



December's Key to Character—2011

Definitions

Elementary: Kindness is showing concern about the well-being and feelings of others.

Secondary: Kindness is the quality of being warmhearted, considerate, humane and sympathetic.

Related Words or Phrases

Generosity	Consideration	Forgiveness	Thoughtfulness	Charity
Benevolence	Favor	Helpfulness	Compassion	Loving-Kindness

What does kindness look like?

People who are kind:

- ◇ Refuse to tease or ridicule others.
- ◇ Show concern when someone is sad.
- ◇ Practice acts that meet the needs of others.
- ◇ Take care of the environment.
- ◇ Treat everyone fairly.
- ◇ Practice acts that make others happy.

What does kindness sound like?

People who are kind may say things like:

- ◇ How can I help?
- ◇ Do you want to join us?
- ◇ You go first, you seem tired.
- ◇ I'm sorry that I hurt your feelings.
- ◇ Are you okay?
- ◇ Let's pick up the trash.

Websites:

www.randomactsofkindness.org—free classroom resources and lesson plans
www.freestoriesforkids.com—an excellent site full of free stories emphasizing different character traits
www.storiestogrowby.com—Absolutely Whootie—teacher resources
www.dosomething.org—social activism areas; grants

Celebrate Character!

Beth P. submitted this classroom activity to Random Acts of Kindness.



Positive Page

Submitted by : Beth P.
 Date Submitted: 6/9/2006

Usually just before Christmas when my class finally knows each other well, I hand out a sheet of paper with a pretty border. I instruct each student to put their name at the top of the page in bold print. Some even decorate their names. Then each student passes their sheet to the right. The students are instructed to write a positive message to the classmate whose name is on the paper. No comments are allowed about appearance. This page is all about character! Pages continue to be passed until every student has written on every page. At the end I watch hearts soar when they read what their classmates think. I know students from years ago who still keep their pages. By the way, I also send one around with my name. It's a real keepsake.

Kid's Oath of Kindness

As a kind person, I am caring, helpful and generous to everyone. I am considerate and always think about how my conduct affects others. I care how others feel and I am giving and forgiving. As a kind person, I do good deeds without the thought of reward. I have compassion and empathy for others.

Source: Shimek Elementary, Iowa City, Iowa



"People should see kindness in your face, your eyes, in your smile."—Mother Teresa

Parent Corner



Work together on projects that show generosity as a family. Volunteer your time and resources to help others and discuss what you are doing and why you are doing it with your children. Senior centers, food kitchens and homeless shelters always welcome extra hands. When children grow up in a family where kindness is a way of life, they experience the importance as well as the joy of giving to others and develop a generous character. As they mature, they will begin to give back the kindness that they have observed and participated in with you. They will give as an expression of themselves without the goal of personal gain. Ideas that can encourage the character trait of kindness follow:

- ◇ Try to find some reason to say "thank you" to your child each day. Let them know you appreciate their work even if it is their assigned chore.
- ◇ If your child complains about what they do not have, ask them what they do have to be thankful for.
- ◇ Insist that your child write thank you notes for gifts they receive. Buy them their own stationary and stamps that reflect their personality.
- ◇ Be the first to suggest a random act of kindness when you see the opportunity.
- ◇ Participate in food drives and donate clothes and toys to charitable projects.
- ◇ Establish a "family meeting" time once a week; perhaps over dinner on a special night. Keep a basket on the table all week for members of the family to write kind acts or words sent their way or that they tried to do for someone. Review the basket and thank each other during the family meeting. The slips of paper in the basket can be simple things that show a kind spirit and might say something like:
 - I washed the dishes when it was not my turn.
 - I called my sick aunt.
 - I helped a friend who fell on her bike.
 - I made a point to smile at a person I passed by who looked sad and angry.
 - I opened the door for someone and let them enter first.
 - I offered to carry a package or book for someone who was overloaded.
 - Mom made my favorite dinner.
 - My brother washed the car without being asked.
- ◇ Plan family projects to show kindness to others.
- ◇ Keep recycling bins in your garage to be kind to the environment.
- ◇ Talk with your children about being kind to animals. Take a stray animal to a shelter. Discuss that we show kindness by giving the proper care required for an animal (food, water, exercise, vaccinations).

