
Courtesy

Thoughtfulness
Towards Others

Rudeness is a weak man's
imitation of strength.

Eric Hoffer



October Character Connection Theme: Courtesy



Definitions

Courtesy is defined as “polite behavior; gracious manner or manners.” It can be “a polite gesture or remark.”¹ It is thoughtfulness towards others. A courteous person derives his manners and politeness from his kindness and consideration towards others.

Anna Julia Cooper (1859–1964), was born to a slave, yet became a great African American educator and feminist. In “A Voice from the South,” part 1 (1892) she states:

“... Woman’s cause is the cause of the weak; and when all the weak shall have received their due consideration, then woman will have her ‘rights,’ and the Indian will have his rights, and the Negro will have his rights, and all the strong will have learned at last to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly; and our fair land will have been taught the secret of universal courtesy which is after all nothing but the art, the science, and the religion of regarding one’s neighbor as one’s self, and to do for him as we would, were conditions swapped, that he do for us.”²

Quotes

“Courtesy is a man's privilege, not an obligation.” (Anonymous)³

“Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy.” Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), French philosopher. *Reflections on America*, ch. 17 (1948)⁴.

“The greater man the greater courtesy.” Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892) *Idylls of the King: The last Tournament*. Line 628.⁵

“Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy.” Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) *Letters and Social Aims*. *Social Aims*.⁶

“Nothing is ever lost by courtesy. It is the cheapest of the pleasures; costs nothing and conveys much. It pleases him who gives and him who receives; and thus, like mercy, it is twice blessed.” –Erastus Wiman

“Really big people are. above everything else. courteous. considerate and generous – not just to some people in some circumstances – but to everyone all the time.” —Thomas J. Watson

He who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.
–St. Basil⁷

¹ “courtesy” The American Heritage Dictionary

² <http://www.bartleby.com/66/2/14902.html> The Columbia World of Quotations. 1996.

³ <http://www.quotationreference.com/quotefinder.php?str=1&subj=Courtesy&bys=1&subind=1&lr=C>: Sim Tech., John A. Simone, Jr.

⁴ <http://www.bartleby.com/66/5/37905.html> The Columbia World of Quotations

⁵ <http://www.bartleby.com/100/453.161.html> John Bartlett (1820–1905). *Familiar Quotations*, 10th ed. 1919.

⁶ <http://www.bartleby.com/100/420.81.html> John Bartlett (1820–1905). *Familiar Quotations*, 10th ed. 1919.

⁷ http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_courtesy.html, TPCN-Quotation Center, Cyber Nation International

Activities

** At the end of the day, have students notice and compliment those who have exhibited courtesy. Perhaps an award could be presented to a most polite student of the day. Keep a notebook of these good mannered observations and present it to the principal at the end of the month.

**Research the customs of different countries and time periods. Talk about the Golden Rule as a basis for good manners and etiquette.

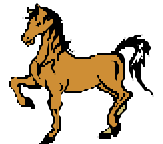
**Rub a plastic spoon with something woolly. Then hold the spoon near a trickle of water (The water is attracted to the spoon.) Talk about static electricity. Discuss why people with good manners attract others to them. Talk about polite introductions, table manners, handshaking, and addressing someone.

See http://www.ryangrpinc.com/TIPS_ESOURCESearch_START.asp or

<http://www.uky.edu/LCC/SOC/ISA/etiquette.html> for on-line general etiquette suggestions. Will

Rogers said, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." How does the way you address someone (Mr., Mrs., Dr., Miss, or Ms.) make a difference?

Make a guidebook for good manners. Divide the class in groups. Have each group write and illustrate a book section of good manners for riding a **bus (stepping on someone's toe, getting past someone, appropriate volume, sitting down); in an **assembly** (appropriate applause, audience behavior); among **cars** (roller blading, walking, biking, avoiding road rage); in the lunchroom or at the **table** (food manners, thanking those that help us); on the **phone** at school or home (answering, appropriate length); with a **cough** or sneeze (covering mouth, staying home if ill, washing hands); in **conversation** (not interrupting, being patient, "Excuse me," use of appropriate titles, shaking hands, introductions); and on the **playground** (taking turns, safe play on equipment, including everyone.)



