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RESILIENCY

Building Resilience Through Children's Literature

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"Harnessing the power of literature to cultivate resilience."

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Introduction:

In an ever-changing and challenging world, resilience has become vital to navigating through adversity and maintaining well-being. Drawing inspiration from extensive research, the "Building Resilience Through Children's Literature" project aims to empower children and communities with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to cultivate resilience.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back, adapt, and thrive in adversity, stress, and uncertainty. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and physical strength, enabling individuals to withstand and recover from challenging circumstances. Research from various fields, such as psychology, neuroscience, and sociology, has shed light on the factors that contribute to resilience and the strategies that can be adopted to enhance it.

Project Goals:

The " Building Resilience Through Children's Literature" idea is driven by the goal of promoting resilience at both individual and community levels. By leveraging research findings and evidence-based practices, the project seeks to:

Raise Awareness: Create awareness about the importance of resilience, its impact on well-being, and its role in navigating life's challenges effectively.

Education and Skill-Building: Disseminate knowledge and provide practical tools to develop essential skills that foster resilience, such as problem-solving, emotional regulation, gratitude practices, kindness, mindfulness, optimism, and effective coping mechanisms.

Community Engagement: Foster a sense of community and connection among individuals by creating after school clubs, workshops, and volunteering opportunities that encourage shared experiences, mutual support, and the exchange of resilience-building strategies.

Resource Development: Compile and develop resources, including reading guides, online resources, and interactive platforms, to ensure the accessibility of resilience-building tools to a wide range of individuals.

Sustainable Resilience: This initiative aims to instill long-lasting habits and mindsets that will enable individuals to continuously adapt, grow, and maintain resilience throughout their lives.

A growth mindset and resilience are closely related concepts that promote personal development, adaptability, and overcoming challenges. They are essential qualities that contribute to individuals' ability to navigate setbacks, persevere, and continue to grow and learn.

Resilience is the capacity to bounce back from adversity, setbacks, or difficult situations. It involves adapting, recovering, and maintaining a positive attitude despite facing obstacles. Resilient individuals can effectively cope with stress, maintain their mental well-being, and find opportunities for growth and learning in adversity.

Growth mindset, a term coined by psychologist Carol Dweck, is the belief that one's abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, dedication, and a willingness to learn from failures. Individuals with a growth mindset embrace challenges, view setbacks as opportunities for growth, and persist in facing obstacles. They understand that abilities can be cultivated and improved over time. Together, resilience and a growth mindset can foster a positive outlook, perseverance, and a belief in one's ability to overcome challenges. They encourage individuals to approach difficulties as learning opportunities, seek support when needed, and embrace a mindset of continuous improvement and growth.

Cultivating resilience and a growth mindset is crucial for students' academic and personal development. It helps them develop a positive attitude towards learning, handle setbacks constructively, and build self-confidence. By fostering resilience and a growth mindset, educators can create a supportive environment encouraging students to take risks, learn from mistakes, and reach their full potential.

Research Behind Literature & Resilience Education

Research has shown that resilience can be cultured and developed by anyone. The American Psychological Association stated, "resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary" and anyone can learn to become more resilient. The power of literature to inspire, heal, and transform individuals has been recognized for centuries. In recent years, researchers have turned their attention to the impact of literature in fostering resilience, the ability to bounce back and thrive in the face of adversity.

Ginsberg (2018) introduced the seven C's essential building blocks of resilience. Competence refers to an individual's awareness of their strengths and abilities to feel empowered and safe to make mistakes. Confidence encompasses skills to navigate the world "think outside the box and recover from challenges" (p.1). Connections emphasis people, communities, and families having "high expectations" that allow individuals to overcome challenging situations. Character closely related to integrity and a clear sense of right and wrong. Contribution includes finding opportunities to contribute to the well-being of others. Contribution building block highlights the importance of community service, and gratitude practices to face challenging circumstance in a unique and positive way. Coping highlights strategies to react to stressful situations including having an outlet for creative expression, exercising, relaxation techniques, and role models. Control refers to the children's understanding that they have control over their actions and destiny, yet they are not responsible for all the negative circumstances that may experience. However, they are always in control to make wise choices.

The existing research on building resilience through literature highlights mechanisms through which literature can foster the development of resilience-building practices and lay a foundation for developing coping skills. Children's books that align with the 7 Cs of Resilience, educators, and parents can

provide valuable literary experiences that support the development of resilience in children. These stories can serve as catalysts for discussions, reflection, and the reinforcement of key resilience-building qualities in an engaging and accessible manner.

