



Key to Character

Definitions

Elementary: Compassion is a deep awareness of and sympathy for another person's suffering.
 Secondary: Compassion is the humane quality of understanding the suffering of others and the desire to do something about it.

Related Words

commiseration	condolence	sympathy	pity
charity	tenderness	sensitivity	humane

WHAT COMPASSION LOOKS LIKE!

Compassion is about acting kind and compassionate. Practicing compassion sounds like:

- "Why are you sad?"
- "How can I help?"
- "I'm sorry that happened to you."
- "Would you like to join us?"
- "You did a great job."

Kind and compassionate people:

- Put others' needs before their own
- Show kindness without expecting rewards
- Tell and show others they care
- Listen to others and provide a shoulder to cry on

Benchmark Gesture

After players from Bushnell-Prairie City/Avon High School in Galesburg, Illinois, completed their handshake ritual following their football win over Mionk Fieldcrest, junior Branton Waters told his teammates, "Everybody go shake No. 11's hand." The number belonged to Fieldcrest quarterback Noah Martin, who had been injured during the game and was sitting on the bench with an icepack on his foot. "He played with a lot of sportsmanship," one of the B-PC-A players said afterward, always helping you up and saying, "Good tackle, good hit." The same gesture was repeated the next night when the entire Sterling Newman High School team made a point to go over and thank an injured lineman on the sideline from Monmouth-Roseville. "Never have I seen such a gesture from a team, let alone on consecutive days," said reporter Aaron Frey of the Register-Mail. Source: characercountssports@jiethics.org

Lollipop Stop

Competing in the final round of the Western Region Motocross Championships in Colac, Australia, Cory Watts held a commanding point lead. On the third corner, a rider in front of him crashed and lay pinned under his bike. Watts stopped and pulled the rider from underneath the bike, then he resumed the race.

The delay dropped him back to last place, earned him no points in the race, and cost him the championship by three points. "I didn't care about the result at that moment," Watts said later, "he was pinned."

Mark Hancock, president of the local motorcycle club, said you don't see actions like that anymore. "There should be more of it. If more people acted like Cory did, the world would be a better place."

The event organizers gave Watts a Good Samaritan Award and a "big bag of lollies," which Watts said was the best trophy he ever received. Cory Watts is 10 years old.

Source: charactercountssports@jiethics.org



"There is no better exercise for strengthening the heart than reaching down and lifting up another." Anonymous

Suggested Reading List



Middle & High School:

THE DIVE FROM CLAUSEN'S PIER by Ann Packer

Twenty-three-year-old Carrie Bell has lived in Wisconsin all her life, and she longs for a change, an upheaval, tragedy, Carrie questions everything she thought she knew about herself and the meaning of home. How much do we owe the people we love? Is it a sign of strength or of weakness to walk away from someone in need?

DUNE by Frank Herbert

A blend of adventure and mysticism, environmentalism and politics, *Dune*—set on the desert planet Arrakis — is the story of a mysterious man known as Maud'dib, who seeks to avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family and bring to fruition humankind's most ancient and unattainable dream.

EAST by Edith Pattou

Rose has always felt out of place in her family. So when an enormous white bear mysteriously shows up and asks her to come away with him, she readily agrees. The bear takes Rose to a distant castle, where each night she is confronted with a mystery. In solving that mystery, she finds love, discovers her purpose and realizes her travels have only just begun.

THE EIGHT by Katherine Neville

Computer expert Cat Velis is heading for a job to Algeria. Before she goes, a mysterious fortune teller warns her of danger, and an antique dealer asks her to search for pieces to a valuable chess set that has been missing for years...In the South of France in 1790 two convent girls hide valuable pieces of a chess set all over the world, because the game that can be played with them is too powerful.

ERAGON by Christopher Paolini

A chance discovery changes the life of Eragon, a poor farm boy, overnight and thrusts him into a perilous world of destiny, magic, and power. With only an ancient sword, the advice of an old storyteller, and a fledging dragon, Eragon must navigate the dangerous terrain of an Empire ruled by an evil king. Can Eragon take up the mantle of the legendary Dragon Riders? The fate of the Empire may rest in his hands.

THE FORETELLING by Alice Hoffman

Rain is a girl of the Amazon tribe of women warriors, born in a time of blood and fear. As the future leader of her people, she must seek and hold fast to her inner warrior. What she encounters along her poignant and harrowing path toward her destiny — a kind young man, a strange, recurrent prophecy, and a condemned baby brother — lead her, against odds, to forge mercy, love, and peace.

Elementary:

THE GOLDEN RULE by Ilene Cooper

"Treat others the way you would like to be treated", a grandfather explains to his grandson, in this lovely introduction to compassion and empathy. The book expresses real-world examples, particularly the picture of a sad little girl on her first day in a new school. "What would make her feel better?"

