weeks 2-7 students will be collecting data on their communities to better understand how the six kindness concepts they are studying are either present or absent in their community. They will use this data to formulate a project proposal.
- **Week 8:** During this week students take the data they collected during Weeks 2-7 and map it to determine where the kindness gaps are in their local community.
- **Week 9:** In this week students determine their project focus and write up a project proposal. Their proposal must be approved by you, the teacher.

- **Weeks 10-14:** This time will be used for project development and execution. They will identify and collaborate with community partners, work in small groups to develop marketing and communications materials for their project, and deliver as planned in Week 9. *Projects should be finished by the end of Week 14.*
  - **Week 15:** In this week students will spend some time reflecting on the class and, specifically, on the project they developed and executed. A specific reflection form will be supplied for this (see *Week 15*). Teachers will also assess student projects during this week.
  - **Week 16:** Students will present their project to the rest of the class this week. *See the Presentation Prep Sheet below for more details.*
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## The Project Purpose

Students will determine a project idea based on a kindness concept gap in their local community. The purpose, then, is to *fill this gap*. The gap will be determined through community research and analysis during Weeks 2-7. The class will vote on the concepts that appear to be most deficient and structure a project around increasing that kindness concept. Students will work in small groups (we recommend four groups per class). Students should be mindful of their time and capacity to develop and execute a project in only 7 weeks time (Weeks 8-14, with Week 8, largely, as a concept mapping week and not a planning/work week). It sounds like a lot of time, but it will go quickly. Here are some tips to help keep students focused:

**Think Locally:** Students will be thinking locally for this project, either in their town or neighborhood, or within a sub-community of those communities: school, grade level, church or religious organization, non-profit (like a food bank or county resource center), etc. Wherever they feel the identified kindness concept gap is most prevalent is where they may want to focus their efforts.

**Think Originally:** Students cannot use something they already do in service to others as their project (for example, volunteering at a local food bank); it needs to be a brand new service project they have not done before and needs to address the kindness concept gap they identified in Week 8. For example, students may determine the local food bank could increase its capacity for caring by offering masks to patrons or volunteers, so their project could center on mask making, awareness, and distribution for the food bank. Same organization [i.e., food bank] but *new, original* project with a focus on filling the kindness concept gap.

**Think Specifically:** Have students address one singular specific issue that, again, can be developed and deployed in 7 weeks. Please help guide your students in thinking realistically about what they can achieve, reminding them that no act of kindness or service is too small (but sometimes they can get too big!).



Need inspiration? [randomactsofkindness.org](https://www.randomactsofkindness.org) and [DoSomething.org](https://www.do-something.org) are great resources for project ideas.

# The Project Reflection

Every project deserves proper reflection. You as the teacher have observed countless stumbling blocks and challenges among your students as they worked through the planning and execution of their kindness based projects. However, you have also witnessed amazing fortitude and perseverance. All of this warrants discussion and exploration. As such, Week 15 is dedicated to project reflection. This will help them prepare for their presentations in Week 16 and will serve as a way for you to further assess the impact and success of the projects.

Remind students that this reflection does not have to indicate an end to the class, but rather a beginning to something bigger - a student body empowered to bring kindness to their community, regardless of where they wind up geographically after high school!

## So what does reflection look like?

Most of us think of reflection as a simple journal entry. "What went well?" and "What would you change?" are common prompts. Students answer and, if time permits, small group discussions are incorporated.

This reflection design is different.

It embodies this type of pragmatic project assessment but also assesses community impact and incorporates a reflection on kindness and the interconnected concepts they learned earlier in the course. Through a kindness self-inventory, students will circle back to those first 8 weeks and bring the conversation back to the core concepts that propelled them towards their personalized community kindness projects in the first place.

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# The Project Presentation

At the end of Week 16, groups present their project to the class. You can tailor project presentation requirements to best suit your students, your classroom environment, and the time you have left at the end of the semester. The instructions in Week 16 leave this pretty open-ended, though groups should present on the following:

- An overview of the project
- The community asset mapping
- The Planning Process
- The Project Execution
- Problem Solving for Community Challenges
- How did this project help you better understand community service and community collaboration?

