



CHARACTER COUNTS!

Caring Pillar

Activity Quickies

Upper Elementary Activities

Little Brown Bags of Compliments

Learning to give compliments is one way to develop a caring character. Have your students share times they received compliments and how they felt. Then give each student a brown lunch bag and as many index cards as there are students in the class. Have each student decorate the bag and write his or her name on it. Then have the students sit in a circle with their bags, index cards, and pens. Ask each student to pass his or her bag to the right one student. Then have each student write a compliment about the person whose name is on the bag he or she is holding. Encourage the students to write specific compliments about positive acts rather than just nice comments about appearance. When the students are finished, instruct them to put the cards in the bags and pass them to the right again. Continue until each student gets his or her own bag back. Let the students read the compliments. Ask how they feel after reading them. Discuss the importance of giving positive compliments and sharing feelings of appreciation.

Source: Developing Character When It Counts – Grades 6-8, 1999

"Strive for Five!" Campaign

Challenge kids to choose 5 people they can help in some way. For example, they may choose to play with someone new, help a person who has fallen, say thank-you to the lunchroom workers, etc. Or, instead of doing something nice for 5 people, change it to doing 5 kind things a day. Don't be surprised when "Strive for Five" becomes a desire to help in more than 5 different ways!

Source: ilovethatteachingidea.com

Secret Pals

Have each student write his or her name on a slip of paper. Place the names in a jar. Let each student draw a slip. Ask the students not to tell or show anyone the names they drew. Then have the students place the slips back in the jar. Explain that each person is a secret pal to the person whose name he or she drew. The assigned task is to be a caring person to this particular person for the day. Remind students that a caring person is kind, compassionate, and helpful. At the end of the day, let students try to guess and reveal their secret pals. Discuss how it feels to offer caring acts, and how it feels to receive them.

Source: Developing Character When It Counts – Grades 4-5, 1999

Lower Elementary Activities

Helping Hands

Make a photocopy of a child's hand. Then make some additional copies from the first copy and cut them out. When a child behaves in a caring manner toward you or his or her classmates, have the child sign his or her name on a hand and hang it somewhere in the room. Tell the students that you would like to see the helping hands stretch all the way around the room before the school year is over. If you don't have access to a photocopy machine, trace a child's hand onto construction paper and cut it out.

Source: Spotlight on Character: Plays That Show CHARACTER COUNTS! – Grades 2-3, 1999

A Loving Friend

Read Aloud *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. Ask your students to list ways that the tree cared for the boy. Have them think of ways the boy could have cared for the tree. Create a bulletin board with a large class "giving tree" in the center. Cut out circles of paper to represent the fruit of the tree. On each circle, have a student draw a picture of someone behaving in a caring way. Hang the fruit on the tree for all to see.

Source: Spotlight on Character: Plays That Show CHARACTER COUNTS! – Grades 2-3, 1999

Compliment Jar

Discuss with students the many different ways they can be caring towards a classmate. Direct them to identify acts that show compassion, consideration, kindness and charity.

Write the name of each student on a small slip of paper (about the size of a fortune in a fortune cookie), and place them all in a jar. Have children sit on the floor in a circle and pass the jar around. Each student then draws a slip and pays a compliment to the person whose name is on it.

Source: More Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, 2004

Tale of Four Wishes

Share this "Tale of the Four Wishes":

Four Indian men travel very far to meet a great magical leader who grants wishes. Three of the men wish for selfish things. The first man wishes to have a lot of money; the second wants to be more handsome, and the third wishes to be taller. Only the fourth man wishes for something that will benefit others. He asks to be a great hunter so that he can provide food for the villagers. The magical leader gives each of the men their wishes in pouches but instructs them not to look in the pouches until they get home. But the three selfish men cannot wait; they are too eager. Halfway home, they open the pouches. The first man finds that his pouch is full of money, but he is immediately attacked and robbed by a crowd of other greedy men like himself. The second man finds a mirror in his pouch and looks in it. His reflection proves that he has become very handsome, and he is instantly surrounded by a crowd of women who never leave him alone. When the third man opens his pouch he instantly grows taller, but everywhere he goes his head gets tangled in tree branches. However, the fourth man waits until he returns home to open his pouch. And just as he had hoped, he becomes a great hunter loved by many because he was able to feed them.

Ask the children to explain what this tale teaches about caring. Discuss how thinking of others before ourselves shows that we care. Distribute paper and yarn and create a wishing pouch by "sewing" two paper pouches together with the yarn. Ask students to make a wish for someone else and put it in their wishing pouch.

Source: Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, 2002