THANK YOU FOR GIRAFFES by Vivian Husnik

A beautiful introduction to gratitude; the story is told as a little girl's prayer of thanks. This book expresses thanks not only for things in the world but also for people, experiences, and joyful moments.

ALL I SEE IS PART OF ME by Chara Curtis

"All the plants, the animals and trees, are in your light...and you are these." Told from the perspective of a boy in conversation with a star, this book highlights the theme of connectivity. Value your inner wisdom; the rhyming and bright pictures will capture your students.

A NEW COAT FOR ANNA by Ziefert

After many months a mother's determination produces a beautiful gift.

Websites

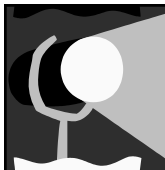
www.theteacherscorner.net—daily writing prompts for the month of February.

www.ThinkQuest.org/Library—Student-Created Websites.

www.teachhumane.org—HEART's mission is to foster compassion and respect for others.

www.tmpp.org—Meditation on Universal Compassion...Recommended age range: high school and above.

whitehorseweb.madison.k12.wi.us/node/333—Opportunities for Students/Whitehorse Middle School; age appropriate for middle school students.



Spotlight on Schools

Bullies are becoming scarce at **Denison Middle and Lake Gibson Middle**. Students are taught to show compassion for others through their bully-busting programs at the beginning of each year.

Bullying has been defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation.

Lake Gibson Middle & Denison Middle schools are spotlighted this month for their NO BULLY Zones!

Subject Level Lesson Plans

- Math:** Create a chart and graph for exploring compassion. Make a graph showing a school that has 400 students. In a recent service learning project to show compassion, 75% of the students participated. Of those that participated, 180 did every activity, 60 did most of the activities, and 60 did some of the activities.
- Language Arts:** Ask students to find headlines from various media sources that use the word compassion, and have them expand on the headline by writing a short 3-4 sentence paragraph. Lead a discussion using their writings on compassion.
- Create a booklet on the care and feeding of your compassion.
- Science:** Have students moderate a discussion on what are the implications of being a scientist? The debate could include:
- Could a person with compassion be a scientist?
 - Should scientists be personally responsible for the aftermath of their work?
 - Is science truth?
 - Is there an interconnectedness of scientific investigations and individual social issues and concerns.
 - Does a scientist need to be as ethical and compassionate as another human being or does the pursuit of science allow them to ignore their ethical side?
- Social Science:** Identify and research compassionate heroes.
- Have groups make lists of things they can do to be a good citizen and show compassion to others in their families, school and community.
- Art:** Create masks of how compassion looks.
- Create a cartoon.
- Drama:** Have students act out these role-plays showing compassion in their words or actions.
1. While Don and Jackson are playing catch at recess, they see Lyle, a new student, sitting alone.
 2. Becky and Tera know that their neighbor, an elderly woman, is sick at home.

Note: Refer to the source, www.humanityquest.com;topic/art_activities/index.asp?themeI=compassion, for more detailed lesson plans related to these topics.

Acts of Compassion for Students:

Assist individuals with a disability
Assist your local nursing home
Help out at a local charity
Make something for a family member
Clean your bathroom without being asked
Tell your parents how much they mean to you

Acts of Compassion for Adults:

Tell a work friend what a great job they are doing
Send flowers to friends or family
Cook a meal for staff
Sponsor a family overseas
Give your unused clothes to charity

A LEADER WHO SHOWED COMPASSION

Martin Luther King Jr.

Reverend King, one of the most influential black leaders

To ever march for civil rights and justice

Was born to a minister and a teacher of school.

Educated to where he earned his Ph.D.

Becoming a pastor marching against what was unfair and cruel.

Leading a boycott to protest bus segregation

He gained national prominence in 1955 and 56.

As he preached and marched for freedom for all

He was jailed, threatened, spat upon and beaten

As for peaceful demonstration he would call.

Marching to Washington D.C. in 1963

He was one of the leaders of faith

Voicing concern for the plight of the poor.

Soon thereafter, he was killed by a sniper

In Memphis, supporting workers rights and more.

King dedicated one of his books to his children

Praising God and praying for mankind's future

With words for all to prayerfully remember.

To be judged, not by color, but by character

Shunning violence never to surrender.

Dr. King wil be remembered down through history

As a man whose mission in life was the enrichment of others.

"A soldier for the Lord" with goodness of heart.

Risking everything for man's freedom and equality.

From the legacy of self-sacrifice we must refuse to part.

