

A Bowl of Compassion

This lesson focuses on caring through the act of compassion. Students will be presented with a series of difficult and surprising scenarios and will then talk about what they might do in that situation.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- Scenario Cards (see below)
- Bowl or box

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:

- Show compassion by brainstorming solutions for difficult scenarios.
- Explain compassion through words.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

The act of compassion for others often seems easy for us adults when we are watching a moving documentary or a news broadcast. However, the struggle to show compassion within our own community is at times a bit more difficult. We become immune to the homeless person with the sign or the single mother struggling with the packages. This week, take a concentrated look around your community, your school, and even your classroom. Who might be in need that you may have overlooked in the past? Dialing in your compassion to your immediate surroundings can really increase the connectivity with your students, your peers, and your community as a whole. When we are connected, we are present, so take a look around. Who has fallen through the cracks? How can your compassion help you remain connected with your school?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Place students in diverse groups of 3-4 to balance speaking parts.
- Use the scenario cards at the end of this lesson to help with comprehension.
- Add a “Create Your Own” difficult scenario card for advanced learners to extend the lesson.



Share

5-7 minutes

Have students gather at the circle time/community meeting area.

- Have students share with their neighbor about something they are grateful for today.

- If desired, write the gratitudes down on the links from last week to add to the chain later.



Inspire

What is Compassion?

10-15 minutes

Explain that Compassion is the feeling you get inside you when you want to help someone that is in need. This person could be a friend, your teacher, your parents, a sibling, or maybe even someone you have never even met! When a person is sad, in pain, or needs help, we naturally feel compassion for them. Our hearts tell us to help. Sometimes we don't even stop to think about giving this help because the feeling of compassion is so strong. Our desire to be kind and caring is overwhelming and we just jump into action! When have you felt compassion for your family or friends? How were you able to show kindness and caring?

Explain that compassion can be felt for people we have never even seen or met. Provide simple examples of scenarios that might naturally lead to a feeling of compassion. Some examples might include a sick child, a car accident, or a dead pet.

- Ask for other examples: Have you ever seen a movie that made you feel compassion for one of the characters?
- Read *The Lady in the Box* by Ann McGovern or watch this video for a read aloud  [The Lady In the Box](#)
- After the read aloud, ask the following questions:
 1. *Have you ever seen someone sleeping outside on the street or in the park?*
 2. *How do you feel when you see someone in need?*
 3. *How would you help the "Lady in the Box"?*

Note: This can be a sensitive topic. Be prepared for some questions that students may have around why people are homeless, why some have more than others, etc.



Empower

20 minutes

Divide the students up into teams of 3-5 depending on your class size. Using a bowl or box, place all of the scenario cards inside the bowl (make sure to fold them up so no one can see them from the outside).

Invite two groups up at a time. Have one group select a scenario card. Read the scenario title and describe the action of the card. Allow both teams time to discuss the scenario as a team. They must answer the question, "What would I do if this happened to me?" After two minutes, have both teams explain their answer. Example: I forgot my lunch at home.

Team 1:

We would tell the teacher and maybe she could help us get another lunch.

Team 2:

We would ask our best friend for some of their lunch because they always have extra.

After both teams have provided an answer, ask the following questions:

- *How would you feel if this happened to you?*
- *How could you show compassion if you saw this happen to someone in our class?*

Repeat this activity until all groups have had at least two chances up front. Try 3 teams at once for more of a challenge.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Compassion is a complex emotion and can be difficult to explain in a concrete way. Using real life scenarios as they come up while incorporating this language allows young children a foundation from which to build on. During times of conflict, use this same model to help both sides of the disagreement understand and show compassion for the other.



Extension Ideas

- Use this same technique during times of conflict with students throughout the year. This shifts the focus from, “my point of view is right” to one of kindness and compassion for the other person.
- Using the “Create Your Own” scenario card below, allow students opportunities to create their own and act them out in the pretend play area of your room (if applicable). Extra practice showing compassion is always a good investment of time!



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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/>

A kid on the playground does not have a coat on. It is cold today.

Your mom is crying because a plate just broke.

A girl just missed the bus to school.

A boy got a flat tire on his bike.

A dog barked loudly as a girl walked by someone's yard.

A boy fell off the swings and skinned his leg.

Some kids are playing ball. A boy asks to play and they say no.

A girl is sitting alone on the steps at recess.