



COMPASSION



In January we are going to learn about **Compassion** and how we can make it a part of what we do here at school and at home. Our January Virtue Group is called “Compassion in Action” and they will help show everybody what it means to be compassionate.

What is compassion? Compassion is a feeling we have when we see or hear about others who are hurt or troubled. It’s a kind of “Generosity of the Heart.” Compassion is recognizing how somebody else feels and wanting to make them happier by doing whatever you can for them. It is caring about other people’s feelings and *showing* them you care.

Compassion begins with empathy, which is understanding how somebody else feels. We have all been hurt or sad or worried about something so we can all share that feeling with others. When you know how somebody else feels it’s easy to put yourself in their place and understand how much it can hurt. That’s where compassion begins.

The next part of compassion is using that shared feeling to try to *help* the other person. That’s where it becomes a kind of Generosity. When you feel compassion you want to give something to another person to make him or her feel better. By trying to understand how they feel you can think of ways to help them. You can think back to when you felt that way and what made you feel better.

Showing compassion means that we stop thinking about ourselves and think about what would make another person feel better. It might be as simple as listening when they want to talk. Or it could be sharing some food or your toys with them. Being compassionate is a wonderful feeling! It can even help us forget our own worries. When you put yourself in somebody else’s place you can see how we all have the same feelings.

This month we are going to practice Compassion with more weekly activities. For the first activity we have made up posters for each class to display as a daily reminder to help us remember what it means to be compassionate. Every morning at announcements we will read what the poster says and invite classes to read it out loud with us. Compassion can be a bit tricky to understand so we hope this will help everybody remember.

The activity we have chosen for the second week is to practice compassion at school. Our Compassion in Action leaders will be watching throughout the day for anybody showing compassion and will hand out a special green card to whoever they see. When students get a card, they are to hand it in to their teacher and we will see which class has the most at the end of the week. The class with the most cards will get a special surprise to honour their compassion for the week.

Our third activity will be a special Spirit Week at school. Each day we will think about compassion in a different way and we will show it by wearing different things. We will have a Band-Aid Day to help us think about people who are hurt or sick; Pink Day will help us remember others who may be bullied; Green Day will remind us to show compassion for Nature and our Earth; on Vegetarian Day we will try not to eat meat as we think about all the animals around us; and Rainbow Day will help us remember that we are all pretty much the same and want or need the same things to be happy.

As a school-wide activity we want to take our message of compassion to the rest of the town. Weather permitting, during our Spirit Week we will go for a walk downtown carrying posters to tell others what we are learning. We call this march “Occupy Rivers” and we hope it will make the people we see stop and think about how to show compassion in their lives too. If we can share our feelings of compassion with others, we can help make the world a kinder, safer and happier place for everybody.

January can be a long, cold month and people often feel pretty grumpy by the end. Let’s try to cheer each other up and make January a happier and more fun time for everybody. If we practice compassion every chance we get we will help others feel better and we might even find that helping others will makes us feel better also.

“I think one of the best words in the English language is compassion. I think it holds everything. It holds love, it holds care... And if everybody just did something, we could all make a difference.”

[Michael Crawford](#)