

The background of the cover features a grayscale image of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, gently cradling a glowing globe. A bright yellow star is positioned on the right side of the globe. The overall composition is centered and evokes a sense of care and global unity.

Activities for Developing **EMPATHY**

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By
Becky Kirby, M.Ed.
Miarco

**40 Activities That Teach the Meaning and Importance of
Empathetic Behaviors for Grades 5 – 9**

About the Author

Becky Kirby worked as an educator and school counselor for 41 years. She spent her entire career working in the Ravenna School District in Ravenna, Ohio. She retired from Ravenna in 2013. She also taught classes to the School Counseling Practicum students at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio.

Other books written by Becky Kirby:

Grab Bag Guidance

Classroom Guidance from A-Z

Ways to Amaze and Engage Middle School Students

Dedication

I dedicate this book to my youngest grandsons, Connor Kirby and Max Ratliff. They were both born in 2010. They join our other grandchildren Maggie Ratliff, age 9, Mason Ratliff, age 7, and Kyle Kirby, age 5.

Activities for Developing Empathy

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Introduction

Recently, I jokingly told my superintendent that I finally figured out what I was doing, and it is time to retire. The truth is, there is nothing like experience!

I started teaching in 1972 and in 1988 received a Master's Degree in School Counseling. I began my career as a school counselor in the early 90's and continued working as an elementary and middle school counselor until 2013. I often wish I knew then what I know now. I have taken much of what I have learned over the years and incorporated the ideas into my books to help school counselors work more successfully with students.

Forty years ago, I never dreamed that I would be sitting in an auditorium listening to our police force as they presented ALICE (Alert/Lockdown/Inform/Counter/Evacuate) training to our staff. Someone coming into a school with a gun was beyond my comprehension. But today's reality is that violence can happen anywhere, and we must be prepared. This reality reinforces my belief that we must teach students empathy. We must teach children how to be aware of what others might be feeling and how to support and help other people in need—to reach out to others and show that they care.

When I first began writing this activity book, I wondered if it was possible to teach empathy to students. I then realized that helping students understand their own and other's feelings and teaching them to reflect back to someone what they saw or heard, to give supportive statements, and to put themselves in someone else's situation *is* teaching empathy. Challenging students to volunteer to help those less fortunate not only teaches empathy but also educates students about differences, acceptance, and understanding.

This book is filled with varied activities that you can use to teach empathy. I wish you and your students the best.

Sincerely,
Becky Kirby

ACTIVITY 7

How Would You Feel About Another's Situation?

PURPOSE:

To have students describe how they would feel about another person's situation

MATERIALS NEEDED:

For the leader:
None

For each pair of students:
 In Another's Shoes (page 31 or CD)

PREPARATION:

Print a copy of *In Another's Shoes* for each pair of students.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the students into pairs. Distribute *In Another's Shoes* to each pair of students. Explain to the students that they are to read the first situation, then share with their partners their thoughts and feelings about that situation. Allow enough time for the students to complete this process for each situation on the activity sheet.

Then ask for volunteers to share their thoughts about the situations with the class.

CONCLUSION:

Conclude the lesson by saying:

Today you practiced feeling how another person feels. This is an important step in developing empathy for others.

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ACTIVITY 18

A Dozen Ways to Show You Care

PURPOSE:

To have students become aware of ways they and others show that they care

MATERIALS NEEDED:

For the leader:
None

For each student:
 A Dozen Ways to Show You Care
(page 75 or CD)
 Pencil

PREPARATION:

Print a copy of *A Dozen Ways to Show You Care* for each student.

ACTIVITY:

Distribute *A Dozen Ways to Show You Care* and a pencil to each student. Tell the students:

Think of the past month and fill in the blanks on the worksheet. On the left side of the page, write about ways that you have shown you care. On the right side of the page, write about caring acts you know about or have witnessed someone else performing.

Then have the students share what they wrote.