Stories

The Knight and His Horse⁸

Once there was a knight who went to war with a wonderful horse. The horse maneuvered deftly, rode quickly, and saved his master from many scrapes. The knight fed his horse the best quality of feed. He kept the horse's feet trimmed and shod. The horse was always well groomed. When the war was over, the knight left his horse in the stall, feeding him only straw and paying little attention to him. The horse became thin and weak. Time passed and a neighboring country invaded. In great haste, the knight brought out his horse, brushed him, saddled him in trappings of war, donned his own armor and attempted to ride him. The horse collapsed under the weight of the heavy armor. "I am sorry," said the horse, "You will need to go to war on foot. You have transformed me from a horse of war into a stick horse. How can you expect me in one day to be transformed into a horse of war again?" *In order for good manners to be ready for a grand occasion, they must be practiced in daily ordinary circumstances.*



The Seat Companion⁹

A wealthy young Jew was once traveling on a train. He sat next to a man, bent and weighted with years. The young man treated his seat companion with disdain and rudeness and waited impatiently for the train ride to end. When the ride ended, the young man watched as his seat companion was received by a great throng, for this was a celebrated rabbi. Realizing his mistake and the missed opportunity to learn, the young man pushed his way through the throng to the elderly man. He begged his apologies and asked for forgiveness. The old rabbi looked at him a long time. "I am not the one to grant you forgiveness", the rabbi said. "To receive forgiveness you must go out and beg it from every poor old person in the world." *Courtesy should be extended to everyone, no matter what we perceive his or her station in life to be.*

⁸ adapted from <http://www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/cgi/aesop1.cgi?srch&fabl/TheHorseandHisRider>, Aesop's Fables, John R. Long

⁹ adapted from <http://inspirationalstories.com/0/18.html> Love for Others: A Hasidic Story by: Brian Cavanaugh, T.O.R., The Sower's Seeds



The Birkenhead¹⁰

During the Kaffir Wars, The 43rd infantry was sent on the HMS Birkenhead to South Africa. On February 24, 1852, the boat shipwrecked off the Cape. According to tradition the ship captain called, "Every man for himself." However, the troops stood steady on parade as the women and children boarded the three serviceable lifeboats. The ship split in two, then tilted, but the men stood in their ranks until thrown overboard. Of the 638 on board, only 193 survived. According to tradition, this event was where the saying "women and children first" originated. *Talk about the self-control that is called for by good manners. Find out the origin of "etiquette" and some of the courtesies that we extend to others.*

A Great Man's Courtesy¹¹

President Lincoln was once driving with a wealthy plantation owner. They passed an old slave who bowed very low and took his hat off to him. In return, Lincoln smiled and tipped his hat. When the plantation owner asked Lincoln why a person in his position would take notice of a slave, Lincoln replied, "I prefer not to be outdone in courtesy by anyone."

Writing or Discussion Topics

** Sarah Patton Boyle was a U.S. civil rights activist and author. She was a native of Virginia. In "The Desegregated Heart" she describes the Virginian's ideal self-image as: "He was one whose glory was an inner glory, one who placed culture above prosperity, fairness above profit, generosity above possessions, hospitality above comfort, courtesy above triumph, courage above safety, kindness above personal welfare, honor above success."¹² Irish poet W.B. Yeats wrote his wish for the future charms of his daughter in "A Prayer for My Daughter." (Read entire text <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15530>) He writes:

"In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;"

Have students talk to their parents about the small courtesies that make an ideal family member or employee. Then, have students write a description of an ideal American. What place does courtesy play in the character of a model citizen?

**Talk about etiquette for Halloween and other holidays. What place does kindness and good manners have in celebrations?

Role Plays

**Henry is riding the city bus with his mother. He is glad that his is in the first seat, because all of the seats are filled and the bus is feeling very crowded. The bus stops again and a grandmother holding a child's hand gets on the bus. *What should Henry do?*

**Her mother has just introduced Joyce to a friend from work. *What should Joyce do and say? How does Joyce address the adult friend?*

**Edgar is late for school, but arrives as the flag is being put on the flagpole. Two boys are saluting. Edgar will miss the quiz if he is late. *Talk about flag etiquette. What should Edgar do?*

Book List

What Do You Say, Dear? by Maurice Sendak.