Literature offers opportunities to deepen understanding and increase resilience by illustrating ways to overcome fears, challenges and build resilience. Literary works provide a safe space for readers to explore and reflect upon a wide range of human experiences, allowing them to develop empathy, expand their emotional repertoire, and gain new perspectives on life's challenges. Readers can find solace, validation, and inspiration through identification with characters and narratives, ultimately fostering resilience (Miall & Kuiken 2002; Kuiken, Miall & Sikora 2004). Through narratives of characters who navigate challenges, readers can witness the development of self-efficacy—the belief in their own ability to overcome obstacles. Literature can create a sense of connection and belonging by depicting relatable characters and shared human experiences, which allows for "artistically motivated self-transformation" (Martinez, 2014, p. 110).

In summary, literature work plays a pivotal role in this process, as it presents characters who confront and transcend adversity, allowing readers to construct their own narratives of resilience and reinforce the qualities associated with building resilience.

Florida Standards

HE.68. R.2.5 *Explain strategies and skills needed to assess progress and maintenance of a challenging personal goal.*

HE.68. R.3.2 *Explain and develop ways to apply leadership skills in the school and the community.*

HE.68. R.1.2 *Describe the importance of empathy, kindness, honesty and trust in building and sustaining relationships.*

HE.68. R.1.1 *Demonstrate the ability to respond with empathy in a variety of contexts and situations.*

ELA.2.V.1.3 *Identify and use context clues, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge.*

ELA.2.R.1.1 *Identify plot structure and describe main story elements in a literary text.*

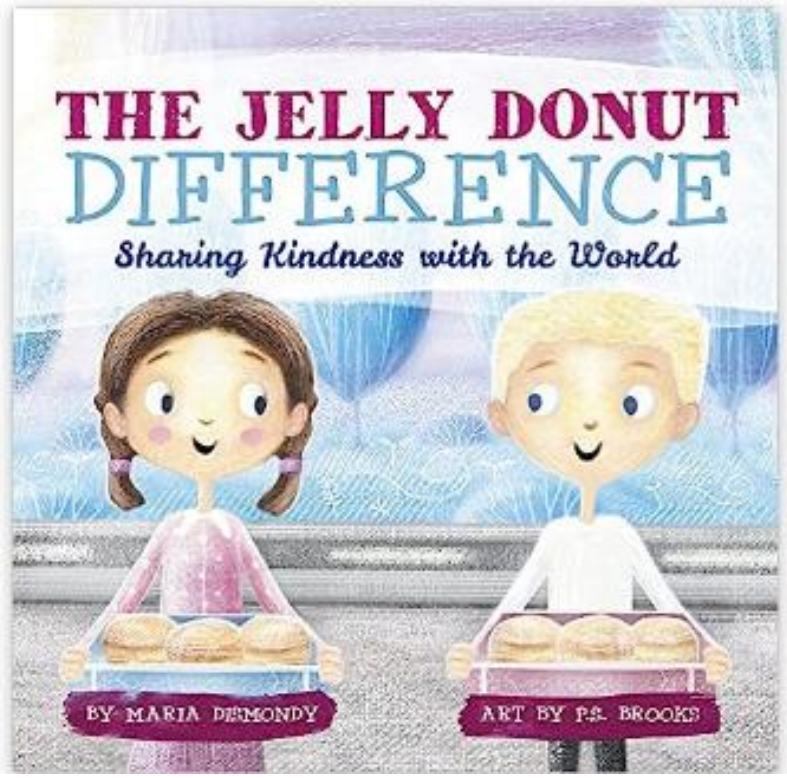
ELA.2.R.1.3 *Identify different characters perspectives in a literary text.*

ELA.3.C.1.2 *Write personal or fictional narratives using logic.*

ELA.5.C.5.2 *Use digital writing tools individually or collaboratively to plan, draft, and revise writing.*

The "Jelly Donut Difference" Teachers' Guide

Suggested Grade Level: 1st – 4TH



Written by Maria Dismondy

Illustrated by P.S. Brooks

UNIT PLAN: THE "JELLY DONUT DIFFERENCE"

ABOUT THIS UNIT

"The Jelly Donut Difference" unit focuses on developing kindness, empathy, and compassion in students through exploring the children's book "The Jelly Donut Difference" by Maria Dismondy. This unit integrates language arts skills such as reading comprehension, writing, and vocabulary development with character education to promote a positive and inclusive classroom community.