CONCLUSION:

Conclude the lesson by saying:

Today we looked at different ways that we have shown that we care, and how others have shown that they care. Showing these traits to others demonstrates empathy.



A Dozen Ways to Show You Care

This month I was:

friendly by: _____

kind by: _____

compassionate by: _____

caring by: _____

understanding by: _____

unselfish by: _____

respectful by: _____

honest by: _____

patient by: _____

accepting by: _____

trustworthy by: _____

concerned by: _____

This month someone was:

friendly by: _____

kind by: _____

compassionate by: _____

caring by: _____

understanding by: _____

unselfish by: _____

respectful by: _____

honest by: _____

patient by: _____

accepting by: _____

trustworthy by: _____

concerned by: _____

ACTIVITY 27

The Empathy Calendar

PURPOSE:

To have students practice caring behaviors each day for one month and mark the acts they complete on their calendars

MATERIALS NEEDED:

For the leader:
None

For each student:
 Empathy Calendar (page 103 or CD)
 Pencil

PREPARATION:

Print an *Empathy Calendar* for each student.

ACTIVITY:

Present this activity at the end of a month. Distribute an *Empathy Calendar* and a pencil to each student. Tell the students to begin the assignment the first day of the upcoming month. Have the students read what is on each date.

CONCLUSION:

Say:

We are all going to try to have an entire month where, at least once a day, we do something caring for someone. Look at the tasks listed on the Empathy Calendar. Whenever you accomplish a task on the calendar, mark it with an X. If you accomplish the task more than once, add another X on that date. At the end of the month, bring your calendars back and we will discuss what you were able to accomplish. Good Luck.



ACTIVITY 34

Empathy Didactic Cinquain Poetry

PURPOSE:

To have students write a poem about empathy using the Didactic Cinquain format

MATERIALS NEEDED:

For the leader:

- Board to write on

For each student:

- Didactic Cinquain Poetry* (page 122 or CD)
- Paper
- Pencil

PREPARATION:

Print a copy of *Didactic Cinquain Poetry* for each student. Gather the necessary materials.

Display on your IWB (interactive white board) or write the following sample of a Didactic Cinquain poem on the board:

Empathy
Kind, genuine
Caring, giving, supporting
For a better world
Acceptance

ACTIVITY:

Distribute *Didactic Cinquain Poetry*, paper and a pencil to each student. Then tell the students:

Today you are going to write a poem about empathy using the Didactic Cinquain Poetry form. Look at your worksheet, while I explain how to write this type of poetry.

There are five lines in a Didactic Cinquain poem:

- The first line is one word which is the subject or title of the poem.*
- The second line contains two words which are adjectives that describe the subject or title.*
- The third line has three words that tell the reader more about the subject of the poem or shows action. Many times these words are gerunds that end with “ing.”*
- The fourth line has four words that show emotions about the subject of the poem and may be individual words or a phrase.*
- The fifth line is one word that is a synonym of the subject or title or is very similar to it.*

Title your poem Empathy, then follow the format on the worksheet. An example is on the board.

When you have completed your poem, copy it onto a plain white sheet of paper. You will each share your poem with the group/class.

CONCLUSION:

Today you wrote a poem about empathy using the *Didactic Cinquain Poetry* form.

Did you find writing a Didactic Cinquain poem easy or difficult? Why?

Were you surprised at what you wrote?

What did you like about the other poems?

How were some of the poems the same?

How were some of the poems different?

ACTIVITY 39

Empathy Word Search

PURPOSE:

To have students find hidden words related to empathy

MATERIALS NEEDED:

For the leader:
None

For each student:
 Empathy Word Search
 (page 141 or CD)
 Pencil

PREPARATION:

Print a copy of *Empathy Word Search* for each student.

ACTIVITY:

Distribute *Empathy Word Search* and a pencil to each student.

Then say:

Today we are going to review what we have learned by completing an Empathy Word Search.

We will see how many of you can find all the words.