What do you do, Dear? Proper Conduct for All Occasions by Sesyle Joslin, Maurice Sendak (Illustrator), Harper Trophy, September 1986

Mind Your Manners! by Peggy Parish, Marilyn Hafner (Illustrator), Mulberry Books, May 1994

You Know Better Than That by Smaridge, Norah, Nashville, Abington Press, 1973

November: Dependability

December: Friendship

January: Cooperation

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¹⁰ <http://www.lightinfantry.org/obli/birkenhead.htm>

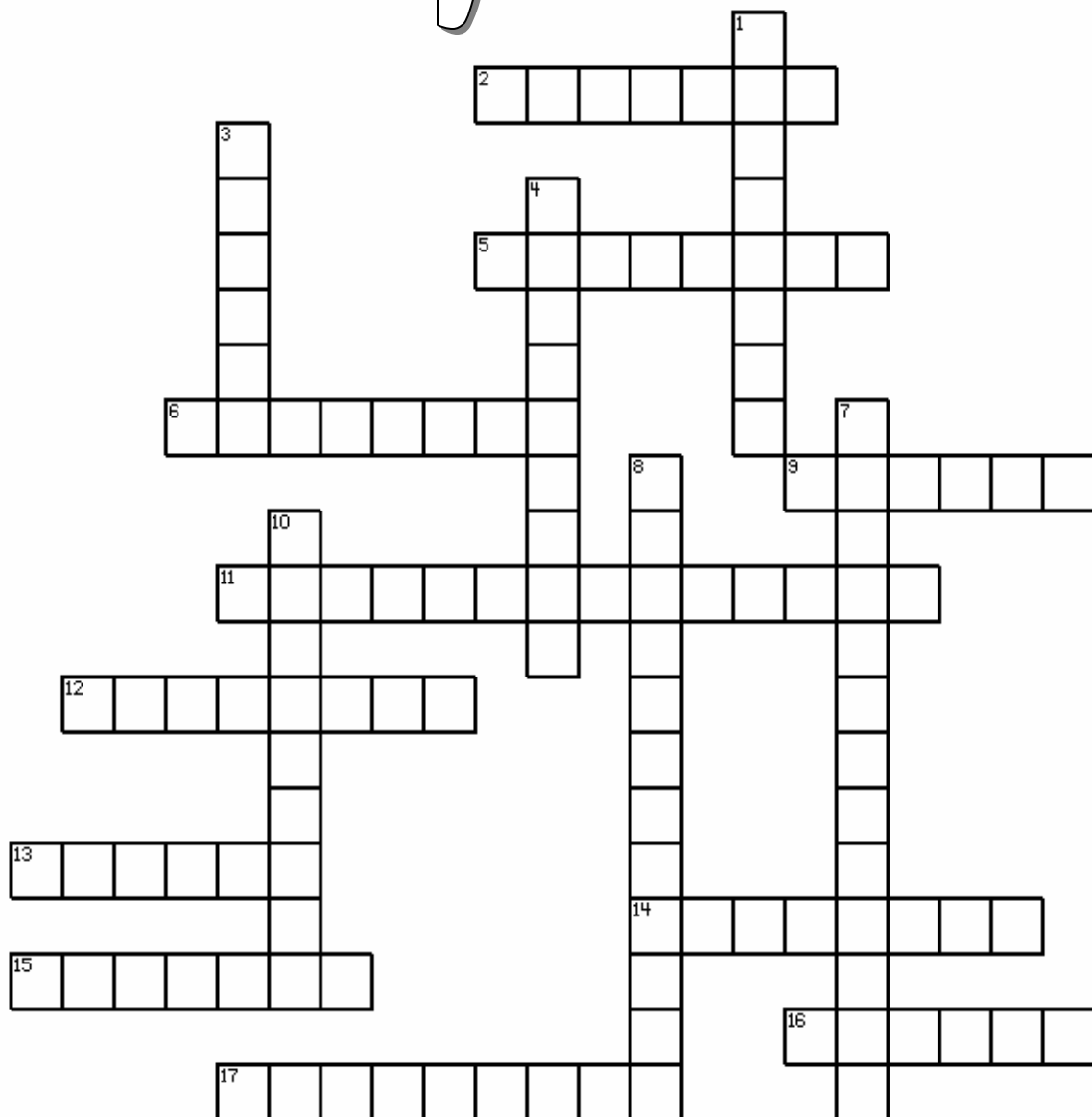
¹¹ adapted from The Scouter's Minute page 82

¹² <http://www.bartleby.com/66/57/8057.html> The Columbia World of Quotations. 1996.