True Stories of Acts of Kindness

"Your Dinner is in the Cat!"

By: Anonymous

This year I am making my own Christmas cards, but in the spirit of charity, I am donating a tin of cat food per card to the local cat protection league shelter. Now I can use slogans like, 'your dinner is in the cat', or 'Tiddles thanks you for the turkey' in each card. If you don't like cats, I am sure the local dog shelter would be more than grateful.

"A Smile and a Sandwich"

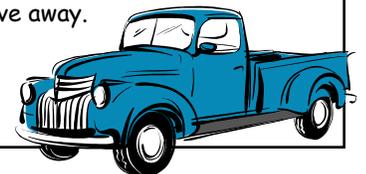
By Mari C. Serrano

Last Christmas, my 8-year old son asked me why food wasn't free. He thought it was ok to charge for everything else, but not for food, because some people could not afford it. So, come the day after Christmas, with his room full of new toys, my son took the gift bags he got from his presents, and filled them with sandwiches he made himself, soda, a bag of cookies, and a handmade card that said "God Bless You. Merry Christmas." When I woke up, he asked me to help him deliver the bags. We got in the car and he handed out meals with a smile and a "God Bless You, Merry Christmas." I may have gotten plenty of gifts that Christmas, but my son's act of kindness was the biggest gift of all.

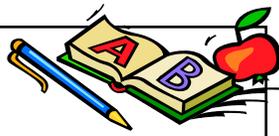
"Just Because"

Submitted by: Anonymous

While dropping off his large items at a recycling center, a man noticed a petite, old lady in line with 5 -6 big black bags of recycling. He noticed that she looked tired and hungry, so he asked her if she wanted his recycling because he knew it would bring in some money. She smiled up at him, thanked him for his kindness, and hugged him. Next, he went to the market to buy steaks to celebrate his newly finished novel. Steaks were a big deal to him, since he was currently in his fourth month of unemployment and money was tight. He had the steaks in hand but decided to put them back and buy hamburger instead. He went back to the recycling center, folded the \$20 bill he would have spent on steaks and walked up to the old lady. He gently touched her shoulder, put the \$20 in her hand and walked away. Suddenly, the old woman rushed up behind him, grabbed him around the waist and hugged him tightly. He turned around and hugged her back. Tears flowed from each of them. She told him she loved him and thanked him again. He got in his truck and drove away.



Teacher's Corner



The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation provides a wealth of ideas for the classroom and for school wide activities.

For any educational context, from preschool and elementary through the teen years, in schools large and small, their pages provide resources to supplement, complement, and support positive behavior goals. You'll find activity ideas in the School Activity Ideas section. Calendars and Graphics are housed on the Resources pages.

In the Classroom to Community section, they feature exciting lesson plans based on real-life actions by community leaders. Their "Quick Start" feature puts lesson plans and student activities in your hands instantly. Browse the list of ideas, and then click on "Read More" to see a full lesson plan.

Random Act of Kindness Week

February 13-19, 2012

Encourage students to take the Extreme Kindness Challenge by committing to a daily act of kindness for seven days during RAK Week. As a class, brainstorm acts of kindness. Each day, have each student record the act of kindness they performed, the recipient's response, and their own personal feelings after the action. Allow students to share their experiences with the class at the end of the week.

Preschool and K-2 Power!

Very young children learn so much by rhymes and songs. Below are some lyrics that can teach kindness and are sung to familiar tunes.

"There's a Little Act of Kindness"

(Tune: "There's a Hole in the Bucket")

There's a little act of kindness we can do, we can do,
There's a little act of kindness we can do each day.

"We Care"

(Tune: "I'm a Little Tea Pot")

There are many ways to share we care,
Speak kind words and always share,
Lend a helping hand to those in need,
When we are kind, we plant good seeds.

"Let's Be Kind"

(Tune: "Fere Jacques")

Let's be kind, let's be kind,
In our heart, and in our mind,
To our family, to our friends,
May our kindness never end.



Subject Area Integration

This example of a classroom project could be adjusted for any elementary grade level and is easily integrated into Social Science, General Science, Language Arts and Writing activities, depending on curriculum map alignment.

