

Animating Matters

'Pass it On': Random Acts of Kindness & Compassion

GRADES
K-7



This lesson emphasizes the power of one's ability to 'pass on' positive words, feelings and actions to others to help build self-esteem, empathy and compassion. Students will view the animation *Pass it On* to learn about the characteristics and impact of positive and negative behaviours. They will practice how to be mindful with their words, tone of voice and body language and will create a collaborative art project to highlight their experiences of demonstrating random acts of kindness and compassion.

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Estimated Time: 90 minutes (3 class periods)



Goals

- ✓ To differentiate between positive and negative behaviours in relationships
- ✓ To encourage and compliment others
- ✓ To show empathy and describe others' feelings in an increasing range of situations
- ✓ Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate and inappropriate ways to express feelings and communicate effectively with others



Prep/Materials

- DVD player; Youth MADE Animation: *Pass it on*
- Student Reflection Journals
- A class set of 8½ X 14 legal sized paper with 4 large consecutive boxes photocopied onto it (see Wrap up activity)
- Pencil crayons, felts, pastels



Activity 1:

Energizer Pass on the put-ups! (15 - 20 minutes)



Arrange students into groups of 4 and randomly number them 1-4. Ask all the #1 students to whisper something about himself/herself to the #2 student (e.g. favourite hobby/activity, a skill, a talent etc.). The second student will then whisper this information to the #3 student but will add positive details that they appreciate about that person. The #3 student continues to add positive details and whispers this information to the #4 student. The final student then shares the positive statement aloud to the small group. Once all groups have shared, invite the #4 students from each group to share their positive statements aloud to the class. Continue the activity until all students have had a positive statement shared about them.



Debrief Questions:

- How did it make you feel when your classmates said kind words about you?
- Have you ever had unkind or hurtful things said about you or done to you? If so, how did that make you feel?
- Have you ever said or done unkind or hurtful things to others? If so, how did that make you feel?



Tell students they will be watching an animation of people passing on some kind and unkind behaviours and how these behaviours make people feel.

Activity 2: Screen the Youth MADE animation "Pass it On" (15-20 minutes)



NOTE: Students will likely focus on the physical violence in the animation and may find it humorous. Address that violence is extremely hurtful and that there is a zero tolerance policy for violence in the school community and beyond. Explain to students that since violence is not tolerated, you will focus on the other ways that we may demonstrate unkind and hurtful behaviours without knowing it.



Debrief Questions:

- What were these characters 'passing on' at the beginning of the animation? How do you think the 'receivers' felt (those receiving the kind or unkind behaviour)? How did they show their feelings? (e.g. facial expressions, body language etc.)
- What happened after a character passed on a kind or unkind behaviour? (e.g. The behaviour was passed onto another person; the behaviour was contagious; the behaviour was a negative/positive influence). Have you ever had this happen to you? If so, tell us about it.
- What happened at the end? How do you think the characters felt at the end?
- What did you learn from this animation?
- What are some of the unkind and hurtful things that have been done to you (aside from physical actions such as hitting, punching, pushing etc.)?



NOTE: Students will likely share that they have experienced name-calling or gossiping, the use of hurtful language. Tell students that words can be very hurtful and that the next activity will help them practice how to be mindful of the way that they use their words so that they are not misunderstood by others.

Activity 3: Be mindful of what you say: (15-20 minutes)

Words, Tone & Body language

1. Brainstorm some statements that students might say to one another on a daily basis.

Ask students, "What are some things that you say to your classmates during the day?"

Sample statements:

- ☆ What are you doing for recess?
- ☆ What are you eating?
- ☆ That's nice.
- ☆ What are you drawing?
- ☆ What are you doing after school?
- ☆ What are you reading?
- ☆ How do you do that?
- ☆ When will you be finished?

Write the students' statements on the board. Tell students that when we talk to people, we do not only use words but we use our bodies and our voices. All of these ways help people understand what we mean. But sometimes, we might say something that others think means something else.

