

*Compassion/
Caring*

Valuing Other's
Thoughts, Feelings,
and Experiences

“The best portion of
a good person’s life
is the little
nameless,
unremembered acts
of kindness and
love.”

~ William Wordsworth ~

April Character Connection Theme: Compassion/Caring

Definitions

Compassion is “the deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another in the inclination to give aid or support, or to show mercy. . .to sympathize with.” It comes from Latin *com-* meaning “with” and *pati*, meaning “to suffer.”¹ A caring person values others’ thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Here are some ways to practice compassion:

*Let someone know you care.

“Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another.” --George Eliot²

*Give of your time to help another.

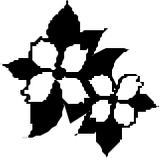
“A kind and compassionate act is often its own reward.”-- William John Bennett³

*Really Listen.

“The first duty of love is to listen.” --Paul Tillich⁴

*Forgive someone who hurt you.

“The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath.”
--William Shakespeare



Quotes

“*Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.* No stranger to trouble myself, I am learning to care for the unhappy.”
--Virgil (70-19 B.C.)⁵

“Love doesn’t sit there like a stone, it has to be made, like bread; remade all the time, made new.” —*Ursula K. Le quin*⁶

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.” -- Winston Churchill⁷

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.”--George Washington Carver, (1864-1943, American botanist and educator)⁸

“Keep in mind that the true measure of an individual is how he treats a person who can do him absolutely no good.” --*Ann Landers*⁹

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

--Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)¹⁰



Activities

**Make paper compassionate eyeglasses. The eyepieces could be heart shaped. Talk about seeing people and situations through compassionate eyes.

**Clara Barton was known as the “Angel of the Battlefield” during the American Civil War. With a vehicle equipped with medicine and supplies, she administered first aid to the wounded soldiers on the battlefield. After the war, she worked to learn the fate of missing soldiers. Through her efforts, the United States joined the Red Cross movement. Clara was instrumental in adding the “American Amendment” to the Red Cross constitution. This clause extended assistance to

¹ from The American Heritage Dictionary

² Baer, Franklin C., “Quotable Hearts” <http://www.bemorecreative.com/tqs/tq-love.htm>, accessed February 19, 2000

³ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_kindness.html

⁴ Baer, Franklin C., “Quotable Hearts” <http://www.bemorecreative.com/tqs/tq-love.htm> accessed February 19, 2000

⁵ The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980

⁶ Quotes and Quips, Covey Leadership Center, 1993, page 24

⁷ Quotes and Quips, Covey Leadership Center, 1993, page 26

⁸ <http://www.cp-tel.net/miller/BilLee/quotes/more.html>

⁹ Quotes and Quips, Covey Leadership Center, 1993, page 16

¹⁰ submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative



victims of natural calamities.¹¹ *Talk about the importance of compassionate service on the battlefield and after disasters, then play Medic Assisted Dodge Ball:* (Equipment: 4 red balls, 2 yellow balls, 2 small rolling carts) The game is played in a gym with a basketball hoop at each end. Divide the class into two teams. Team members must stay on their half of the basketball court. Each team chooses a “medic.” Red balls are used to “wound” members of the opposite team. (Medics may not be “wounded.”) A wounded team member must drop to the floor until a medic rolls him to the sidelines on a cart. After the “wounded” team member does 5 “therapeutic” push-ups, he may return to the game. A team member that steps across the middle line is also considered “wounded.” Yellow balls are used to shoot baskets at the opposite end of the court. On the first basket, the opposing medic is sidelined. On the second basket, the entire basket thrower’s team miraculously recovers from injuries and stands up to play.

**On a bulletin board, make a large circle. Have students place self-portraits inside the circle. Brainstorm on words and phrases that show compassion. Place the positive sentences on the inside of the circle. Include “Outwitted” by Edwin Markham:

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

**Magnetize a sewing pin by rubbing it on a magnet, and then use the magnetized pin to pick up other pins. Compassion can be compared to the force that draws the pins together. Katherine Paterson said, “Peace is not won by those who fiercely guard their differences but by those who with open minds and hearts seek out connections.”¹²

**This poem from *McGuffey’s Second Reader* was memorized by many in past generations. As a class, memorize:

Beautiful faces are they that wear
The light of a pleasant spirit there;
Beautiful hands are they that do
Deeds that are noble, good and true;
Beautiful feet are they that go
Swiftly to lighten another’s woe.¹³

Stories

The Boy Who Vanished: A Tale from Russia



Long ago there lived a rich nobleman with a wonderful son. Through a wicked spell, the boy disappeared just before his twelfth birthday. Although the nobleman searched thoroughly, he could not find his son. For years he mourned. Then he learned that in one of the rooms of his castle footsteps, moans, and groans were heard at midnight. The nobleman offered 300 pieces of gold to any of his countrymen who would stay in the room and discover the secret of the haunting sounds.