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Wilfrid lives next to a retirement home, and his favorite old person is 96-year-old Miss Nancy. Everyone says Miss Nancy has lost her memory, and even though Wilfrid doesn't even know what a memory is, he accidentally helps her find it.

THEMES IN THE STORY

The overarching theme of "The Jelly Donut Difference" is kindness and empathy. The book emphasizes the importance of small acts of kindness and their positive impact on others. It encourages readers to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, fostering empathy and compassion. The theme highlights the idea that everyone has the power to make a difference through their actions and that even the smallest acts of kindness can create a ripple effect of positivity and inclusivity in our lives and communities.

The Jelly Donut Difference: Sharing Kindness World

LESSON 1

"The Jelly Donut Difference" –Vocabulary Map Lesson Plan

Essential Question: How does practicing kindness and empathy contribute to a positive and inclusive classroom community?

Grade 1st Grade to 3rd Grade

Objective:

Students will

1. Identify the central themes and messages of the story related to kindness and empathy.
2. Read and respond to works of literature with emphasis on comprehension.
3. Identify and explore vocabulary words from the text and create a vocabulary map to deepen their understanding of the words and their meanings.

Materials:

- "The Jelly Donut Difference" by Maria Dismondy
- Large chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers or colored pens
- Vocabulary map templates (pre-drawn or printed copies)

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Begin the lesson by asking students about the importance of vocabulary in understanding and enjoying a story.
- Explain that today they will be reading "The Jelly Donut Difference" and creating a vocabulary map to explore and understand key words from the text.
- Show the cover of the book "The Jelly Donut Difference" and ask students to make predictions about what the story might be about based on the title and the cover illustration.

Pre-reading Activity (5 minutes):

Tap knowledge and build background to prepare for reading the story. Build background by discussing:

1. Look at the book cover, what do you see? What do you think the book will be about?
2. What do you know about jelly donuts?
3. Have you ever eaten jelly donuts?
4. Have you ever eaten a jelly donut before? If yes, what did you think of it?
5. What ingredients might be used to make a jelly donut?
6. What might be the difference between a jelly donut and a regular donut?
7. Write down their predictions on the whiteboard or chart paper.

During Reading: Read and discuss the book "The Jelly Donut Difference" as a whole class or in small groups.

- Encourage them to pay attention to the main events and characters in the story & ask students to notice any unfamiliar or interesting words.

Comprehension Check During Reading:

1. Who are the main characters in the story? What are their names?
2. What do you think will happen next? Why?
3. Did the twins do the right thing?
4. How is Ms. Marvis feeling? How do you know?
5. What is the challenge that the characters face in the story?
6. How do the characters show kindness and make a difference in the lives of others?
7. Are there any specific acts of kindness mentioned in the story? If yes, what are they?
8. How do the characters feel after they perform acts of kindness?
9. Are there any positive outcomes of the characters' actions?
10. What lesson or message does the author want readers to learn from the story?

- After Reading: Conduct a class discussion to assess students' understanding of the book. Ask a series of comprehension questions about the main events, characters, and messages conveyed in the story. For example:

1. How do the characters feel after they perform acts of kindness?
2. Are there any positive outcomes of the characters' actions?
3. What is the lesson or message that the author wants readers to learn from the story?
4. How does this story inspire you to be kind and make a difference in the lives of others?
5. Can you think of any real-life situations where you could apply the lessons learned from this book?

- Reading and Identifying Vocabulary Words (15 minutes):
- Introduce the concept of a vocabulary map as a tool to explore and deepen understanding of words.

Vocabulary Map Explanation (5 minutes):

- Explain that a vocabulary map typically includes the word, definition, a sentence using the word, and a visual representation or illustration.
- Creating the Vocabulary Map
  - Provide each student with a vocabulary map template or have them draw their own on a blank sheet of paper.
  - Guide students in filling out the vocabulary map for the selected words from "The Jelly Donut Difference."
  - Encourage students to context clues or online resources to find the definitions of the words and create sentences that demonstrate their understanding.
  - Ask students to create visual representations or illustrations to help them remember the meaning of each word.
  - **Resource:** Vocabulary Map

Sharing and Discussion

- Invite students to share their vocabulary maps with the class, explaining their choices and reasoning behind the definitions, sentences, and visual representations.
- Display a few vocabulary maps on the chart paper or whiteboard for a whole-class discussion.
- Discuss the similarities and differences among the vocabulary maps and the nuances of the word meanings.

