



# Kindness lesson plan: middle and high school

## Activity

### *Kindness Break*

## Objective

*Children will be able to:*

- Name ways to show kindness.
- Understand how it feels when someone does or says something kind.
- Take actions to add more kindness to the world using a *Kindness Break*.

## Supplies

[Video](#), printed pledges to *#lightitupblue* for a kinder, more inclusive world, available at [autismspeaks.org/kindness](https://autismspeaks.org/kindness).

## Preparation

- Brainstorm with students to create a word web for the word “*kindness*.”
- Watch [Kindness video](#) and “[What Does Kindness Means to You?](#)”

## Connection

- Discuss the acts of kindness in the story and related emotions.
- Ask students to identify the emotions that kindness can bring out.

*For example:*

*In this video, we saw a series of kind acts, starting with the construction worker.*

*How did his act of kindness make an impact on \_\_\_\_\_?*

*When the kindness was returned to him, how do you think that impacted him in turn?*

- Connect the acts of kindness from the video to acts of kindness in the group or other environment.

*For example:*

*What about in our class/group/family?*

*Name something kind that someone has said or done for you. How did that make you feel?*

*Name a kind thing that you have done for someone. What do you think that person felt?*

## Active engagement

- Encourage learners to think about ways to perform acts of kindness themselves, and who they would like to extend kindness to. Talk about different ways to be kind, as shown by the characters in the book.
- Then, ask them to take a “kindness break,” where they stop what they are doing to extend kindness to someone else. Encourage students to think of virtual ways to be kind, while many are learning remotely. Find some ideas [here](#).

*Each learner will choose a partner in the small group and the learners will each say something kind to their partners.* If this lesson plan is being conducted virtually, students can choose someone in their household to do this activity with. Choose a volunteer to tell the group what they said or plan to say to during their kindness break. Then, ask the group to think about ways they can take a kindness break to extend kindness to people outside this classroom or group. For more ideas about kindness activities, print or share our [Kindness Tear Sheet](#).

*For example: In this video, we learned that kindness fills others with happiness and makes them feel good. Then they want to share that feeling with others. If we all work together, we can spread kindness in our families, our group, our classrooms and our communities. All it takes is making the effort to be kind to others. There are lots of ways to be kind to others. Let's practice a few:*

*Invite someone to join your activity.* You can ask your classmate or someone who seems to be on the "outside" and inviting them to connect in person, if your situation allows, or virtually. You can also use social media for a good cause here by adding new people to your social networks and offering positive comments. Try offering to tutor someone in class who seems like they need some help in a subject you do well in, or, if relevant, "There is a play tryout today. Would you like to walk over together?" If you are teaching at home, offer ways to share kindness with family members. Try inviting a sibling to play a game with you or do a project together at home.

*Find common interests.* You'll never know what you have in common with someone else until you find out what they like to do! Try starting a conversation by sharing something you like, then asking what others like to do. "I can't wait for softball season to start. Do you play any sports?" or "Here are some at-home exercises I've been doing with my family. Do you have any ideas or recommendations?"

*Be patient.* Everyone moves and speaks at their own speed. Sarah might talk really fast, while Henry might need more time to say what he's thinking. And, sometimes it will take a few invitations for someone to feel OK saying "Yes." Keep extending kindness and give them time to respond. Try: "I'm here if you need to talk."

*Be kind* – just like you would want to be treated! Accept your classmates and respect them for all their differences. Think of someone you don't typically connect with at school or in sports or activities and think of a kind thing to say about them. Tell that person here, or write it down and deliver it later, like a letter. "Jack, thanks for giving great feedback on that group project. Your ideas made the end result better," or, "Olivia, thanks for being a great leader on the team. You are a great model to everyone on how to support each other."



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*Take a kindness break* – right now! Find a partner in our group/class. Then, think of something kind to say, like we read about in our book, and then say it out loud to them.

*Invite a student to share their kindness message.* Ask what each of the volunteers felt when they heard kind words.] How did you feel when you heard that?

*Let's make our kindness grow all the time, not just here.* Think of someone in your life – maybe in your class, your sports team or your family. It might be someone you don't normally connect with, or someone you might not always remember to thank for their kindness [teacher, bus driver, coach]. Think of something kind to say to them or something kind to do for them. Write it down, and the next time you see them, take a kindness break and share that kind word or action.

### Closing

Invite learners to pledge to be kind by signing the *Kindness Pledge from Autism Speaks*. Then ask that they do an act of kindness for someone else outside this group to keep the kindness growing.

*For example:*

*Let's all make a pledge to be kind. [If in person: Have students sign the printed pledge to be kind.*

*If virtual: Have students take the pledge at [autismspeaks.org/kindness](https://autismspeaks.org/kindness).]*

*Give your kindness message to that person the next time you see them. You'll be starting a kindness boomerang like we saw in our video today.*