

# Reading buddies — Compassion

## EXPLANATION:

Reading Buddies is an activity concept that pairs older readers with younger readers for reading time with books. This activity is an opportunity for our Senior students to share their knowledge of compassion through storytelling and book reading. Powerful moments of connection can occur when learning together 'and concepts of care and compassion are explored.



**YEAR LEVELS:** Years 11–12

**STUDENT GROUPING:** Whole group discussion and reading sessions

**ACTIVITY LENGTH:** 45 minutes approx. for initial conceptualisation of activity plus times dedicated to library search, reading events etc

## LINK TO CURRICULUM:

**Link to General Capabilities in the English curriculum:**

### *Personal and social capability*

Students develop personal and social capability in English by enhancing their communication skills, teamwork and capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others. Close study of texts assists students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, beliefs and responses by interacting with a range of texts. English actively assists students in the development of communication skills needed for analysis, research and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. Students work collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research endeavours.

## SCOPE OF TASK:

Programs that pair older readers with younger readers have many benefits. For example:

- Increase in self-esteem and sense of purpose
- Listening to stories read-aloud supports reading fluency, phrasing and expression and a range of literacy skills
- Fosters leadership, self-confidence and problem-solving skills
- Positive connections between Senior students and young children in a school community
- Supports communication, conversation and discussions

A 'Reading Buddy' program can focus on different themes. For this activity Senior students will concentrate on exploring concepts of compassion and care by reading and investigating storybooks about compassion.

To conduct this activity there will need to be a partnership developed between teachers of a Senior class and a teacher from the early grades. Introductory sessions, reading times etc will need to be set up to allow the relationships to be built between the students. Each student will need to be partnered with a younger student (or two depending on the numbers).

1. Gather Senior students together and share the activity focus – to conduct a storytelling event with younger students exploring concepts of compassion.
2. To begin the activity, have students consider what compassion might look like for younger students. Questions that might lead this discussion include:
  - What might young students' understanding of compassion be?
  - How might you be able to describe compassion to young children?
  - What vocabulary could you use to describe compassion?At this stage the early years teacher can be invited to the group to discuss the younger children's understanding and give insight.
3. Ask students to research storybooks that they could read that depict themes of care, friendship, acts of kindness etc. This could include a visit to the library and a discussion with the School librarian.
4. To start the 'Buddy' partnership ask each Senior student to write a simple introductory letter to their younger partner. Some information they can share includes:
  - Introduce themselves and share some personal details (e.g. name, age, favourite sports or food)
  - Information about the visit and reading a book
  - Share some information about compassion and which book they will be reading
5. At a prearranged time, Senior students can visit their 'reading buddy' and read the book. Throughout the reading students can highlight themes of compassion and ask their buddy questions about what is happening in the book and how the story relates to care, friendship, compassion and kindness. Most importantly remind student to have fun with their buddy!
6. After the reading buddy event debrief with the Senior students about how it went and the younger students understanding of compassion:
  - Did the book connect concepts of care, friendship and kindness?
  - How did the younger students understand the concepts?
  - How did you explain and connect care and compassion?
  - Was the event fun? Why?
  - What have you learnt about compassion through sharing the concept with others?

7. To complete the activity students could prepare a report about the event which can be shared with the school community and parents informing them about the importance of compassion, care, kindness and reading!

### RESOURCES:

- Laptop and internet
- People resources including teachers and librarians
- Pen and paper to write letters
- Children's storybooks