Reflection and Extension (5 minutes):

- Ask students to reflect on how creating a vocabulary map helped them understand and remember the words from "The Jelly Donut Difference."
- Discuss the importance of using new vocabulary words in their own writing and communication.

Wrap-up (5 minutes):

- Summarize the main vocabulary words discussed during the lesson and how they enhance understanding of the story.
- Encourage students to continue exploring and incorporating new words into their everyday language.

Extension Activities:

- Have students create vocabulary maps for additional words from the book.
- Ask students to choose a word from their vocabulary map and write a short story or paragraph using that word correctly.
- Encourage students to use the vocabulary words in conversations with their peers or during class discussions.

Note: Adjust the lesson plan and timing based on your students' grade level and abilities.

LESSON 2:

"The Jelly Donut Difference" – Story Map Lesson Plan

Grades 1st – 4th Grade

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Identify the central themes and messages of the story related to kindness and empathy.
2. Read and respond to works of literature with an emphasis on comprehension.
3. Make connections among ideas and between texts with a focus on textural evidence.
4. Identify the main elements of the story and create a story map to visually represent the narrative structure.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by engaging students in a discussion about acts of kindness and generosity. Ask students to share examples of times when they have shown kindness or received acts of kindness from others.
2. Explain that today they will be reading the Jelly Donut Difference book independently, in groups of two to three students.
3. Then, create a story map to visually represent the narrative structure.

Story Map Explanation (5 minutes):

- Introduce the concept of a story map as a visual representation of the key elements of a story.
- Explain that a story map typically includes the title, characters, setting, problem, events, and resolution.

Creating the Story Map (20 minutes):

- Provide each student with a story map template or have them draw their own on their Mindfulness Journal.
- Guide students in filling out the story map by writing or drawing the main elements of "The Jelly Donut Difference" in the appropriate sections.

- Encourage students to use different colors or symbols to represent each element.

Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes):

- Invite students to share their story maps with the class, explaining their choices and reasoning behind the visual representations.
- Display a few story maps on the chart paper or whiteboard for a whole-class discussion.

Reflection and Extension (5 minutes):

- Ask students to reflect on the importance of each element in a story and how they contribute to the overall narrative structure.
- Have a brief discussion about the message or lesson learned from "The Jelly Donut Difference" and how it connects to the story's elements.
- Reinforce the importance of acts of kindness and how they can make a difference in the lives of others.

Wrap-up (5 minutes):

- Summarize the main elements discussed during the lesson and how they contribute to a well-structured story.
- Encourage students to apply the concept of story mapping to other stories they read in the future.
- Conclude the lesson by expressing appreciation for the students' participation and thoughtful reflections.

Writing Prompt: The characters find an old recipe book with handwritten notes. Describe the emotions and memories this discovery brings up and how it strengthens their bond.

Extension Activities:

- Collaboratively create a kindness jar or bulletin board where students can write and display acts of kindness they have witnessed or performed.

Note: Adjust the lesson plan and timing based on the grade level and abilities of your students.

LESSON 3

"The Jelly Donut Difference" - Exploring the 7 Cs of Resilience Lesson Plan

Grades 3rd grade – 5Th grade

Objective

Students will explore the 7 Cs of resilience (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Contribution, Coping, and Control) by identifying examples of resilience in the story and reflecting on their own experiences.

Materials:

- "The Jelly Donut Difference" by Maria Dismondy
- Large chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers or colored pens
- Index cards or small slips of paper
- Writing materials for students

Procedure:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- Begin the lesson by asking students if they know what resilience means and why it is important.
- Begin the lesson by asking students if they are familiar with the concept of resilience.
- Discuss the importance of resilience in facing challenges and overcoming adversity.
- Discuss the concept of resilience and explain that they will explore the 7 Cs of resilience while reading "The Jelly Donut Difference."

Overview of the 7 Cs of Resilience (10 minutes):

- Introduce the 7 Cs of resilience: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Contribution, Coping, and Control.
- Explain that these qualities can help individuals develop resilience and navigate difficult situations.

Competence and Confidence (15 minutes):

- Focus on the first two Cs: Competence and Confidence.
- Discuss what it means to be competent and confident in facing challenges.
- Ask students to share examples of times when they felt competent and confident in handling a difficult situation. **Optional:** create a Four-Square Strategy (Definition, use it in a sentence, write a synonym, write an antonym, draw a picture).
- Write down their examples on chart paper or whiteboard.
- Then, ask the students to go back to the story "The Jelly Donut Difference" and identify examples of the first two Cs: Competence and Confidence resilience in the story.

