

Kind World Explorers

GRATITUDE

"MY WORLD"



Presented by

CAMP KINDNESS COUNTS
Empowering, Inspiring and Connecting Kids with Kindness

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GG Greater Good
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“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

- Leo Buscaglia

Hello!

Are you ready to go on an adventure to discover your character strength powers? When we practice character strengths such as Awareness, Authenticity, and Flexibility, this helps us to become brave and kind people, which helps to create a kinder world. Welcome to the Kind World Explorers Guidebook, a tool to support parents in raising compassionate and courageous kids!

This guidebook is filled with activities that build on specific character strengths. By developing kind character, we create happier, stronger communities!

Families can explore these character strengths through 3 themes: My World, Your World, and Our World.

- **My World** - Focus on the character strength and myself
- **Your World** - Focus on the character strength and those around us
- **Our World** - Focus on the character strength and our community and world

We encourage you to have discussions with each activity and think of ways to extend the learning into your everyday life. Building kind character is like learning to ride a bicycle. The more we practice, the better we will get, and the better we get, the more natural it becomes!

Thank you for joining us on this adventure and helping to make the world a better place. Have fun and enjoy exploring!

Let's connect with Kindness,
Team Camp Kindness Counts

About Us

Camp Kindness Counts believes in the power of kindness as foundational for children and families to create a happier, healthier, and stronger world. When we formed in 2012, the initial response from parents surprised us and the reactions from the kids inspired us. It became clear that taking time to show kids how their simple acts of kindness help can make a positive impact around them was powerful. It makes them feel like “superheroes.” They feel important and understand their thoughts and actions matter! We became a 501c3 nonprofit organization in 2014 and we have expanded our programming to schools and communities near and far since then.

We are committed to providing families and children tools for character development, which help foster social emotional well-being and opportunities for service and social action. These tools and learnings help build a generation of compassionate, strong leaders and community members. Families and youth build on crucial character strengths, such as compassion, perseverance, and forgiveness, while making a difference in themselves and in turn, the community. We aim to foster a culture of kindness in our schools and communities and we believe youth and families, when inspired and empowered, are the people who can help make this happen! TOGETHER we can encourage kindness and character development as central values and watch our family, school, work, and community life flourish!

MISSION

We empower kids and families to embrace kindness as a core value to community building. We encourage kids to embrace their authentic selves through mindfulness. We believe that when kindness and authenticity are embraced as societal values, the youth of today are better equipped to shape the world as confident, compassionate leaders.

VISION

We envision a world where young people feel confident, curious, and productive. Youth will lead their communities and schools to adopt a culture of kindness and compassion.

VALUES

- Listen deeply to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of kids
- Foster connected and supportive communities across parents, schools, and kids
- Nurture ourselves and those around us through compassion and mindfulness
- Inspire leadership by nourishing creativity and acts of kindness
- Express joy and gratitude through our thoughts, words, and actions

Embrace a worldview in which each person can make an impact locally and globally. The next pages contain tips to help your community put these activities into practice. With a little planning and communication, you can share simple but powerful activities with children, helping them become kind leaders of tomorrow!

Guidebook Activity Options

Start with a character strength (Gratitude, Generosity or Forgiveness)! Once you select your character strength, we recommend completing all the “world” options before you begin another. For example, begin with My World, then go on to Your World and end with Our World. There are 2 activity options to choose from. Choose 1 option per “world” based on what works best for your group or family.

Gratitude: feeling thankful and appreciative

In this book:



Gratitude Journals

OR

Embodying Gratitude

Also available:



Affirmations

OR

What If We Didn't Have



Thank You Cards

OR

Zoom Out Gratitude

Generosity: giving and sharing with others



Generosity Relay

OR

Quilt Weaving



Smile Cards

OR

The Giveaway



Paper Flower Delivery

OR

Bookmarks

Forgiveness: letting go of grudges



Letter Writing

OR

Self-Forgiveness



Cup Stacking

OR

Forgiveness Squares



Dogs and Forgiveness

OR

Dog and Cat Toys

Check out our website for more resources related to each character strength! www.campkindnesscounts.org/characterportal

Gratitude: My World

Feeling thankful and appreciative

What do I notice in my life for which I am grateful?

Option 1: Gratitude Journal Making

Materials: plain letter-size paper, construction paper or cardstock, stapler or string, hole punch (optional)

Learning Objectives: Students will understand the meaning of gratitude and practice noticing moments of gratitude and their feelings through reflection

SEL Competencies: Self- Awareness (identifying emotions), Social awareness (perspective-taking)

Opening Script:

"Today, we will learn about gratitude. What do you think gratitude means? [Invite participants to share their own ideas.] To some, gratitude means feeling thankful and appreciative. What do you notice in your life for which you are grateful? How can you show your appreciation back? [Invite participants to share their own ideas.] Today, we are going to practice gratitude by creating a Gratitude Journal!"