Not far away, a poor peasant man and wife lived with their three daughters. Seeing nothing to lose, the oldest daughter volunteered to stay in the haunted room. For her stay, she requested only the equipment and ingredients to prepare a dinner. A few minutes before midnight, the fire was blazing and dinner was almost done. The footsteps and moaning started. Soon a young man, grief stricken, stood before the girl. When asked for whom the fire and the dinner had been prepared, the frightened girl replied that they were hers. The stranger’s look of anguish deepened and the figure disappeared. In the morning, the girl reported the evening’s visit to the nobleman and was paid the 300 gold pieces. Still the nobleman wanted more information and continued to offer the reward.

Emboldened by her sister’s story, the second daughter volunteered to stay in the room. Equipped with the same provisions, she encountered the same ghostly figure. She, too, was asked for whom the fire and dinner were prepared. Remembering her sister’s reply and her safety, she, answered that they were hers, and only hers. The same anguished look greeted her reply, and the figure disappeared. This daughter, too, reported her adventure.

The youngest daughter then volunteered to stay in the room. She took the same provisions, made the same preparations and soon the same ghostly figure appeared. When he asked for whom the fire and dinner were prepared, she answered, “I have prepared them for me.” Then she added, “But you may share them with me.” The figure smiled, the spell was broken and the peasant’s daughter reunited the nobleman with his son.

The nobleman’s son and the peasant girl were soon married, lived in a beautiful castle, and lived happily ever after.¹⁴ *Why is it important to show compassion to those who may be frightening or repulsive to us?*

¹¹ submitted Pleasant Grove High School PTA representative, from *The Book of Virtues*, page 144-146

¹² Baer, Franklin C., “Quotable Hearts” <http://www.bemorecreative.com/tqs/tq-heart.htm>, accessed February 19, 2000

¹³ submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA representative, from *The Book of Virtues*, page 134

¹⁴ Please see: Whootie Owl’s “The Boy Who Vanished” at <http://www.storiestogrowby.com>

Mary McLeod Bethune

Mary Jane McLeod Bethune was born on July 10, 1875, in South Carolina to a former slave. Fortunately to receive an education, she graduated and soon began to teach in Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and Illinois. In Chicago, she also visited prisons and counseled those in slums. In 1904, Mary opened the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls. The school opened with 5 girls that paid tuition at 50 cents a week. However, students who could not afford the tuition were not turned away. The school grew and in 1923 joined with a boys' school to become a college.¹⁵ Mary Bethune's motto was: "Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it might be a diamond in the rough."¹⁶ One day she attended a conference in Birmingham with the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. At that time there was a Birmingham law that required blacks to sit on one side of the center auditorium aisle and whites on the other side. Filled with compassion for her friend and indignation at the injustice, Eleanor refused to obey the order. When police told her that she was violating the law, she sat on a chair that she had moved to the center aisle.¹⁷ *How can viewing others as "diamonds" help us show compassion?*

Writing or Discussion Topics

**The story is told of a wealthy boy, Winston, who is rescued from a bog by a farmer's son named Alexander. Winston's father rewards Alexander with an education. Soon Alexander becomes an important doctor who discovers penicillin. Later, Winston becomes very ill and sends for the now famous Alexander. The new miracle drug is administered and again Winston's life is saved. Tradition states that the famous doctor was Sir Alexander Fleming and Winston Churchill was the boy that he saved.¹⁸ *Considering that "what goes around often comes around," why is compassion such an important trait? Have students talk with their parents about experiences as recipients or suppliers of compassion. Then have students write a true "Soup for the Soul" story of compassion.*

** Often, healthy dolphins will swim on either side of a weak dolphin, supporting it, so it can breathe.¹⁹ However, chickens will peck a weak or diseased chicken to death. *How do we, often unwittingly, "peck" a "weakened" person? How can we buoy another up?*

**Children can learn compassion as they love and care for animals.

Little children, never give
Pain to things that feel and live;
Let the gentle robin come
For the crumbs you save at home;
As his meat you throw along
He'll repay you with a song.²⁰



Why should we be kind to animals? How can we be kind to animals? Have students write a journal entry on an experience when they have received the rewards of being compassionate to an animal.

Role Plays

**Carl is blind. *How can Arthur show compassion and still allow Carl to feel dignity? What are other disabilities and ways to show compassion?*

**Darren likes baseball, but often drops the ball. He is always chosen last for teams and is often substituted out. *Can Fred, today's team captain, show compassion and still be popular with his other friends?*

Book List

Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch by Eileen Spinelli

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

The Wolf's Chicken Stew by Keiko Kasca

Miss Maggie by Cynthia Rylant

Now One Foot, Now the Other by Tomie dePaola



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¹⁵ "Bethune, Mary McLeod," *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1988 page 275

¹⁶ Profiles in Caring, www.nahc.org/NAHC/Val/Columns/SC10-1.html

¹⁷ Freedman, Russell, *Eleanor Roosevelt—A Life of Discovery*, Scholastic, New York, page 110