Source: www.theteacherscorner.net

Parent Power

Be a Compassionate Family

“The positive impact that acts of contributing and caring have on our children’s emotional health should prompt us to reflect upon what we can do to keep this impact alive each and every day. We must not permit opportunities to pass by in which we can help others to feel special, cared about, and appreciated..... For those of us who are parents, we must model compassion as well as involve our children in helping others. Children are astute observers of how we lead our daily lives. I often ask youngsters what do your parents do to help others. Although I hope that children do not respond that their parents are out every evening serving on different community committees, since that would imply that they are not spending enough time with their kids, it is reassuring to hear children say, “My mother or father coaches a team in town or is on the school board or volunteers to work with the elderly.” I also ask children what charitable activities have they and their parents participated in together. I believe that even young children can accompany parents to deliver meals for the elderly or help out in a soup kitchen or go for a Walk for Hunger or Walk for Aids or any designated charity. These acts should not be reserved for holidays but should become part of every family’s routine throughout the year. As I have often said, I believe there is an inborn need in children to want to help others and that we must nurture and reinforce this need. There are many, many values that we can teach our children and one of the most important is to be compassionate, caring people. This task will be facilitated when we model compassion in all of our relationships and when we involve our children in experiencing the joy of being contributing members of their society. We must strive to replace self centeredness and selfishness with a genuine interest in and concern for others. In such a scenario, all will benefit.

An excerpt from: “Compassion and Caring: Integral Features of Emotional Well—Being” by Robert Brooks, Ph.D

FCAT Power Writing Prompts

Think about the real meaning of compassion. Write a five paragraph essay related to the following topics:

1. Write about a time you showed compassion to someone with your words or actions.
2. Write about a time when you needed someone to show compassion towards you. How did you feel when someone helped you?
3. Explain the meaning of compassion to someone from another planet.
4. As Mayor of your city, write a proclamation declaring a resident a hero for a fictitious act of compassion.

source: [www. Kingston.k12.mo.us](http://www.Kingston.k12.mo.us)

The Man Who Had Plenty

"Remember, happiness doesn't depend on who you are or what you have; it depends solely upon what you think." Dale Carnegie

Once there was a family that was not rich and not poor. They lived in Ohio in a small country house. One night they all sat down for dinner, and there was a knock at the door. The father went to the door and opened it.

There stood an old man in tattered clothes, with ripped pants and missing buttons. He was carrying a basket full of vegetables. He asked the family if they wanted to buy some vegetables from him. They quickly did because they wanted him to leave.

Over time, the family and the old man became friends. The man brought vegetables to the family every week. They soon found out that he was almost blind and had cataracts on his eyes. But he was so friendly that they learned to look forward to his visits and started to enjoy his company.

One day as he was delivering the vegetables, he said, "I had the greatest blessing yesterday! I found a basket of clothes outside my house that someone left for me.

The family, knowing that he needed clothes, said, "How wonderful!" The old man said, "The really wonderful part is that I found a family that really needed the clothes." Author: Jerry Ullman



Bulletin Board Ideas

- When we show compassion, we are showing our love for others. Write the words "Love in Many Languages" on your bulletin board. Hang hearts all around that have the word love in different languages or an act of compassion by someone in the class.
- In honor of February holidays, combine President's Day, Groundhog Day, and Valentine's Day. Use a Valentine's Day tablecloth as a background. Add pictures of students, staff, and Presidents, past and present, to hang on the board. In the corner, have a groundhog coming out of his hole thinking "Past, Present and Future Leaders of America." (submitted by Christine Snowberger)

source:: www.theteacherscorner.net

Sunshine State Standards

PreK-2

HE.A.1.1 - The student comprehends concepts related to health promotion.

HE.B.1.1 - The student knows health-enhancing behaviors and how to reduce health risks.

Grades 3-5

HE.B.1.2 - The student knows health-enhancing behaviors.

HE.B.3.2 - The student analyzes the influence of culture, media, technology and other factors on health.

Grades 6-9

HE.A.1.3 - The student comprehends concepts related to health promotion.

HE.A.2.3 - The student knows how to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.

Grades 9-12

HE.B.1.4 - The student knows health enhancing behaviors and how to reduce health risks.

HE.B.2.4 - The student analyzes the influence of culture, media technology, and other factors on health.

It Matters to This ONE

As I walked along the seashore

This young boy greeted me.

He was tossing stranded starfish

Back to the deep blue sea.

I said, "Tell me why you bother,

Why waste your time this way?

There's a million stranded starfish...

Does it matter, anyway?

And he said, "It matters to this one.

It deserves a chance to grow.

It matters to this one,

I can't save them all you know.

But it matters to this one.

I'll return it to the sea.

It matters to this one,

And it matters to me."



