The Kindness Quilt
by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

Themes
Encourage Others
Pay-It-Forward
Acts of Kindness
Service Projects

Minna and her classmates have been asked to work on Kindness Projects. Her acts of kindness keep growing and she can’t decide which ONE she will use for the project so she uses all 4 of them and puts them together to build a kindness square. She soon discovers that kindness can grow and grow and grow and pretty soon everyone is “encouraging others” and helping out!

Discussion Starters

1. What is a fable?
   A short story that teaches a lesson, the characters are usually talking animals

2. What was the lesson to be learned in the fable Mrs. Bloom read to the students?
   In the fable, the lion decided not to snack on the mouse and instead let the mouse go. Later the mouse helped the lion. This showed kindness back-and forth between the two animals. Who was the lion kind to? Who was the mouse kind to? Use a pendulum or a teeter totter or a scale to demonstrate back-and-forth kindness.

3. The E in NED’s name reminds us to Encourage others. How do you feel when someone encourages you with kindness? Do you feel the same way when YOU encourage others with kindness?
   Answers will vary. Kindness makes me smile, makes me happy, feels good. Being kind to someone can me you smile, feel happy and feel good too!

4. Discuss the difference between ‘back-and-forth kindness’ and ‘pay-it-forward kindness.’
   Answers will vary. Back and forth means – you are kind to me and in return, I am kind to you. Pay it Forward kindness is when you are kind to someone with nothing expected back. You may not know this person but you choose to be kind in hopes that you can make them a little happy and then they will be kind to someone else. Sometimes you are kind to others who are not kind in return. Use a scale to demonstrate balancing out kindness by going back and forth with kindness. Show how sometimes you give out kindness and get nothing in return.

Key Vocabulary

Quilt: sewn together fabric shapes to make a new piece of patterned fabric
Scampering: to run quickly or playfully
Snoozing: a short nap
Plucked: to pick off
Scurrying: to move quickly or in a hurried way
Gnawed: to bite or chew on again and again
Practice: to repeat or do over and over in order to get better
Celebrate: to party in honor of something special
Community: people, homes, schools and businesses in the same part of town
Litter: pieces of paper and trash scattered around where it shouldn’t be
Moral of a fable: the good message in the story – what you can learn from the story

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5. Is it easy to be kind to someone who is kind to you? How does it make you feel? Answers will vary. It is often easy to be kind back and forth. Remind students to be kind because it makes them feel good.

6. How do you feel when you are kind to someone who hasn’t been kind to you? How do you feel if someone has been kind to you and you weren’t kind to them? How does it feel when you are unkind to someone? Answers will vary. Some will say it feels strange when someone “pays back” unkindness with kindness. You may wonder why they did that. It may stop you from being unkind because you realize how odd it feels when they are nice to you for no good reason. Sometimes you can lose an enemy and make a friend by “paying back” unkindness with kindness.

7. When you pay kindness forward, you are not expecting kindness in return. Give examples from the book of how kindness was paid forward from one person to another and so on.

Jadelyn was kind to Keisha (gave her an apple)
Then Keisha was kind to Zack (shared the computer)
Then Zack was kind to A.J. (helped build blocks)
Then A.J. was kind to Minna (shared yellow cards)

Writing Prompt
I did it! Choose one act of kindness that you can pay forward today at recess or lunch. Afterwards, write in your journal about the experience and focus on the who, what, when, where and why. Don’t forget to write how you felt!

Activities
Do IT!
Have two students come up and model kindness back-and-forth by saying kind words, just between each other. To emphasize the point – have them go back and forth a couple of times.

Then have the children model pay-it-forward (with kind words) by starting a linked arm chain until everyone in the class is part of the chain. Teacher starts by saying something kind about one student. That student joins the teacher in the front of the room. The student now calls out another student’s name and says something kind. That student joins the chain. The chain keeps growing until ALL students in the room are part of the chain.

ASK: Now what? How can we pay-it-forward from our classroom? Answers will vary. Help students brainstorm how to pay kindness forward to their families, their school and their community. Help them come up with ideas and categorize them appropriately. Have students share new ideas throughout the week and keep the list growing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY KINDNESS</th>
<th>SCHOOL KINDNESS</th>
<th>COMMUNITY KINDNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer to help wash dishes</td>
<td>Pick up trash on playground</td>
<td>Pick up trash in your neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take care of a pet (when it’s not your job)</td>
<td>Deliver message to office</td>
<td>Help neighbor with a project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do an extra chore</td>
<td>Ask someone new to eat lunch with me</td>
<td>Donate clothes &amp; toys to those in need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help a sibling</td>
<td>Straighten up a mess in the classroom</td>
<td>Collect pennies for a good cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean up a mess someone else made</td>
<td>Share supplies with someone who has none</td>
<td>Write thank you note to police or firemen</td>
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Example:

**Kindness Jar**

Create a classroom Kindness Jar. For each act of kindness witnessed, add a dried bean to the jar. When the jar is full, have a celebration. (The beans could become jelly beans and enjoyed by all students!)

NOTE: Have private conversations with students who are doing unkind acts and explain that it’s like taking two beans out of the jar because unkindness often does a lot more damage than a small act of kindness. Encourage students to do two acts of kindness to undo an unkind act!
Name: ____________________________

I did it! Draw a picture and write a sentence about an act of kindness you did today.
Classroom Kindness Jar Label

Directions: If possible, print on full-sheet label paper. Cut out the label and attach to a jar.
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