¹⁸ Please see <http://www.rogerknapp.com/inspire/fleming.htm> and Fleming story from The Speakers Library of Business in *A Cup of Chicken Soup for the Soul* (c)1996

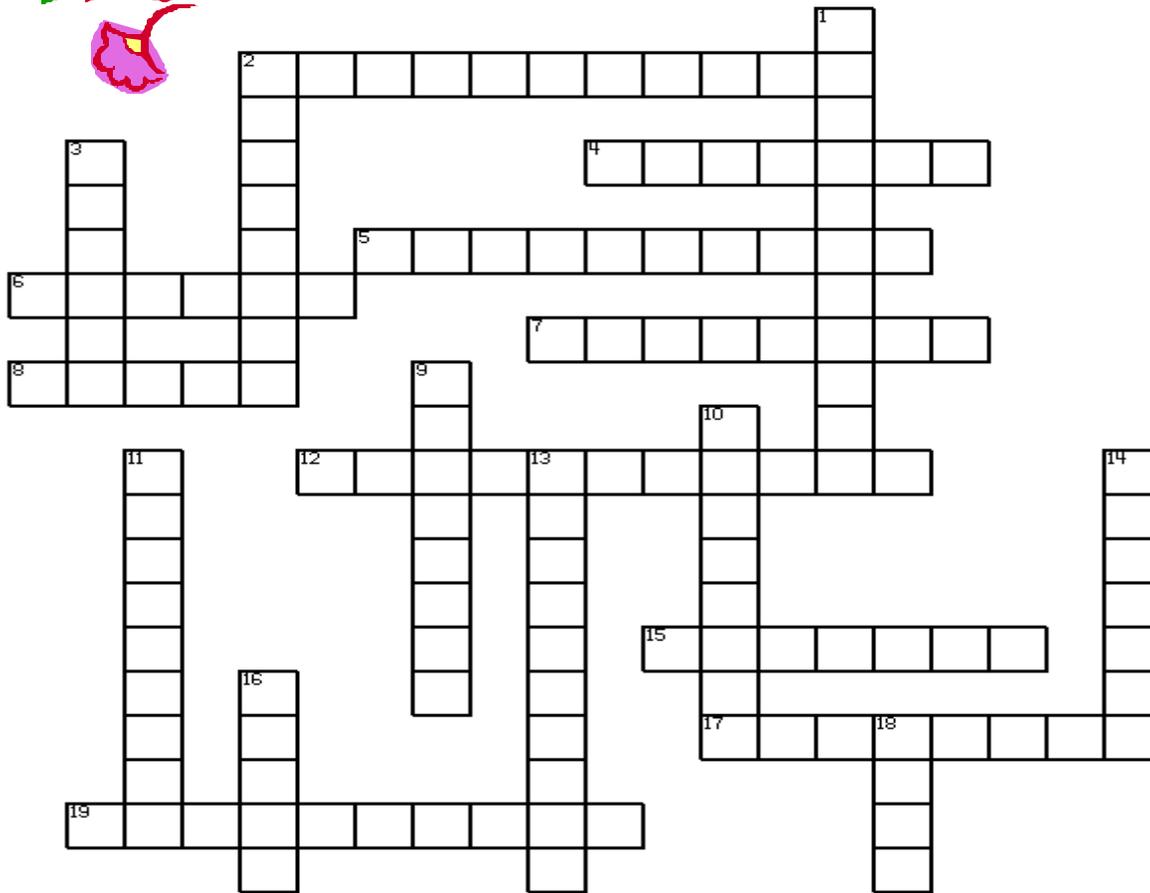
¹⁹ Greer, Allen M. "Dolphins and Porpoises," *Zoobooks*, page 11

²⁰ Submitted by Pleasant Grove High School PTA Character representative



Name _____

Compassion Puzzle



- | |
|-------------|
| Concern |
| Compassion |
| Forgive |
| Charitable |
| Kindness |
| Sympathy |
| Commiserate |
| Benevolence |
| Generous |
| Listen |
| Kindhearted |
| Polite |
| Hospitable |
| Gracious |
| Pity |
| Courtesy |
| Unselfish |
| Share |
| Mercy |
| Empathy |

ACROSS

- To feel or express sorrow for
- Regard for or interest in someone or something
- The deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another in the inclination to give aid or support
- To apply oneself to hearing something
- The quality of being generous, warmhearted and good
- Kind or compassionate treatment of an offender
- Tendency to behave in a considerate manner
- To excuse for a fault
- The act of understanding the feelings of another

- 19. Generous in giving money or help to the needy

DOWN

- 1. An inclination to perform charitable acts
- 2. Polite behavior
- 3. Marked by consideration for others; courteous
- 9. Willing to give or share
- 10. Courtesy and warmth
- 11. Generous
- 13. Welcoming guests with warmth and generosity
- 14. A conscious involvement with a person's situation
- 16. To distribute equally
- 18. Sorrow or grief aroused by the misfortune of another