Name _____

Courtesy

courtesy
please
thank you
polite
manners
your welcome
kindness
consideration
gracious
thoughtfulness
etiquette
social
behavior
propriety
decorum
protocol
curtsy



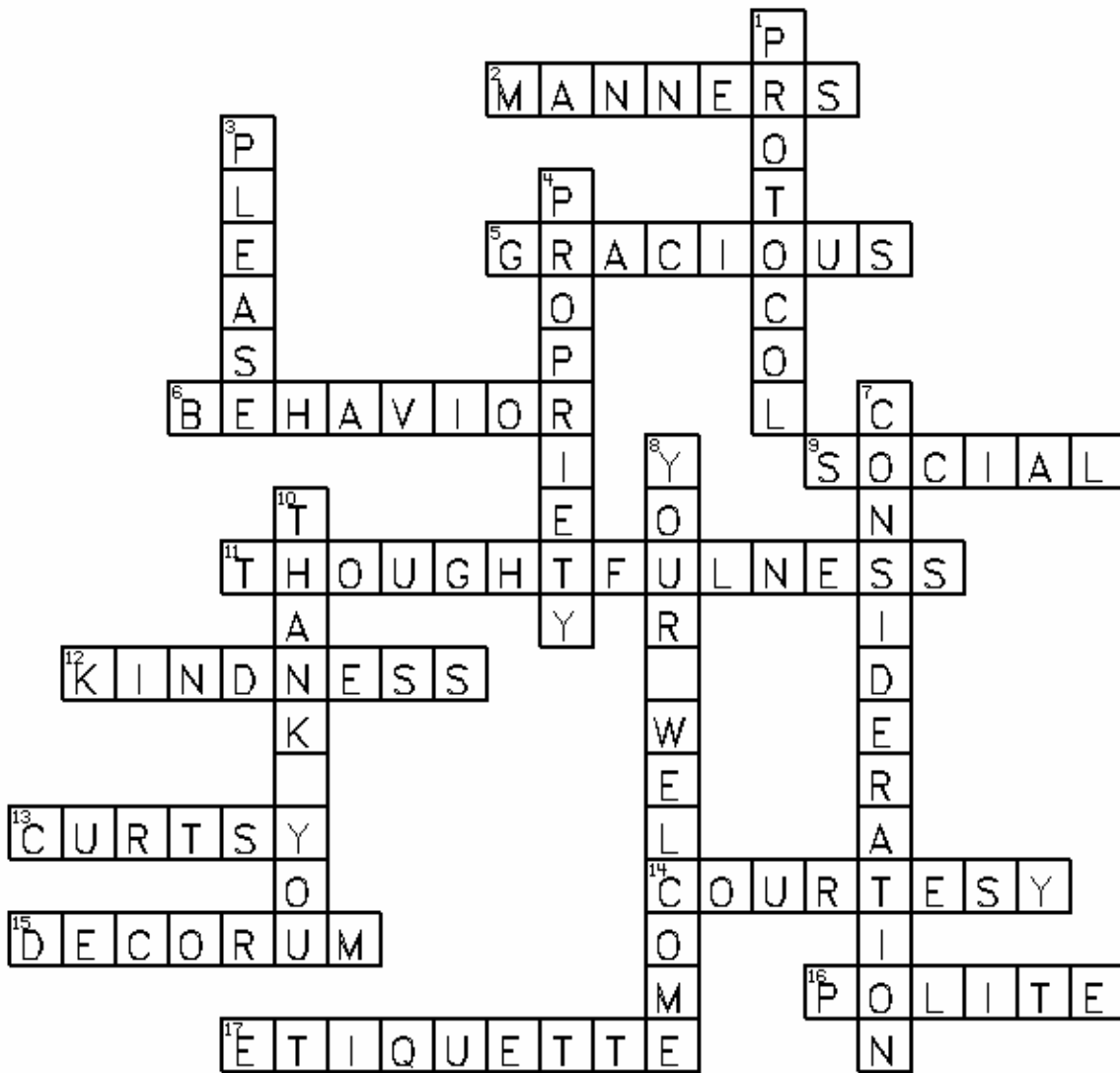
Use the word bank to fill in the words for the crossword puzzle. (Hint: Start with the longest word.)

“Moral virtues are the foundation of society in general, and of friendship in particular; but attentions, manners, and graces, both adorn and strengthen them.” --Lord Chesterfield in “Letters to His Son”¹³

Created with the help of Worksheets—www.qualint.com

¹³ <http://www.bartelby.com/95/101.html> Introduction: “Manners and Morals” by Richard Duffy to Emily Post’s *Etiquette*

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Answer Key