"Kindness Between Ages"

Submitted by: T. O'Donnell

Last year my son's first grade class was inspired by Random Acts of Kindness week. They wanted to make the day for residents of a local nursing home. We collected cans and a parent spray painted them. Each child then decorated one by themselves. They then planted seeds (with love) and grew "window planters." While the plants were tended to each week, they learned springtime songs. When the plants began to poke through, the day came for the children's visit.

They walked over to the resident's community room. Unknown to them, the local newspaper carried the story, the administrator had treats for them and they had a ready audience of residents. They sang, passed out the planters and conversed with the residents for over an hour.

They learned not only how good they could make someone else feel, but also themselves. We got great pictures for the children to share and memories for old and young to have for a lifetime. As it goes to show, kindness can start at ANY age.

Follow-up FCAT skills could include:

Writing letters to the residents
Drawing and labeling parts of the plant
Writing a journal showing the daily or weekly progress of plant growth (measurement).

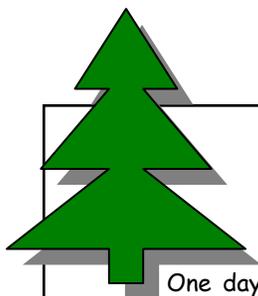
This classroom activity for middle and high school students is easily integrated into Science, Social Studies, Math or Language Arts activities, depending on curriculum map alignment.

"Kindness to the Environment"

To reinforce kindness to the environment, students could research the impact of oil drilling on the surrounding environment and to answer the question "Are the benefits of procuring oil off the coast of Florida worth the potential environmental impact?" students should:

- ◇ Read pro and con discussions concerning off-shore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, including articles related to recent oil-spill clean-ups in the Gulf.
- ◇ Use the internet to identify where most of the world's oil comes from now.
- ◇ Find a prediction as to how much oil will be found in the Gulf of Mexico and compare it to the amount found elsewhere.
- ◇ Research President Obama's five-year plan for offshore oil drilling, which calls for opening new areas in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska but bars development along the East and West Coasts.
- ◇ Create a pie chart or bar graph to display research data related to world oil production.
- ◇ Share research and add the research of other students in a general class discussion or small focus groups.
- ◇ Decide if they support or oppose the drilling off the coast of Florida.
- ◇ Write a position paper stating whether they believe drilling in the Gulf is justified and include their graphs in their paper.

Tell Me a Story: Kindness



"Modern Nomads"

By Pedro Pablo Sacristan
www.freestoriesforkids.com

One day, Mister Arnold was teaching a lesson, and things were going as normally as ever. He was explaining the story of mankind to his pupils. He told them that, in the beginning, men were nomads; that they never stayed in the same place for very long. Instead, they would travel about, here and there, in search of food, wherever it was to be found. And when the food ran out, they would move off somewhere else.

He taught them about the invention of farming and keeping animals. This was an important discovery, because by learning to cultivate the land, and care for animals, mankind would always have food readily available. It also meant that people could remain living in one place, and this made it easier to set about tasks that would take a long while to complete, like building towns, cities, and all that was in them. All the children were listening, spellbound by this story, until Lucy jumped up:

"And if that was so important, and improved everything so much, why are we nomads all over again, Mister Arnold?"

Mister Arnold didn't know what to say. Lucy was a very intelligent girl. He knew that she lived with her parents in a house, so she must know that her family were not nomads; so what did she mean?

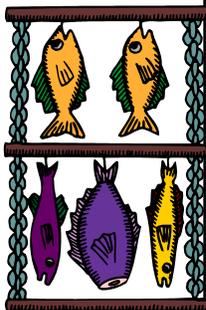
"We have all become nomads again," continued Lucy, "The other day, outside the city, they were cutting the forest down. A while ago a fisherman told me how they fish. It's the same with everyone: when there's no more forest left the foresters go elsewhere, and when the fish run out the fishermen move on. That's what the nomads did, isn't it?"

The teacher nodded, thoughtfully. Really, Lucy was right. Mankind had turned into nomads. Instead of looking after the land in a way that we could be sure it would keep supplying our needs, we kept exploiting it until the land was bare and barren. And then off we would go to the next place! The class spent the rest of the afternoon talking about what they could do to demonstrate how to be more civilized...