2. Choose one of the neutral statements from the brainstormed list and model how it sounds in a neutral and friendly manner. Using the same statement, deliver it in a negative way through your tone of voice and body language (e.g. emphasizing certain words, using a sarcastic tone, using an unfriendly voice, crossing arms, making a negative facial expression, scowling, etc.).

Ask students how the two statements were different even though the words were the same.

3. Invite students to practice with a partner how to say the statements on the list in both a kind way and unkind way. Invite some students to share their role plays in front of the class and ask students the following questions:

- How did it feel when you were spoken to in a kind or respectful way?
- How could you tell that the person was being kind or respectful? What did the person look like and sound like? (Write these characteristics on the board; e.g. smiling, eye contact, open body language etc.).
- How did it feel when you were spoken to in an unkind or hurtful way?
- How could you tell that the person was being unkind or hurtful? What did the person look like and sound like? (Write these characteristics on the board; e.g. frown, arms crossed, leaning forward, closed body language).



NOTE: There are three elements in any face-to-face communication:

- ☆ 7% of meaning is in the words that are spoken
- ☆ 38% of meaning is paralinguistic (tone of voice)
- ☆ 55% of meaning is in non-verbal behaviour (facial expressions, body language)

Mehrabian, Albert (1971). *Silent Messages* (1st ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

4. Draw a person on the board and do the following: shade a small part of a speech bubble to represent the 7% of words; shade a larger part of the person's throat and mouth to represent 38% of the 'tone of voice'; and shade most of the face and body to represent 55% of the 'non-verbal cues'.



NOTE: The 93% of non-verbal elements are particularly important for communicating feelings and attitudes, especially when they are incongruent. If words disagree with the tone of voice or non-verbal cues, people tend to believe the tonality and non-verbal behaviour.

Tell students that it is important to understand all of the ways that help us talk to others and helps others to understand us. If we are not mindful of how we use our words, voices and body language, we might be unknowingly sending an unkind or hurtful message to someone.



Wrap Up: (20 - 30 minutes)



To complement the *Pass it On* animation, invite students to create a comic strip that illustrates a time when they passed on a random act of kindness to a friend, family member or a stranger. You may want to brainstorm some examples with the students. Provide them with a piece of 8½ X 14 piece of paper that has four large consecutive boxes photocopied onto it. Ask students to draw a picture of their scenario and to label it to tell their story of kindness and compassion. Remind students to illustrate the characteristics of kind and respectful behaviour brainstormed earlier (including body language). When each student's comic is complete, transfer all the ideas onto a long piece of paper to create a tapestry.



Assessment & Evaluation

- ✓ Assess that students have honoured the Classroom Community Agreements during the lesson discussions and activities
- ✓ Assess students' participation in sharing their experiences. Look for evidence of active listening and their willingness to give positive and respectful statements.
- ✓ Assess how cooperatively students are working together during the activities, discussions and role plays.
- ✓ Assess that the comic strip characters include the characteristics and elements of respectful language (verbal and non-verbal cues)



*You may also invite students to do self and/or peer assessments for the above assessments.

*You may use the following rubric scale to evaluate the above assessments: Powerful=5; Confident=4; Developing=3; Beginning=2; Not yet meeting expectations=1



Follow Up:



☆ Share the class tapestry with another class and invite them to add to the tapestry by telling their stories of random acts of kindness and compassion. Other classes may choose to represent their stories using a different style of art, such as a mosaic. Encourage classes to continue passing their artwork along until all the classes in the school have contributed to it. Once everyone has participated, hang the tapestry or other artwork around the gymnasium or auditorium during a school assembly to acknowledge and celebrate all the random acts of kindness that have been demonstrated in the school.

☆ Invite students to present their role plays to students of younger grades in the school to model the importance of being mindful of their words, tone and body language.