CONCLUSION:

Ask the following questions:

How are the words that you found in the word search related to empathy?

Were they easy or hard to find?

What word was the hardest word for you to find?

Conclude the lesson by saying:

Let's look at each word. I would like volunteers to tell us about times they have seen or done what the word describes.



THE FOLLOWING SAMPLES
ARE REPRODUCIBLE/PRINTABLE PAGES
INCLUDED ON THE CD-ROM

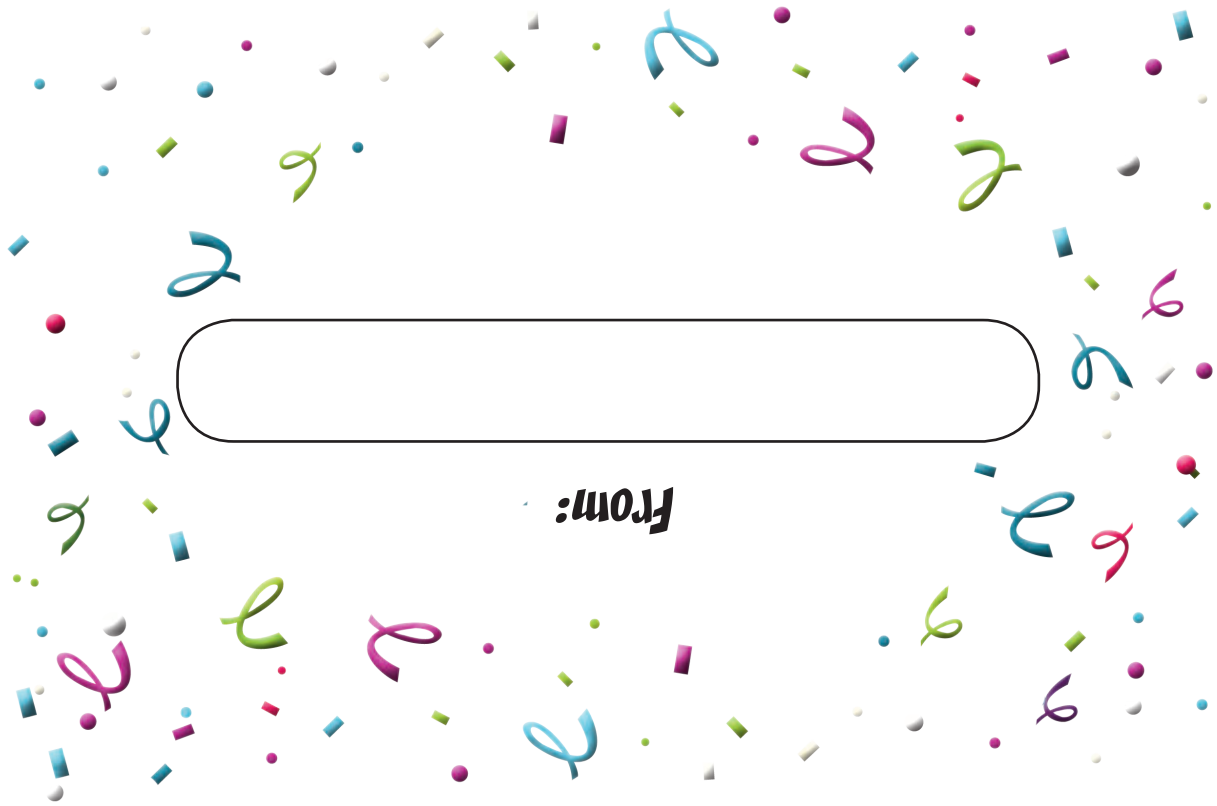
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How Would You Feel?



