

A Bowl of Compassion

This lesson focuses on caring through the act of compassion. Students will be presented with a series of difficult and surprising scenarios and will then talk about what they might do in that situation.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ Scenario Cards (see below)
- ☐ Bowl or box
- ☐ “*The Lady in the Box*,” by Ann McGovern

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Show compassion by brainstorming solutions for difficult scenarios.
- Explain compassion through words.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Introduce yourself to a new teacher/staff at school today. Remember what it felt like to be new. Friendly faces make it easier.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Place students in diverse groups of 3-4 to balance speaking parts.
- Use the scenario cards at the end of this lesson to help with comprehension.
- Add a “Create Your Own” difficult scenario card for advanced learners to extend the lesson.



Share

5-7 minutes

Have students gather at the circle time/community meeting area.

- Review the definitions of **caring** and **gratitude**.
- Have students share with their neighbor about something they are grateful for today.
- If desired, write the gratitudes down on the links from last week to add to the chain later.



Inspire

What is Compassion?

10-15 minutes

Explain that compassion is the feeling you get inside you when you want to help someone that is in need. This person could be a friend, your teacher, your parents, a sibling, or maybe even someone you have never even met! When a person is sad, in pain, or needs help, we naturally feel compassion for them. Our hearts tell us to help. Sometimes we don't even stop to think about giving this help because the feeling of compassion is so strong. Our desire to be kind and caring is overwhelming and we just jump into action! When have you felt compassion for your family or friends? How were you able to show kindness and caring?

Explain that compassion can be felt for people we have never even seen or met. Provide simple examples of scenarios that might naturally lead to a feeling of compassion. Some examples might include a sick child, a car accident, or a dead pet.

- Ask for other examples: Have you ever seen a movie that made you feel compassion for one of the characters?

Read: *"The Lady in the Box,"* by Ann McGovern

Read Aloud Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkiOqv5WPyg&feature=youtu.be> (8 min)

After the read aloud, **ask:**

1. Have you ever seen someone sleeping outside on the street or in the park?
2. How do you feel when you see someone in need?
3. How would you help the "Lady in the Box"?

Note: This can be a sensitive topic. Be prepared for some questions that students may have around why people are homeless, why some have more than others, etc. You may also have some students that have experienced homelessness. If so, allow them to share if desired, but do not bring it up on your own accord.



Empower

20 minutes

Divide the students up into teams of 3-5 depending on your class size. Using a bowl or box, place all of the scenario cards inside the bowl (make sure to fold them up so no one can see them from the outside).

Invite two groups up at a time. Have one group select a scenario card. Read the scenario title and describe the action of the card. Allow both teams time to discuss the scenario as a team. They must answer the question, "What would I do if this happened to me?" After two minutes, have both teams explain their answer. **Example:** I forgot my lunch at home.

Team 1:

We would tell the teacher and maybe she could help us get another lunch.

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Team 2:

We would ask our best friend for some of their lunch because they always have extra.

After both teams have provided an answer, ask the following questions:

- How would you feel if this happened to you?
- How could you show compassion if you saw this happen to someone in our class?

Repeat this activity until all groups have had at least two chances up front. Try 3 teams at once for more of a challenge.

**Reflect**

5-7 minutes

Compassion is a complex emotion and can be difficult to explain in a concrete way. Using real life scenarios as they come up while incorporating this language allows young children a foundation from which to build on. During times of conflict, use this same model to help both sides of the disagreement understand and show compassion for the other.



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AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (**CASEL**) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

<p>A kid on the playground does not have a coat on. It is raining outside.</p>	<p>Your mom is crying because she lost her car keys.</p>
<p>A girl just tripped and everything fell out of her backpack.</p>	<p>The chain on your friend's bike just fell off.</p>
<p>A car alarm sounded loudly as a girl walked by someone's house.</p>	<p>A boy fell off the swings and tore his pants.</p>
<p>Some kids are playing football. A boy asks to play and they say no.</p>	<p>A new girl is sitting alone during lunch recess.</p>