Connection and Character (15 minutes):

- Shift the discussion to the next two Cs: Connection and Character.
- **Optional:** Four-Square Strategy (Definition, Use it in a sentence, write a synonym, write an antonym, draw a picture).
- Explain how building connections and displaying positive character traits contribute to resilience.
- Encourage students to share examples of how connections and character have helped them, or others overcome tough times.
- Write down their examples on chart paper or whiteboard.
- Then, ask the students to go back to the story "The Jelly Donut Difference" and identify examples of the first two Cs: Connection and Character resilience in the story.

Contribution and Coping (15 minutes):

- Move on to the Cs of Contribution and Coping.
- **Optional:** Implement a Four-Square Strategy (Definition, Use it in a sentence, write a synonym, write an antonym, draw a picture).
- Discuss the importance of contributing to others and coping strategies for building resilience.
- Ask students to share how they have contributed positively and coped effectively with challenges.
- Write down their examples on chart paper or whiteboard.
- Then, ask the students to go back to the story "The Jelly Donut Difference" and identify examples of the first two Cs of Contribution and Coping resilience in the story.

Control (15 minutes):

- Focus on the final C: Control.
- **Optional:** Implement a Four-Square Strategy (Definition, Use it in a sentence, write a synonym, write an antonym, draw a picture).
- Discuss how having a sense of control and focusing on what can be controlled can enhance resilience.
- Ask students to share examples of how they have taken control of situations to overcome difficulties.
- Write down their examples on chart paper or whiteboard.
- Then, ask the students to go back to the story "The Jelly Donut Difference" and identify examples of the first two Cs of Contribution and Coping resilience in the story.

Reflection and Application (10 minutes):

- Distribute index cards or small slips of paper to each student.
- Instruct students to reflect on the discussion and write down one personal example or situation where they have exhibited resilience in any of the 7 Cs.
- Encourage students to be specific and include details about how they demonstrated resilience.

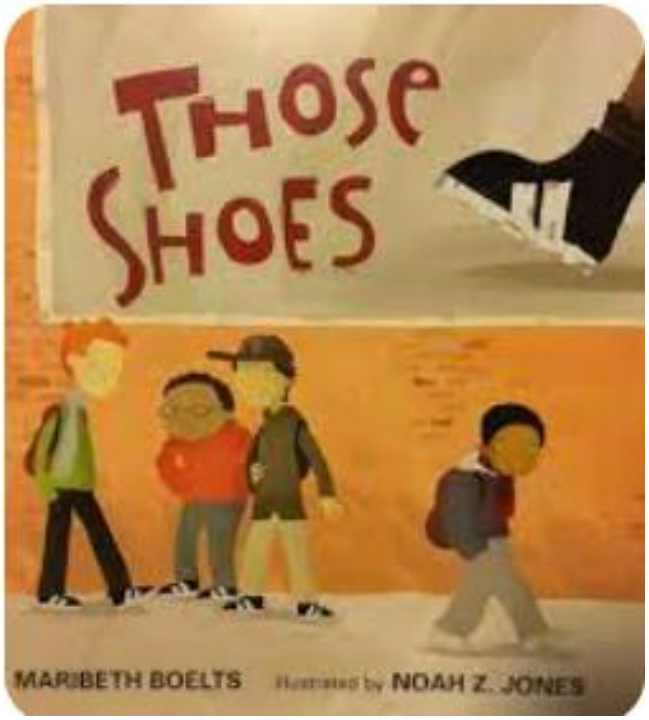
Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes):

- Invite students to share their examples of resilience with a partner or in small groups.
- Allow time for group discussions and reflections on the shared experiences.
- If they feel comfortable doing so, select a few students to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Wrap-up (5 minutes):

- Summarize the key concepts and qualities discussed during the lesson.
- Reinforce the idea that resilience is a skill that can be developed and strengthened over time.
- Encourage students to apply the 7 Cs of resilience daily to navigate challenges effectively.

“Those Shoes” Teachers’ Guide
Suggested Grade Level: 1st – 4TH



Written by Maribeth Boelts
Illustrated by Noah Jones

"Those Shoes" by Maribeth Boelts
Children's Book Themes and Gratitude Lesson Plan

Essential Questions:

How can acts of kindness impact individuals and communities? How can we demonstrate kindness and empathy in our daily lives?

Objective

The main objective of this lesson plan is to explore the themes of empathy, gratitude, and selflessness using the children's book "Those Shoes" by Maribeth Boelts.