You lost your wallet that is filled with money.	Someone found and turned in your wallet.
You forgot your lunch money and have no lunch to eat today.	You have holes in your tennis shoes and the ground is wet.
Someone tells you that another student is posting derogatory things about you on Facebook™.	You forgot your lines in the middle of your performance in the school play.
You see a homeless man begging on the street.	Your family has to go to a shelter to live.
You witness other kids making fun of a new student.	Someone writes a threatening note to another student and signs your name.
The water has been turned off in your home because your parents can't pay the bill.	Your older sister enlists in the army and is sent overseas.
Your favorite aunt has died.	Someone stole your cell phone.
You witness a student making fun of someone of another nationality.	Your uncle lost his arm in the war. He is going through rehabilitation.
You are always chosen last for the team.	Your brother has a serious illness.
You watch the devastation of a hurricane on TV.	You watch a story about animal abuse on TV.
You have to go to the Laundromat each week to wash your clothes.	You lost your home and belongings in a fire.
Your best friend's dad was a firefighter. He died trying to save someone's life.	You are accused of something that you didn't do.
Your best friend's mom is an alcoholic.	You have no money to go to the school dance.

Cut out the rectangle along the dotted line. Write your statement on the back, then fold and deliver your *Happy Gram*.



FOLD
BACK



To:

A rounded rectangular box for writing the recipient's name.



Hearts

Friendly

showing
kindly interest
and goodwill;
welcoming

Kind

being friendly
and generous;
warm-hearted

Thoughtful

showing
consideration
for others

Happy Face Story

Jessie was planning a shopping trip to the mall with two of her friends. Jessie really didn't want Violet, one of their other friends, to come along, so she did not ask her. The other girls went along with this and did not ask Violet or even let her know that they were going. Violet is the oldest of five children and her mother died last year. Since then, Violet has had a lot of responsibility watching her siblings. Violet's favorite thing to do is hang out with her friends, as it gives her a break from the responsibilities at home.

At the mall, Jessie started talking about Violet to her other friends. She said she was glad that Violet wasn't there. None of the other girls spoke up, even though it bothered them that Violet was excluded. Jessie continued by making fun of the way Violet dressed and saying that Violet didn't even have a cellphone or a tablet—things that they all have. She even made the comment that Violet probably couldn't even afford a trip to the mall, as she wouldn't be able to buy anything.

At the food court in the mall, the girls noticed Violet eating with her aunt. When Violet saw them, she turned her head.

At this point the mouth should be torn in many pieces. Explain to the students that for the rest of the story, as the girls make amends with Violet, they are to glue the pieces together in order to make the smile whole again. They should then cut out and paste the mouth onto the *Face* picture. Continue reading the story:

The two girls that were with Jessie decided that they were going over to talk with Violet. Jessie decided to go along. They apologized to Violet and told her that they didn't ask her because they thought she wouldn't be able to go. They asked her aunt if she could stay with them and shop. Jessie's mom would pick them up and bring them home. Violet's aunt said that it was okay, and gave Violet some money to use for shopping. By showing empathy, all of the girls ended up having fun together.

Empathy Bingo

E 1-15	M 16-30	PA 31-45	TH 46-60	Y 61-75
A synonym for empathy is ...	Someone or something that I care for is ...	What is empathetic listening?	How would you feel if you had no food in your house?	How would you help a student who doesn't speak English?
An antonym for empathy is ...	A time someone did something nice for me was ...	How can someone tell that you are listening to him or her?	How would you feel if you had no heat in your house?	How would you help a person in a wheelchair?
The definition of empathy is ...	A time that I did something nice for someone else was ...	When reading someone's feelings, what do you notice?	How would you feel if you had no running water in your house?	If you were in a race and the person next to you got seriously hurt, what would you do?
To be empathetic is to show ...	A time when I really needed a friend was ...	Name three good listening skills.	How would you feel if someone in your home was seriously ill?	Tell about a time that you stuck up for someone.
A person I know who shows empathy is ...	An obstacle that I overcame was ...	What would someone's body language look like who is afraid?	How would you feel on the first day in a new school?	Tell about a time when someone stuck up for you.