

Share a Hug – Compassion

EXPLANATION:

The simple acts of giving and receiving hugs are demonstrations of kindness, compassion, and empathy. Share a Hug is an activity in which students can show care for others and acknowledge their feelings, allowing them to wrap their arms around someone or something.

GRADE LEVELS: Preschool–Kindergarten

STUDENT GROUPING: Group discussion and individual creations

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 20 minutes, plus time during the day or week for students to make their own “hugs”

CASEL CORE COMPETENCY: *SOCIAL AWARENESS*

- Demonstrating empathy and compassion
- Showing concern for the feelings of others
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- You can learn more about the CASEL framework [here](#)

SCOPE OF TASK:

Discussing concepts of kindness, empathy, and compassion helps students to become aware of the world around them and how events and emotions can impact individuals. Providing students with opportunities to feel, practice, and enact compassion is very beneficial. This activity can be conducted at any time to assist students in expressing gratitude and recognizing others' circumstances (e.g., someone is unwell and in the hospital, someone has lost a pet, someone is injured, etc.). This activity could also be linked to circumstances in the community that have negatively impacted people, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or national days like Memorial Day and Veteran's Day.

1. During group time, discuss with students concepts associated with compassion. Questions for discussion could include:

- What happens when people feel sad?
- How do we feel when we see someone who is hurt or sad?
- What can you do when people are sad, upset, or hurt?
- Why is it important to show others you care?

2. How can you show people or pets that you care when they are upset or hurt? Encourage students to share stories of when they have been kind or shown compassion.

3. Ask students if they have ever given a hug to a person or pet to make them feel better. Encourage students to share stories of when they have given hugs. Ask:

- How do people feel when they receive a hug?
- How do you feel when you give a person in need a hug?

4. Discuss with students that sometimes you want to show people care and compassion, but you cannot physically give them a hug.

5. Ask students:

- Who do you think needs a hug?
- Why do they need a hug?
- Can you give them a hug? Why or why not?

6. Tell students that we can make our own "hugs":

- Ask students to lie on poster paper with their arms and hands out as if they were ready to give a hug. Students can model this action prior to lying down.
- Trace around the top half of each student's body.
- Students can then paint and decorate their body shape.
- Once they are finished decorating the body shape, a teacher or adult can write a message to the person whom the student would like to hug.



7. Once the “hugs” have been made, students can take their “hugs” home to be distributed to the recipients.

8. A few days after the “hugs” have been given, discuss the activity with the students:

- Have you given your “hug”?
- Who did you give it to?
- How did they feel when you acknowledged them?
- How did you feel when you gave the “hug”?



9. Remind the students how important it is to show care and compassion to other people and to recognize their feelings.

Hint: To complete this activity, it will be important to share the learning outcomes and aims of the activity with parents/guardians and to ask for their assistance in distributing the “hugs.”

RESOURCES:

- White poster paper
- Paints, crayons, or collage materials
- Glue or tape
- Markers
- Scissors