



# Kindness

## Lesson Plan Booklet

5-Minute Post-Recess  
Activities Inspired  
by Children's Books



*Kindness Lesson Plan Booklet: 5-Minute Post-Recess Activities Inspired by Children's Books*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Listening: The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meaningful: Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>True Kindness: Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Simplicity: Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Seen and Heard: The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Small Action: Come With Me by Holly M. McGhee .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sharing: Thank You, Omu! by Oge Mora .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Value Everywhere: Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Everyday Actions: Because Amelia Smiled by David Ezra Stein .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Expectations: Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed by Emily Pearson.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Creativity: The Kindness Quilt by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Helping: How to Heal a Broken Wing by Bob Graham .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Resources.....</b>	<b>17</b>

# Introduction

Finding time to read to your students can be challenging. You have so much to do. Taking a few minutes right after recess is a great time to set up your class for a quiet activity.

Getting children excited about hearing a new book can set the stage for a love of books and your librarian can lend a hand. Invite a parent or the principal or the custodian to join you and give yourself a quick break.

The following quick interactive activities are useful for any age or book too.

The titles of the lesson plans each have a value listed, then the title and author of the book its focused on. Then there are four parts:

- **Summary:** Shares what the book is about
- **Key Idea:** Identifies the “moral of the story” in each book
- **Discussion Question:** Creates space to discuss the book and key idea
- **Interactive Activity:** Gives room for learners to interact with the idea.

Enjoy and perhaps you can pick some of your favorites to share and ask your community of parents to make suggestions. Visit our website to share your thoughts, and for more resources. Its online at <https://progressiveteachernetwork.org>.

—J. Cynthia McDermott



## Lesson Plan 1

# Listening: *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld

- **Summary:** Taylor is upset, and a parade of animals try to fix things—but only the rabbit listens quietly. This story reminds us that sometimes the kindest thing we can do is simply be present.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness doesn't always mean doing or fixing—sometimes it means listening.
- **Discussion Question:** Why do you think the rabbit didn't talk or give advice?
- **Interactive Activity:** Listening Buddies Walk
  1. Partner students
  2. Take a slow 3-minute walk around the playground or hall. While they are walking, one child talks and the other listens quietly without interrupting, and midway through they switch roles.
  3. Afterward, ask: What did it feel like to be really listened to?

## Lesson Plan 2

# Meaningful: *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson

- **Summary:** A girl misses her chance to be kind to a new classmate, and the opportunity never comes again. This story shows how powerful (and painful) missed acts of kindness can be.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness is meaningful, and missed chances can't always be undone.
- **Discussion Question:** What do you think Chloe learned by the end of the story?
- **Interactive Activity:** Pebble Reflection
  1. Drop a pebble into water (real or imagined)
  2. Watch the ripples
  3. Talk about how kindness spreads like that.
  4. Have students write or draw a time they could have been kinder.

## Lesson Plan 3

# True Kindness: *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts

- **Summary:** A boy really wants a popular pair of shoes, but when he finally gets them, he gives them to someone who needs them more.
- **Key Idea:** True kindness means giving even when it's hard.
- **Discussion Question:** Why did the boy give the shoes away? How do you think he felt afterward?
- **Interactive Activity:** Kindness Journal
  1. Give each student a slip of paper
  2. Ask them to write/draw one thing they could give up to help someone else
  3. When everyone is done, have them present their pictures and share why they wrote or drew what they did

## Lesson Plan 4

# Simplicity: *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller

- **Summary:** When Tanisha spills juice on herself, her classmate wonders how to help. This story explores how everyday acts of kindness matter.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness can be shown in simple, everyday actions.
- **Discussion Question:** What are some ways we can be kind at school every day?
- **Interactive Activity:** Kindness Blitz
  1. Set a 5-minute timer.
  2. See how many kind things the class can do quietly in that time (help clean, compliment, include others).



## Lesson Plan 5

# Seen and Heard: *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig

- **Summary:** Brian feels unseen at school—until a new student helps bring him into the fold.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness helps others feel seen and valued.
- **Discussion Question:** How did kindness help Brian feel included?
- **Interactive Activity:** See Someone Challenge
  1. Invite students to write a kind note or draw a picture for someone in the class who might need cheering up.