Kindness Quotes

Week 1

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Although the world is very full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."

Helen Keller

"Life is an adventure in forgiveness."

Norman Cousins

"Until he extends his circle of compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace."

Albert Schweitzer

Week 2

"The individual is capable of both great compassion and great indifference. He has it within his means to nourish the former and outgrow the latter."

Norman Cousins

"Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Compassion is the chief love of human existence."

Dostoyevsky

"He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help."

Proverb

"If you judge people, you have not time to love them."

Mother Teresa

Week 3

"There is not better exercise for the heart than reaching down and lifting others up."

John Holmes

"We live very close together. So, our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

Dalai Lama

"The most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

Helen Keller

"Be someone who finds something good in each day—then give it to others."

Unknown

"Helping others makes our heart strong."

Anonymous

Week 4

"What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?"

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Love truth, and pardon error."

Voltaire

"Great love and great achievements involve great risks."

Dalai Lama

"It is important we cultivate love and compassion to all the sentient beings which is the way to bring peace to all."

Dalai Lama

"The more you are motivated by love, the more fearless and free your actions will be."

Dalai Lama

Teacher's Compassionate Corner & Activities

- I. Have students search newspapers to find disastrous events (Katrina Storm, Drought in Africa, Homeless people in various cities, etc.) which have occurred lately, that put large numbers of people in need.
- II. Have students research and write a paper on the history of the Red Cross or Habitat for Humanity.
- III. Have students research a week's worth of newspapers and write about someone in a nearby community who experienced a hardship. Have students write about their feelings as it relates to being compassionate.
- IV. Have students to retell a familiar fairy tale (example: Little Red Riding Hood) and tell the story from one of the character's point of view. Example: Have students tell the story from the point of view of the "Big Bad Wolf".
- V. Have students placed in groups and write a rap about compassion. Have each group perform their rap on compassion.
- VI. Have your students make a list of all of the persons that care about them. Have students write about how each of those individuals show compassion towards them when they may or may not make the best or right decisions around them.
- VII. Have students discuss the differences between compassion, pity, and sympathy. How are these terms alike? After distinguishing the meanings of these terms, ask students to write two sentences using each term.

Leading by Example

At the 3k mark of the 10 k race at the Pan Pacific Masters Games in Queensland, Australia, David Fitter was suddenly overcome with stomach ulcers and had to leave the track. Normally, such an occurrence would not have affected the race or other runners. In this case, however, Fitter's withdrawal was significant—he was the guide runner for Damien Williams who is blind.

Stranded on the track with 6K left to go in the race, Williams could not continue. His gold medal hopes in his age group were dashed.

Then he heard the crowd roar and felt another set of hands on him, guiding him onward. It was fellow competitor Andrew Clowers, one lap ahead of him, who sacrificed what looked like a certain gold medal in his age group to help him. "Words can't describe my appreciation," Williams told the *Gold Coast Bulletin* afterward. "I'd only met him this morning."

The show of character did not end there. With two laps to go, Brendan Whelan, who had already finished the race, ran up and took Clowes's place to allow him to resume his race. Cheers rocked the stadium at this second gesture of sportsmanship.

Williams, Clowes, and Whelan all won gold medals in their categories.



Compassion with a heart

"Carrie, isn't that boy in your class?" my mother asks me.

I see Darrell coming out of a fast food restaurant.

"Yeah, but I don't like him," I tell her. We go into the beauty shop and while I'm waiting for her I look out the window.

I see Darrell stopped in front of an alley. He takes a burger from his take-out bag and hands it to a man I didn't see before—he must be homeless.

Most kids at school don't like Darrell because he's annoying and is always telling pointless stories, but he just did something most kids at school would never have even thought to do.

A few weeks later I overhear Joanie's conversation; she and her friends are planning to play a mean joke on Darrell during recess.

I'm about to ignore them, but suddenly I remember what I saw Darrell do and I think of a quote:

"The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good."

No matter how annoying Darrell can be, I know that he's really a good person. Now I have a chance to show my true measure by helping him.

"Joanie, Darrell doesn't deserve this," I start. They are all shocked that I stood up for him and decide to not go through with their plan.

Maxim: "The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good." Ann Landers

Character Points

Compassion: I am aware of the hurts of others and I try to help them.

Community: I understand that I am part of a bigger whole; I respect and care about the needs of others.

Empathy: I am able to see the world through others' eyes and feel what they are doing.

Discussion Questions

Do you think Carrie is being compassionate in this story?

Why is it hard to see goodness in people like Darryl?

What are some ways that you can work on seeing the goodness in all people?

Do you think Darryl and Carrie illustrate the Maxim for the story?

Source: www.ethics.org