The next day everyone attended class wearing a green t-shirt, with a message that said "I am not a nomad!"

And, from then on, they set about showing that indeed they were not. Every time they knew they needed something, they made sure that they would get it using care and restraint. If they needed wood or paper, they would ensure that they got the recycled kind. They ordered their fish from fish farms, making sure that the fish they received were not too young and too small. They only used animals that were well cared for, and brought up on farms...

And so, from their little town, those children managed to give up being nomads again, just as prehistoric men had done, so many thousands of years ago.



"The Man and the Mugger"

Julio Diaz had a daily routine. Every night, the 31-year-old social worker ended his hour-long subway commute to the Bronx one stop early, just so he could eat at his favorite diner. But one night, as Diaz stepped off the No. 6 train and onto a nearly empty platform, a teenage boy approached and pulled out a knife.

"Give me your money," the teenage boy demanded.

Julio calmly gave the boy his wallet and told him, "Here you go."

As the teen began to walk away, Diaz stopped him, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you are going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you will need my coat to keep you warm!"

The boy looked incredulously as his would-be victim shucked out of his coat, and stammered, "Why are you doing this?"

Diaz replied, "If you're willing to risk your freedom for a few bucks, you must really need the money. All I wanted to do was get dinner....if you really want to join me.....you're more than welcome."

The boy schlepped along beside Diaz as they entered the diner, and they sat in a booth near the kitchen. The boy noticed that everyone knew this man he had robbed. The manager, waiters and even the busboy came by to greet the guy. The kid warily asked, "You own this place? You know everyone here."

Diaz smiled and said, "No, I just eat here a lot."

The boy looked puzzled, "But you're even nice to the dishwasher."

Diaz replied, "Well, haven't you been taught you should be nice to everybody?"

"Yeah, but I didn't think people actually BEHAVED that way!" the teen retorted.

When Diaz asked the boy what he wanted out of life, the teen looked down and didn't answer. When the bill arrived, Diaz told the teen, "Look, I guess you're going to have to pay for this bill 'cause you have my money. If you give me my wallet back, I'll gladly treat you."

Without hesitation, the teen returned the wallet. Diaz looked at the kid who not more than an hour before had robbed him at knifepoint. The boy looked sad and alone. Diaz reached in his wallet and pulled out a \$20. He leaned in and told the boy, "I want you to have this, but I'm going to need something in return—the knife." The boy slid the knife across the table to Diaz and accepted the money with a sheepish grin.

After the bill was paid and they stepped outside into the brisk fall evening, Diaz looked at the boy and asked, "See you around?"

The boy stopped, turned to the man and grinned, "You eat here every night, right? Yeah, I'll see you around." The boy pulled the twenty from his pocket showing it to Diaz and added, "Except next time, I'm paying."

—Adapted from an entry on www.helpothers.org

Suggested Reading List

PRIMARY:

The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree by Gloria Houston, 1988. Ruthie and her mother fulfill the family responsibility to provide the village Christmas tree even though Papa hasn't come back from the war to cut it down.

The Wolf's Chicken Stew by Keiko Kasza, 1987. A wolf hungry for chicken stew is defeated in his attempts to fatten a hen as her brood of chicks turns the tables to show him great kindness.

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox, 1985. Wilfrid decides to discover what "memory" is so he can find some memories for Mrs. Nancy, his elderly friend, who has lost hers.

The Wednesday Surprise by Eve Bunting, 1989. Young Anna shows Grandma the ultimate kindness by spending Wednesday nights teaching her to read when the family thinks that Grandma is teaching Anna to read.

Uncle Jed's Barbershop by Margaree King Mitchell, 1993. Uncle Jed dreams about owning his own barbershop. He spends some of his savings for an operation for a niece, and then loses his money again with the Great Depression. Finally, on his seventy-ninth birthday, he opens his own barbershop.

Talking Eggs: A Folktale From the American South by Robert D. San Souci, 1989. This Southern folktale features kind Blanche who follows directions and grows in riches, while her greedy sister disregards instructions and reaps her own troubles.

Smoky Night by Eve Bunting, 1994. Riots in the streets and a fire in Daniel's apartment force him and his mother to evacuate during the night. When missing cats are found, mistrust and fear that existed between two families of different ethnic origin are bridged by caring attitudes.