Activity:

Fold the **plain paper** in half to turn into a booklet. Fold the **construction paper** or **cardstock** in half and place it over the plain paper booklet, as a cover. To bind it:

a) **Staple** it in two areas along the folded edge

OR

b) Use a **hole punch** to punch two holes along the folded edge of the booklet (you may need to do a few pages at a time) and weave the **yarn** through the holes before tying a knot to bind it.

Decorate the cover and, if you want, add a top border on each page. Start the journal by having kids fill out at least 1 page with words or drawings of moments or things that they feel grateful for. Think about how you feel and how you can show your appreciation. Moving forward, reflect as a family, recording things you feel grateful for that day, week, or month in the journal! If there is a day you want to feel a little happier, open your journal to remind yourself of everything you have to be grateful for!

MY WORLD: Focus on Gratitude and myself.



Character
Connection

This activity helps participants to practice gratitude as a part of their everyday life. Studies show that an effective way to raise grateful children is to encourage them to take the time to notice what they are thankful for, to think about it and examine their feelings, and to do what it takes to show gratitude.



Kinder World

Several studies have found that grateful people are more helpful and generous. This can help to increase kindness in our world!



Hints

If children are having a difficult time thinking of things to be grateful for, ask them to stop and look around them. Parents can model noticing what they are grateful for in the world around them and how it makes them feel. They might see a water bottle next to them which reminds them to be grateful for clean water to drink. They might look out the window and think about being grateful for sunshine or squirrels to entertain them for a moment. Often, it only takes one or two examples to get kids' minds racing as they think about all the things in their lives to be happy about!



Next Steps

Start each day noticing what you are grateful for by thinking of something that begins with a letter in your name or any letter of the alphabet! Was it the lunch someone made for you? The smile your friend gave you at school? Next, think about why this happened and how it makes you feel. Lastly, what can you do to show your appreciation? Practicing gratitude in the morning can set the tone for the rest of your interactions all day.

Gratitude: My World

Feeling thankful and appreciative

What do I notice in my life for which I am grateful?

Option 2: Embodying Gratitude

Materials: crayons/markers

Learning Objective(s): Students will understand the meaning of gratitude and practice expressing their feelings and appreciation towards different parts of their body as well as what others may appreciate about their bodies.

SEL Competencies: Self- awareness (self confidence), Social Awareness (perspective-taking)

Opening Script:

"Today, we will learn about gratitude. What do you think gratitude means? [Invite participants to share their own ideas.] To some, gratitude means feeling thankful and appreciative. What do you notice in your life for which you are grateful? Why are you grateful for that? What part of your body are you grateful for? [Invite participants to share their own ideas.] Today, we are going to practice gratitude towards ourselves!"

Activity:

Draw a picture of yourself and illustrate why you are grateful for various parts of your body. All bodies are different, some people have a wheelchair to help them move, others have glasses to help them see, sometimes our bodies hurt and need casts and time to heal. We all have strong parts of our body that help us do things that we really love! Why are you grateful for YOUR body? Do your hands help you work on your favorite hobby? Are your legs and feet able to make you kick far or jump high? Does your brain help you to read all the books you love? Or maybe your ears help you to hear music you love and create music of your own!

MY WORLD: Focus on Gratitude and myself.



Character
Connection

This activity encourages participants to think about body parts that are usually taken for granted, prompting gratitude for them. Studies show that an effective way to raise grateful children is to encourage them to take the time to notice what they are thankful for, think about it, examine their feelings, and do what it takes to show gratitude for it.



Kinder World

Several studies have found that grateful people are more helpful and generous. This can help to increase kindness in our world!



Hints

Many of our messages to children are concerned with things they could do better, but it is important to spend energy focusing on the things they already do well. Help them recognize that their bodies are working all the time to keep them healthy without even trying. Can they point out things that happen in their bodies that they take for granted or simply don't think about?

Try to find at least one thing you are grateful for by the area of your body. For example: eyes help us see, the heart beats, the stomach digests food, hips help us sit or stand, legs get us moving, feet take us on a walk. What can you do to take care of the area of your body that you appreciate



Next Steps

The next time you are sick or injured, can you take a minute to thank your body's defenses and strengths for helping to heal you? Can you take a moment to notice what part of your body is letting you do what you want each day and be grateful for it? Say it out loud or silently in your head: "Thanks feet, heart, hands etc.!"

Book Suggestions

Books are a great way to continue discussions with your children about character strengths. Below are some suggested books which you can use alongside the Kind World Explorers guidebook activities. For additional resources for parents and kids of all ages, please visit our website:

www.campkindnesscounts.org/characterportal

Here are some questions for your group to consider as you read the book:

- 1) How do the characters in this book demonstrate the character strength?
- 2) Have you ever felt like the characters in this book? When?
- 3) Does the story give you any ideas for how you could act in a kind way towards yourself or others?

GRATITUDE

The Thankful Book by Todd Parr

Still A Family by Brenda Sturgis

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de La Pena