



Middle School Lesson: Justice and Kindness Play a Part

Lesson Purpose:

What is a world citizen's responsibility to promote and advocate for justice and kindness? The purpose of this lesson is to define and raise students' awareness of the importance of advocating for justice and kindness. The learners explore ways they can play a role in bringing about a positive change in their school, community, and world.

Duration:

One Forty-Minute Class Period

Objectives:

The learner will:

- identify injustices and unkind actions in the school, community, and around the world.
- discuss the responsibility one has to be an advocate for justice and kindness.

Service Experience:

Ask the students to think of ways to teach others about treating all people with respect.

Materials:

- Printouts of four role-plays to illustrate concepts promoted by Martin Luther King, Jr.

<p>Justice (antonyms: discrimination, unfairness, inequity) Telephone conversations between possible tenants and an apartment owner. Caller indicates ethnic, religious, gender variation, or socio-economic status and is told there are no rentals available. Another caller who has same background as owner gets the apartment.</p>	<p>Tolerance (antonyms: intolerance, impatience, disrespect) A line of people are in a store behind an elderly person who is moving slowly to get out their money and is having difficulty in hearing and understanding the checkout person. One person uses body language and mocking that communicates impatience and disrespect for the elderly person in an attempt to amuse his/her companions.</p>
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<p>Kindness (antonyms: mean, thoughtless, vicious, harsh) In a conversation, a person makes a negative comparison of one person to a third person, saying he/she is worthless and will never amount to anything.</p>	<p>Peace (antonyms: violence, disorder, conflict) One person is tapping his/her pencil. Another person says he/she is sick and tired of the tapping, takes the pencil, breaks it in half, and throws it on the floor.</p>
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- Printout of the Kindness and Justice Discussion Cards (page 3)
- Container to hold the cut-up discussion cards to pass around a circle

Instructional Procedures:

Anticipatory Set:

Introduce yourself and tell briefly about your experience serving as a YACer.

Tell the students that as a YACer, your job is to be philanthropic by sharing money (treasure). The definition of philanthropy is “giving time, talent, or treasure and taking action for the common good.”

Tell that that being kind to someone who is lonely or reading to a second grader or teaching baseball to a team in the community are examples of philanthropy because they are sharing time or talent for the common good. With this definition in mind, ask students to raise their hands if they are philanthropists. Ask for a few examples of sharing time, talent, or treasure for the common good.

1. Remind the students that for the upcoming Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, many people take the day off from work or school to do service. The holiday was designed to remind all people to take philanthropic action to promote justice, peace, kindness, and respect.
2. Ask volunteers to act out the 30-second role-plays. See Materials list, above.
3. Discuss student reactions after each role-play. Use these questions as a guide, if needed to spark conversation:

How did you feel about that behavior? Have you seen it before? Why do you think the person acted that way? What effect does that behavior have on others? Could acting with violence encourage others to be violent? What effect would there be if someone stepped forward and showed a positive reaction (peace, tolerance, kindness, or justice) in the situation? Whose responsibility is it to promote a more civil society?
4. Invite the class to sit in a circle. Pass around the bag or box of discussion prompts.
5. When their turn comes they pick one card out of the bag and read their card to the group. After a student reads a card prompt, allow time for discussion. Encourage them to consider their roles as justice-oriented citizens and future YACers when responding to the Justice and Kindness Discussion Cards prompt.
6. Discuss whether it is the responsibility of all people to promote justice and kindness, and why.
7. Discuss what they can do for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to promote justice and kindness in their community. Brainstorm a list of acts of kindness and service together. Ask students to make a commitment to one of the ideas with their class or family.

Justice and Kindness Discussion Cards

Describe the characteristics of someone who has treated you unfairly.	Describe a situation you have experienced that you felt was unfair.	Describe the emotions you felt when you were treated unfairly.	When do you think unfair or unjust situations get out of hand?	Have you seen injustice in your community? Explain.
Have you ever witnessed someone being unkind to another person, animal, or property? Explain?	Describe a time when someone was unkind to you.	What emotions have you felt when you have been treated unkindly?	If you have treated someone unkindly in the past, do you ever think about it now? How do you feel when you think about your actions now?	Name characteristics of someone who would hurt or bully another person for no reason.
What are some examples of WHY someone may treat another person or animal in an unkind or unjust manner?	Why should we respect people of diverse cultures?	What are causes of stereotypes and prejudices?	Describe a time when someone stood up for someone who was getting treated unfairly.	Describe a time when someone stood up for someone who was being treated unjustly.
Should people speak for the rights of others? Why?	Why might someone protest for animal rights?	Why might someone voice their opinion about an injustice happening in another country?	Who can citizens speak to about protection of human rights?	What does it mean to promote something?
What is advocacy?	What is philanthropy?	Define <i>kindness</i> in your own words.	Define <i>justice</i> in your own words.	Why is it important to listen to other people's problems and/or concerns?