## Lesson Plan 6

# Small Action: *Come With Me* by Holly M. McGhee

- **Summary:** In a world filled with scary news, a young girl asks what she can do to help. Her parents show her how small actions matter.
- **Key Idea:** Small acts of kindness can make a big difference.
- **Discussion Question:** Why did the girl's parents say, 'Come with me'? What does that show us?
- **Interactive Activity:** Neighborhood Kindness Map
  1. Draw your neighborhood or school
  2. Mark places where you could show kindness (e.g., crosswalks, cafeteria, library)

## Lesson Plan 7

# Sharing: *Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora

- **Summary:** Omu shares her delicious stew with many neighbors. At the end, she's surprised with a gift of gratitude.
- **Key Idea:** Sharing brings people together and creates community.
- **Discussion Question:** How did Omu feel when she had nothing left? What happened next?
- **Interactive Activity:** Community Stew
  1. Have students draw a bowl of stew
  2. Each student should write one ingredient representing kindness (e.g., 'sharing markers') on their bowl.
  3. Combine them for a class display.

## Lesson Plan 8

# Value Everywhere: *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña

- **Summary:** A boy and his grandmother ride the bus through their neighborhood. Along the way, he learns to see the beauty and kindness around him.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness is noticing beauty and value in everyone and everywhere.
- **Discussion Question:** Why does Nana think their ride is special?
- **Interactive Activity:** Kindness Bus Tour
  1. Take a pretend classroom bus ride.
  2. Stop at different parts of the school and describe a kind action you might see there.

## Lesson Plan 9

# Everyday Actions: *Because Amelia Smiled* by David Ezra Stein

- **Summary:** A girl's smile sets off a chain reaction of kindness that travels around the world.
- **Key Idea:** One kind action can inspire many more.
- **Discussion Question:** What happened because Amelia smiled?
- **Interactive Activity:** Kindness Dominoes
  1. Set up real or paper dominoes.
  2. Each student adds one labeled with a kind act.
  3. Knock them down to see the chain reaction.

## Lesson Plan 10

# Expectations: *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson

- **Summary:** Mary does one simple kind deed, which leads to a ripple of kindness that affects thousands.
- **Key Idea:** Simple kindness can grow far beyond what we expect.
- **Discussion Question:** Why do you think people kept passing on Mary's kindness?
- **Interactive Activity:** Ripple Round
  1. In a circle, each student names one kind act they received and one they could pass on next.

## Lesson Plan 11

# Creativity: *The Kindness Quilt* by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

- Summary: A class turns acts of kindness into a visual quilt that spreads through the school.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness is creative and visible — it spreads when shared.
- **Discussion Question:** What happened when the quilt grew bigger and bigger?
- **Interactive Activity:** Class Kindness Quilt
  1. Each student decorates a paper square with a kind act.
  2. Combine into a quilt display.



## Lesson Plan 12

# Helping: *How to Heal a Broken Wing* by Bob Graham

- **Summary:** A boy notices a hurt bird that everyone else ignores. With care and time, he helps it heal.
- **Key Idea:** Kindness is paying attention and taking the time to help.
- **Discussion Question:** Why did the boy stop to help the bird? What did he do?
- **Interactive Activity:** Quiet Rescue Walk
  1. Take a silent walk around the school to 'rescue' small things (trash, forgotten jackets, lonely friends).
  2. Reflect together.

# More Resources

Following are some resources you can use in your classroom and teaching practice.



**Progressive Teacher Network (PTN)** — A learning collective designed to provide support for all practitioners who engage in a child-first perspective and want to engage with others in this essential work. Located online at <https://progressiveteachernetwork.org/>

**Horace Mann Upstanders Book Award** — The Horace Mann Upstander Awards recognizes children's literature that exemplifies social action and encourages young readers to become agents of change. An Upstander is someone who takes a positive stand and acts on behalf of themselves and others, embodying the spirit of advocacy and justice. There are great books listed here! <https://upstandersaward.org/>