

The Ripples of Kindness

This lesson sets the foundation for the year ahead. Establishing a respectful and kind classroom will provide a safe and fun learning environment. Use the basic structure provided in this lesson and incorporate unique classroom needs.

Respect Sub-Concept(s)

Self-Care, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

35-40 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ *One Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson
- ☐ Large bowl that can hold water
- ☐ One stone per student. This can be a natural stone or you can spray paint the stones red (each stone in future lessons has a specific color to easily differentiate the various kind acts that are noticed and accounted for by dropping the stone). If stones are not available, substitute with small colored items (Legos, coins, balls, etc.)

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.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Learn basic ways to show kindness and respect in the classroom and learning environment.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

It is extremely important to be kind to yourself as a teacher before you can expect to share that same level of respect within your classroom. How do you practice self-respect personally? Fueling your body, ensuring proper sleep, and carving out some quiet time each day are all terrific options to be kind to you in preparation for your classroom each day.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Illustrate the choices on the list
- Write the list in English and in another language, especially if there are ELL students in the class.
- Adjust the number of choices based on the ability and class size; 12 choices may be too many for your students to remember/process.



Share

5-7 minutes

What does the word “kindness” mean? Don’t use the word to define it!

Write down a definition on the board or type it on the smart board.

Share a time someone did something kind for you. Describe how it made you feel. What about the word “respect”? What does that mean?

Write down the definition.



Inspire

12-15 minutes

Today we are going to hear a story about a girl's choices and how they impacted another girl in her class. As we read/listen, I want you to pay careful attention to the choices that were made and to the acts of kindness and respect (or disrespect).

Read or listen to [Each Kindness](#) by Jacqueline Woodson. Talk about how the choices the girls made impacted the new student. Ask students what other choices the students could have made instead to make the new student feel more welcome.



Empower

15-20 minutes

This activity mirrors the one in the book *Each Kindness*, which allows students to drop a stone in a bucket or container of water and observe and discuss the ripple effect.

Kindness Pond: Bring in a large bowl of water that can accommodate each student dropping a small stone into and also accommodate the teacher (and possibly students) adding additional stones to over the course of the entire RESPECT Unit (see other lessons for how the Kindness Pond will be incorporated further).

Each student takes a small stone, says something kind they have done that day or recently, and drops the stone in the water to demonstrate the ripple effect of their kind act. Encourage students to think about a kind act they did recently (vs. a long time ago) and remind them, as Chloe was reminded, that it can be a very small thing that they did (hold a door open for someone, smile at a classmate, etc.). If anyone cannot think of a kind act, give them the opportunity to state a kindness they experienced themselves, they observed someone else do, or that they will try to do before the end of the day. Remind students that even if they do not feel they have made kind choices so far today, they can always choose kindness moving forward. Kindness is always a choice and they have infinite opportunity to make kind choices each day.

Be sure to discuss the ripple effect and talk about how one kind act can lead to another kind act.



Reflect

3-5 minutes

Our kindness pond is going to be a part of our classroom for the entire RESPECT unit and maybe longer! I want a way for us to physically see how many kind respectful acts we are doing in second grade and each time we drop a stone I want us to think about how our kind and respectful act can positively impact other people. That is the ripple effect we talked about. Each time you do something that shows kindness and respect to someone else, you give them a feeling that lasts and inspires them to do something kind and respectful for someone else.

Think about how kind and respectful our classroom, our school, and even our world would be if we rippled kindness and respect out to everyone else! That is going to be our goal this year. Each time you see our kindness pond, think about doing something kind and respectful. And, each time I see you all doing something kind and respectful, I will drop another stone in the pond. If you see others being kind and respectful, you can drop a stone, too! Let's see how many kindness stones we can get in our pond this month!



Extension Ideas

- To make this a math lesson, you could have a set number of stones for “kindness and respect” (approximately 50 stones) and do a regular “stone count” to help your students see how many stones are in the pond vs left “on shore” in the container. If there are 50 stones to start, and you have 18 students who each drop a stone, how many stones are left? You can count stones at the end of the week, too, to determine how many more have been dropped.
- To make this a science lesson, you can measure the water line before the stones are dropped. Then measure the water line after the stones are dropped to see how much the mass of the stones have displaced the water.
- You can either explain to students or simply be mindful as the teacher that the water may eventually overflow the bowl if enough kindness stones are added. If/when this happens, consider the class “overflowing” with kindness. You might even have a targeted celebration to draw attention to and celebrate this!