## Presentation Ideas:

For the presentations themselves, you may have students do something like the following:

1. **Gallery Walk** - If you have a lot of students, setting up more of a gallery of projects than specific presentations may be a more efficient use of time. Have students create posters that highlight the required elements. Students can set up their posters around the room and stand next to them as others tour the gallery and ask questions. Or, you can simply go around the room and have students say a few things about their work that is highlighted on the poster.

2. **Digital Portfolio** - If you teach online or don't have time during class to have students present, you can have them create digital portfolios of their project. Using something like Google Slides or Google Docs is an easy way to have students work collaboratively and then all of the projects can be compiled in one Google folder that can be shared with the entire class. This also gives students an opportunity to build something they can use later for college applications, for securing internships, or applying for jobs. This is a portable showcase of the work they did as part of the course.
  
3. **Formal Presentation** - If you have time or if you have students who need more formal presentation experience, having students prepare a slide presentation (3-5 minutes) and/or handouts of their project and then actually present in front of the class with prepared notes may be a good way to finish this learning experience. This option does require the most dedicated class time but affords students a great opportunity to practice presentation skills.

After you've decided which presentation scenario is best for your class, give students the presentation parameters and assessment criteria during Week 15 (reflection week) so they are able to begin preparing. They only have four in-class days during Week 16 to prepare.

## Grading

We are leaving the points allocation and grade scale decisions up to you! We know each district approaches grades differently. However, we do recommend the following weighting system to encourage appropriate emphasis on the various course elements:

- Daily participation - 10%
- Homework/Journals - 20%
- Project Completion - 35%
- Project Reflection - 15%
- Project Presentation - 20%

*Note that we are encouraging participation points as this class is highly dependent on sharing and group work, and we feel students should be recognized in some way for active participation and engagement. If your school - or if your personal teaching philosophy - does not support points earned for participation, please make appropriate adjustments.*

### Grading Rubric:

We understand the importance and requirement of objective grading, even if the topic is kindness. To assist you during this component of the project, we have included the following rubric template that you can repurpose:

Criteria	Yes!	Getting There	Not Yet	Missing

*\*We feel it is important to use language like "Yes!" "Getting There," "Not Yet" to encourage a growth mindset. Students need to be held accountable for their progress (or lack thereof), but they cannot be afraid to fail as this is where learning happens. Research suggests that using language that promotes a growth mindset eases students' tension and stress over grades and shifts the focus to the learning process.*

Note: If you'd like to adjust the point system or grading rubric for your students, [click here](#) to make an editable copy of this document.

A more specific Kindness Capstone Project Rubric is included in Week 16 materials and also below:

## Project Presentation Rubric

Criteria	Yes!	Getting There	Not Yet	Missing
<b>Overview of Project</b>	A clear and concise overview was presented.	The overview was clear, but too long for the time constraints.	The overview was a bit unclear.	The overview was either missing or not clear at all.
<b>Community asset mapping</b>	Community asset mapping was explained and the process demonstrated the need for the project	Community asset mapping was explained but it was not connected back to the project.	Community asset mapping was somewhat explained and the project was loosely tied to it.	Community asset mapping was missing or incorrectly explained. No connection back to the project.
<b>The Planning Process</b>	The planning process was clearly laid out and included the creation of a large goal and weekly mini goals	The planning process was clearly laid out and the final goal was discussed. Mini goals were not included.	The planning process was somewhat laid out and goals were either vaguely mentioned or completely omitted.	The planning process was missing or was unclear as explained. No goals were discussed.
<b>Project Execution</b>	Project implementation was presented, including community collaboration and process used for gaining momentum.	Project implementation was presented, but community collaborators were only briefly mentioned.	Project implementation was presented, but community collaboration was omitted.	Project implementation was missing or not clearly explained. Community collaboration was not present.
<b>Problem Solving</b>	2-4 problems that occurred during the project are presented, along with the solutions used to overcome or accommodate them.	1 problem was presented with an accompanying solution.	Problems were presented but no solution was provided.	There was no mention of problems or solutions connected to the project.
<b>Presentation Skills</b>	The presentation was well thought out, presented professionally, and stayed within the time constraints. Questions were answered to the best of the presenter's abilities	The presentation was well thought out and presented fairly well, but was either too short (less than 5 minutes) or too long (over 7 minutes). Questions were answered effectively.	The presentation was a bit disorganized and somewhat difficult to follow. It may have gone over or under on time constraints. Questions were only partially answered and lacked clarity.	The presentation was not planned out. It did not adhere to the time constraints. Questions were not answered effectively or not at all.