Old Henry by Joan W. Blos, 1987. When Henry moves into the dilapidated house and doesn't fix it up, the neighbors' complaints make him move. Then they realize they miss his being in the old house while Henry misses the pies and other acts of kindness from his former neighbors.

INTERMEDIATE:

Thank You, Jackie Robinson by Barbara Cohen, 1989. A fatherless white boy presents a baseball autographed by Jackie Robinson to his elderly African-American friend who is on his deathbed.

Sukey and the Mermaid by Robert D. San Souci, 1992. MamaJo, the mermaid, shows kindness to Sukey who has slipped away to the seashore after being mistreated by her stepfather. A Cinderella tale from the South Carolina sea isles.

Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco, 1994. A moving story about an African-American soldier and a white soldier who are captured by Southern troops during the Civil War. Kindness is shown to the two by the African-American soldier's mother and they develop a caring relationship toward each other.

Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia MacLachlan, 1985. Caleb and Anna yearn for a mother and their father advertises for a bride. Sarah—plain, tall and independent—misses the sea. However, she realizes she would miss the family more than she misses the sea, so she decides to stay.

Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner, 1980. Little ten-year-old Willy hopes to pay the back taxes on his grandfather's farm with the purse from a dog sled race he enters. He competes against the Indian mountain man, Stone Fox, in the national dogsled race.

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White, 1980. Wilbur the pig is saved by the farmer's daughter Fern and then is saved from being the farmer's Christmas dinner by his kind friend Charlotte, a spider.

Donavan's Word Jar by Monalisa DeGross, 1994. Donovan keeps a jar for his word collection and when it fills up, finds a special way to give his words away and receive something special in return.

Little Jim's Gift by Gloria Houston, 1994. Little Jim hopes to convince his stern father that he will soon be a man as he uses his hard-earned savings to buy a Christmas gift for his sister.

MIDDLE/HIGH:

Out of Nowhere by Ouida Sebestyen, 1994. Harley is abandoned by his mother and through kindness and trust builds a new family comprised of an old pit bull, an outspoken old woman, an eccentric junk collector and an optimistic handywoman. They work together to rebuild their lives.

Shadow of the Red Moon by Walter Dean Myers, 1995. In this fantasy, a group of Okalian children led by fifteen-year-old Jon embark on a journey to attempt to return to the Ancient Land and restore their race to its former greatness. They display caring concern for each other, as well as for all life.

The Gift-Giver by Joyce Hansen 1980. A fifth grade girl meets a special friend who teaches her self-confidence and understanding as she tries to keep her family together during hard times.

The Cay by Theodore Taylor, 1969. Philip and his mother are forced to leave Curacao during World War II, but their ship is torpedoed by a German submarine. Philip survives and learns to overcome his prejudice when he is left blind and dependent on an extraordinary black-skinned man.

And One For All by Theresa Nelson, 1989. Geraldine views the lives of her brother and his friend during the Vietnam War era. Their responses to the war reflect the opposing views that divided the country. Coming to terms with tragedy, Geraldine challenges injustice in an adult world.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, 1993. Ranch hand George and his mentally handicapped friend Lennie dream of a little house of their own with a garden and rabbits for Lennie to tend. As they travel from ranch to ranch, George tries desperately to protect Lennie from cruelties.

Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped Hide the Frank Family by Miep Gies, 1987. The story of Anne Frank is also the story of Miep Gies, a Dutch woman who regularly smuggled food and news of the outside world to the Frank family's secret hiding place. She courageously risked her own life almost daily for the Franks.

School-Wide Activities

- ◇ Start a sticker campaign to spread kindness. Staff members can pick up stickers each Monday as they sign in. Stickers are given to any student they observe doing a kind act and the student told specifically what they did to earn the sticker. The student can then give the sticker to someone they observe doing a similar kind act at home or in the community.
- ◇ Each day the principal could encourage a "Kindness is Contagious" theme by reading something about kindness school-wide.
- ◇ Glue photographs of students doing Random Acts of Kindness on a banner or poster and display in a main hallway.
- ◇ Have students write their Random Acts of Kindness on paw prints cut out of construction paper. Post the paw prints in the hallways with the title "Paws for Kindness."
- ◇ Contact the PTA for assistance in beginning a Random Acts of Kindness Club at your school. Refer to the Random Acts of Kindness website for structure.
- ◇ Plan a school wide recycling effort.
- ◇ Hold a teddy bear drive and collect new and used teddy bears throughout the school and community to be donated to the police or fire station or to a children's hospital.

