

Caring

Showing
compassion,
empathy, and love
for others

“In nothing do
men approach so
nearly to the gods
as in doing good
to others.”

~Marcus Cicero~

February Character Connection Theme: Caring



Definitions

To **care** is to have a strong feeling or opinion, to be concerned or interested.¹ A caring person is kind, patient, compassionate, and *shows* care by being a friend,² helping those in need, empathizing and expressing gratitude. Said Pablo Casals, “I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest significance and meaning.”

Quotes

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: what are you doing for others?”—Martin Luther King³

“I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.” --Etienne de Grellet³

*“That best portion of a good man’s life:
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.” --William Wordsworth⁴*



“It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice.” —John Marks Templeton

“In nothing do men approach so nearly to the gods as in doing good to others.” Marcus Cicero⁵

Activities

**At the beginning of the day, draw the name of a class member. Tell students to be thinking of something they like about that person. At the end of the day make a chart with contributions from each student. (“I like _____ because he/she always_____. from [contributor’s name.]”)⁶

** “You Suit Me to a Tee” Have each student draw a Tee shirt, with something they care about written across the front. (“Jason cares about his baby sister.”) Clothespin the shirts to a yarn clothesline.⁷

** Read Koko’s Kitten by Francine Patterson (Scholastic, 1985) Talk about the way Koko, a gorilla, cares for her pet kitten. Have students draw pictures of how they care for their pets or other animals.⁸

***“The way to be happy is to make others so,” said Robert Ingersol.³ Have students make a recipe for “Caring.” Include ingredients (1/2 cup gratitude , etc.) and directions (Stir in a spoonful of playfulness...)⁹

** Read The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein. Talk about ways to care for the environment and conserve our resources. Hold a recycling drive.¹⁰ Make a tree trunk. Each student writes a way to care about his environment on a leaf and places it on the tree.

¹ from The American Heritage Dictionary

² adapted from Six pillars of character, Definitions for Young People, Good Ideas to Help Young People Develop Good Character, page 5.

³The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Quotes and Quips, page 23

⁴The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Quotes and Quips, page 25

⁵ Submitted by Character Connection Representative

⁶ Submitted by Rocky Mountain Elementary Character representative, adapted from *Character Education*, page 29

⁷ Submitted by Rocky Mountain Elementary Character representative, adapted from *Character Education*, page 30

⁸ Submitted by Rocky Mountain Elementary Character representative, adapted from *Character Education*, page 31

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** Read Frog and Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel. Talk about the small ways that we show other people that we care. Contact a home for those less able to care for themselves. Obtain a list of names of those who would like to receive a letter or Valentine. Perhaps your class could adopt a grandparent.¹¹

** “I can live for three months on a good compliment,” said Mark Twain.¹² Have class members stand in a circle. One class member holds a balloon (or ball.) He calls the name of another class member, compliments her (“Bev warmly welcomes new people”), then volleys the balloon to her. She repeats the process.

**As a class, memorize a poem such as this one by Emily Dickinson:

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.¹³



Stories

Consolation¹⁴

President Abraham Lincoln was told of a widow whose five sons had died while fighting for the Union cause. He wrote the following letter:

Executive Mansion

Washington, Nov. 21, 1864

To Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam,

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. Lincoln

Portraits of Compassion

When Kaziah heard of the fallen U.S soldiers in Iraq, her heart moved her to action. She realized that it would have been easy to “walk on” and say only, “Oh that’s so sad, its just too bad.” Instead she chose to “give a gift of the heart, from one American to another.” In 2003 Kaziah Hancock reached out to the bereaved families with an offer to paint (without charge) a portrait of their fallen hero. “My job is to celebrate who they are,” says Kaziah. It is “a gift of the heart, from one American to another.” A non-profit organization, Project Compassion, was formed and four other artists joined Kaziah to paint 270 portraits. Her payment for her efforts? A word of thanks from the recipient, a mother’s

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account of comfort, and knowing that the world is better because of her actions. She comments, "It sends a lot of love into the universe — and that has to be a good thing."¹⁵



Writing or Discussion Topics

****Retell Aesop's Lion and Mouse fable.** Encourage students to reach out with a sincere compliment or kind word to those that are not in "their group." Write results in a journal entry. *Did the care that you showed have immediate results?*

**** In Antarctica, the female Emperor penguin lays a single egg on bare ice. The male rolls the egg onto his feet and waddles into a large group of males. For two months of the dark Antarctic winter, he keeps the egg warm with the rolls of fat from the lower part of his belly. He does not eat during this time.¹⁶ Ask students to talk with their families about ways that parents and children show that they care about each other. Have students write a valentine letter for a family member expressing appreciation for their thoughtfulness and sacrifice.**

****The Wednesday, November 25, 1998 Lindon Edition of New Utah carried an article about a group of citizens transforming vacant weedy ground into wheat for the world's hungry. The project's originator had hoped to use his medical knowledge to help those in need overseas. However, certain medical specialists were in more demand than his field of general practitioner. He turned to helping the needy in the world with food. Called the Mount Pisgah Project, the fields beautified Lindon and provided an opportunity for service. The group planted, harvested, and processed wheat that was then donated to the LDS Humanitarian Services for distribution. *What can we do to show we care about worldwide needs?***

Role Plays

Talk about the reasons for not being caring. Young children may enjoy acting in a role play as animals or people such as: Caring Carl, Lazy Larry, Hurried Hippo, Forgetful Fish, Ima Impolite or Proud Pete.¹⁷

****You are busy playing a computer game when you hear your younger sister crying in the kitchen. When you check on your sister you find her sitting at the table staring at her homework. *If you are Hurried Hippo how might you act? If you are Caring Canary, how would you act? What might be the consequences?***

****Juan is new in your class. He speaks Spanish and knows only a few words of English. *If you are Caring Carl, how would you welcome Juan? How would you treat children with other differences?***

****It is mid-spring. You are playing in your yard when you notice some boys next door. They are throwing rocks, trying to knock a bird's nest out of the tree. *If you are Caring Carlos, what could you do?***¹⁸

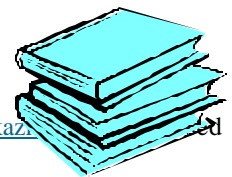
****Lunch recess includes students of all ages—first through sixth grade. Sometimes the sixth graders scare or make fun of the younger children. Sometimes they won't let the 4th graders play in their ball game. *If you are Caring Caleb, what could you do?***¹⁹

Book List

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¹⁶ "Penguin," World Book Encyclopedia, 1988 p. 240

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MARCH: Fairness

APRIL: Integrity

MAY: Worth and Potential

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Caring

1. PULEHFL _____ (Useful, beneficial)
2. YHSYPATM _____ (A relationship or affinity between persons or things in which whatever affects one correspondingly affects the other; mutual understanding or affection arising from this)
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"Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."

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kind
kindhearted
benign
benevolent
gracious
gentle
considerate
thoughtful
indulgent
solicitous
helpful
succor
concerned
compassionate
sympathy
compassion
empathy
loving
affection

¹<http://www.quoteland.com/> , accessed January 4, 2003

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**At the beginning of the day, draw the name of a class member. Tell students to be thinking of something they like about that person. At the end of the day make a chart with contributions from each student. (“I like _____ because he/she always_____. from [contributor’s name.]”)⁶

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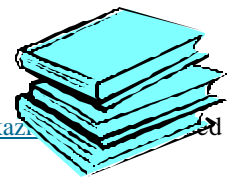
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¹<http://www.quoteland.com/> , accessed January 4, 2003