Note: If you'd like to adjust the point system or grading rubric for your students, [click here](#) to make an editable copy of this document.

# Distance Learning Modifications

We know that many people may need to offer this class in an online format. While the course was originally designed to be delivered in person, we believe you can modify it to suit an online environment. Here are some suggestions:

- **Weeks 1-7: Kindness Concepts**

- These can easily be presented through the discussion forums in your learning management system (LMS). Present the RAK definition of the concept, include the **SHARE** questions, and have students respond in the discussions. You might also consider trying an online video discussion tool like [Flipgrid](#) or [VoiceThread](#) to bring a new, more personal spin to online discussions.
- The **INSPIRE** section of each lesson often includes a linked component (article, video, etc.). This could be done as part of a live session (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc.) if you are hosting live sessions. If you are not hosting live sessions, these could be optional enrichment assignments that you post as announcements or as part of the weekly lessons.
- The **EMPOWER** section of each lesson could be part of the graded work and you might set them up as submitted assignments in the LMS. If you are not using an LMS, you can create a [Google form](#) to collect student responses to the EMPOWER questions or they can email you completed worksheets if they cannot formally submit them.
- Note, too, that while you will download each lesson as a PDF, you are welcome to copy and paste the lesson content (and adjust the language to address your students) as a new lesson in your LMS platform. While it will take some work to re-create the lesson in the platform, the heavy lifting of curriculum development has been done for you!

- **Weeks 8-16: Kindness Capstone Project**

- Group work can be challenging at a distance but it is not impossible! [Google Docs](#) is a great way to collaborate on work and [Google Slides](#) is a great way to build group presentations from a distance. Students can 'house' their research in a shared Google Folder in Google Drive (your school does not need a Google for Education solution, either; students can set up their own Gmail and structure their Google Drive on their own. That said, it's likely your school has Google for Education [or G Suite], so speak with your IT specialist for more information).
- Students can also meet "live" in virtual conferencing platforms, some of which you may be using in class already: [Zoom](#), [MS Teams](#), [Google Meet](#), or [Hangouts](#).
- Students can also practice online scheduling with each other using free tools like [Doodle](#) or [Calendly](#). There are other free tools (though even the free versions have paid options); help students navigate these systems if they need to use them so they aren't accidentally paying for a service they don't need.
- While the project encourages students to actually get out into the community, we realize this may not be a safe option for everyone, even with precautions in place. However, there is a lot that students can learn about their community through things like the Chamber of Commerce website and through simply emailing or calling and interviewing local business owners. This is also a great skill they need to learn and would be doing even if they were meeting for class in person, so remind students this is not outside of the usual expectation. Conducting primary research can be done virtually just as easily (if not more so) than in person.
- The Week 15 reflection should be typed or in some kind of digital format, so submitting the reflection should be easy.
- The Week 16 presentation can also be done virtually through a variety of tools already mentioned. Having a digital portfolio of work is actually great for students applying for jobs, scholarships, or college admission. Encourage students to be creative in how they approach their presentations. Here is a list of 20 different digital presentation tools that your students may like: [20 Best Online Presentation Tools For Students](#)

**Note:** RAK is not affiliated with any of the linked or mentioned software companies and does not guarantee their product or services; they are simply recommendations of widely used educational technology tools that could service a distance learning class conversion.