

A Spot of Empathy & Compassion

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to build skills surrounding compassion and being kind towards how others are feeling. This lesson focuses specifically on how we show compassion when we recognize basic emotions in others. This lesson is the second part of two parts.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Empathy, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- ❑ “A Little Spot of Empathy,” by Diane Alber

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:

- Apply their understanding of basic emotions to their understanding of compassion and empathy.
- Predict how others may feel in response to different situations.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Pick one person in your community to empathize with and place yourself in their shoes for one day. Break it down by different locations and times. Compassion and empathy can only develop through practice

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Children on the autism spectrum may have a difficult time recognizing emotions in people’s facial expressions. Pair up students if necessary.
- For the wrap-up, you could let students in this group study the picture further and give them specific emotions to work on recognizing based on the picture. What does happiness seem to look like? What does sadness seem to look like? Give these students specific things to look for (frown, smile, furrowed brow, big eyes) and relate to an emotion.



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See last page for details.



Share

5-7 minutes

Ask:

- How do emotions help us to know when someone might need help?

Invite student responses.

The feeling that makes you want to help is a superpower emotion that we have called compassion. Compassion means caring when others are hurt, sad, or in need. When we show compassion to others, we are showing them kindness. ALL of us have this superpower inside of us, though sometimes we need to work hard to activate it.



Inspire

12-15 minutes

Read: “A Little Spot of Empathy,” by Diane Alber

Read Aloud Link- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBFHr6Zj39g> (6.25 min)

This story teaches us about empathy. Having compassion makes us want to help others. Putting yourself in the other person’s shoes and thinking about things from their perspective is called empathy. When we have empathy, we are able to make a connection between how we feel (or how we felt when something similar happened) and how the other person is feeling.

Let’s review the key points the book gives us to help practice empathy:

- **Look for emotions.** How can we notice emotions in other people?
- **Be curious.** After you notice a person’s emotions, talk to them. Ask them how they are feeling and why.
- **Listen and connect.** Make sure you listen to their words. How are they feeling and why? Have you ever felt the same way? Has something similar ever happened to you? Make a connection. This helps them feel seen and heard, which shows that you care.



Empower

5 minutes

Now you are going to ask students to practice using empathy to make a compassion connection with a partner.

Instructions:

- Have students sit with one person facing the whiteboard/smartboard and the other facing the back of the room.
- Write an emotion on the board and then have the person facing forward think of a time that made them feel that way.

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- **Example: Sad** - “I fell off the monkey bars.”
- Have them turn around and make their face and body language show that emotion. The other person will then work to identify their partner's emotion, ask what happened, and find a connection within their own life to show empathy.
 - **Example: Sad** - You are frowning and look sad. Why are you feeling this way? Oh you fell off the monkey bars? I've never been on them, but I did fall off the slide last week and it really hurt. Did you get hurt too? I can understand how you feel.
 - Use a volunteer to work through this example to demonstrate how to complete this exercise

Repeat with 2-3 emotions or until time is up.



Reflect

5 minutes

It is important to remember that having compassion for someone and showing empathy go hand in hand. When we connect with someone over a shared experience or emotion, we are using empathy. But we cannot practice showing empathy unless we look for the emotions, be curious about how someone is feeling, and listen to what is happening. Without this information, we cannot connect by finding common ground. Practice makes perfect, so try this out a little bit each day and you will grow in compassion and empathy and kindness!



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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/>