—Source: www.randomactsofkindness.org



Quotes About Kindness



Week 1

"Forget injuries, never forget kindness."
—Confucius

"Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution."
—Khalil Gibran

"Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you."
—Diana, Princess of Wales

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a harder battle."
—Plato

"There is no better exercise for your heart than reaching down and helping to lift someone up."
—Bernard Meltzer

Week 2

"Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver."
—Barbara De Angelis

"In the long run, we get no more than we have been willing to risk giving."
—Sheldon Kopp

"Seek not good from without; seek it within yourselves, or you will never find it."
—Bertha Von Suttner

"As perfume is to the flower, so is kindness to speech."
—Katherine Francke

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless."
—Mother Teresa

Week 3

"If there is any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not deter or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."
—William Penn

"Live as if everything you do will eventually be known."
—Hugh Prather

"Kindness is tenderness. Kindness is love, but perhaps greater than love....Kindness is good will. Kindness says, 'I want you to be happy.'
—Randolph Ray

"Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom."
—Theodore Isaac Rubin

"As I've gotten older, I've had more of a tendency to look for people who live by kindness, tolerance, compassion, a gentler way of looking at things."
—Martin Scorsese

Week 4

"One who knows how to show and to accept kindness will be a friend better than any possession."
—Sophocles, 409 BC

"Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness."
—Seneca

"You have not lived a perfect day unless you have done something for someone who will never be able to repay you."
—Ruth Smeltzer

"The best portions of a good man's life are his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love."
—William Wordsworth

"Goodness is the only investment that never fails."
—Henry David Thoreau

Sunshine State Standards

HE.K.B.2.1/HE.1.B.2.1/HE.2.B.2.1—Recognize/Identify/ Demonstrate healthy ways to express needs, wants and feelings.

SS.K.C.2.1—Demonstrate the characteristics of being a good citizen.

SS.1.C.2.1—Describe the characteristics of responsible citizenship in the school community.

HE.3.B.2.1/HE.4.2.1—Identify/Explain effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills to enhance health.

HE.3.B.2.3/HE.4.B.2.3—Demonstrate/Discuss nonviolent strategies to manage or resolve conflict.

HE.5.B.2.1—Illustrate techniques of effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills to enhance health.

HE.6.B.2.1—Determine strategies to improve effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.

HE.7.B.2.1/HE.8.B.2.1—Use/Illustrate skills for communicating effectively with family, peers and others to enhance health.

HE.8.P.2.1—Justify a health enhancing position on a topic and support it with accurate information.

HE.912.B.2.1—Explain skills needed to communicate effectively with family, peers and others to enhance health.

HE.912.B.2.4—Analyze the validity of ways to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.

HE.912.P.2.1—Utilize correct, accurate data/information to formulate a health enhancing message.

Bulletin Board Ideas

- ◇ In the month of December, cover your bulletin board in red background paper and put a large cutout of a Christmas tree on it. Then, using a Christmas tree light pattern, make bulbs in many colors of paper. Whenever a child in your class is caught doing something kind, add a bulb to the tree. At the end of the month, or on the day of your Christmas party, hang actual Christmas lights as the border around the board. This will be a wonderful surprise for the students and it will show them how their kindness actually lit up your classroom—from www.ehow.com.
- ◇ Kindness Clown: Create a clown holding felt balloons on a felt board. Let the students brainstorm kindness ideas and put one on each balloon.
- ◇ Spider Web: Create a giant spider web around the slogan "Spin a web of Kindness." Discuss the web of kindness covering the class and school as kindness is contagious. Give each student a spider ring as a reminder.
- ◇ Lighthouse: Create a felt or paper lighthouse with ideas for kind acts angled out as light beams (e.g. eat lunch with someone new, smile and say thank you to the bus driver, donate used items, recycle paper/plastic).