Target Age Group: Elementary school children (Grades 4th – 6th)

Duration: 1 week (adjust as needed based on class schedule)

Materials Needed:

- "Those Shoes" by Maribeth Boelts (one copy for each child or display using a projector)
- Whiteboard or chart paper with markers
- Drawing materials (colored pencils, crayons, markers, etc.)
- Post-it Super Sticky Easel Pad (optional)
- Activity sheets

Week Overview:

Day 1: Introduction to "Those Shoes" and Empathy

Introduce the book "Those Shoes" to the class and show the cover and illustrations.

- Discuss what empathy means and why it is essential to understand other people's feelings and needs.
- Resource: https://nearpod.com/library/preview/lesson-L34887420

Day 2: Reading and Discussion

Before Reading:

- Ask the children if they have ever wanted something because everyone else had it. Discuss their feelings and experiences related to peer pressure and material possessions.
- Show the cover of the book and ask the children to predict what the story might be about based on the title and illustrations.

During Reading:

Pause at key points in the story to ask questions and encourage discussions. For example:

- How do you think Jeremy feels when the other kids make fun of his shoes?
- Why do you think Jeremy decides to buy the "those shoes" even though they are too small?
- Encourage the children to predict what might happen next in the story based on the events and emotions presented.

After reading:

Discuss the main themes of the book with the children:

- Empathy and Compassion: How did Jeremy show empathy and compassion towards Antonio?
- Gratitude and Contentment: What did Jeremy realize about the importance of being grateful for what he already had?
- Selflessness and Sacrifice: How did Jeremy's decision to give the shoes to Antonio demonstrate selflessness?
- Peer Pressure and Materialism: How did Jeremy handle the peer pressure to fit in with the other kids?
- Lead a group discussion about the story's main themes, characters, and the challenges they face or the class into groups and ask them to re-read the book and discuss it to complete the different responses to reading activities.

Day 3: Understanding Gratitude

- Discuss the concept of gratitude with the class, defining what it means to be thankful and appreciative.
- Encourage the students to share things they are grateful for in their lives.
- Resource: https://nearpod.com/t/social-studies/6th/expressing-gratitude-L118411153

Day 4: Gratitude Journaling and Reflection

- Distribute paper or gratitude journals (or use a shared class journal).
- Instruct the students to write or draw things they are grateful for in their journals.
- Encourage the children to share personal experiences of showing empathy or gratitude towards others.
- After journaling, allow the children to share their reflections with the class.

Day 5: Acts of Kindness and Selflessness

- Connect the themes of empathy and gratitude to acts of kindness and selflessness.
- Discuss how the characters in "Those Shoes" demonstrated acts of kindness and selflessness in the story.
- Ask each child to think of one act of kindness they can do for someone else and encourage them to follow through and make a plan.

Assessment:

- Monitor the children's participation and engagement throughout the week.
- Review the gratitude journals to see how they expressed their gratitude and reflections.
- Observe if the students show an improved understanding of empathy, gratitude, and the importance of acts of kindness.

Writing Activity:

Journal Prompt: What lessons did you learn about empathy, compassion, and the true meaning of kindness? Add details and evidence from the text to make your journal entry a heartfelt reflection on the events and lessons learned.

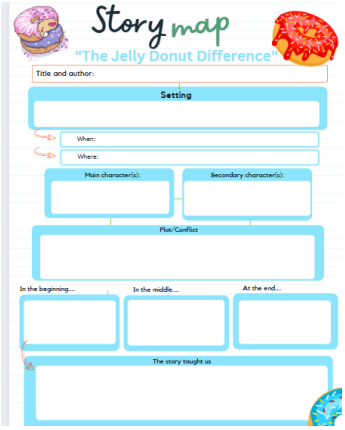
Extended Activities:

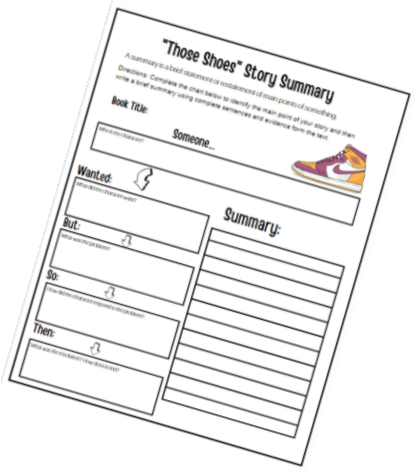
- Random Acts of Kindness Project: Encourage children to create a "gratitude project" where they actively express appreciation for someone who has positively impacted their lives. This could be a teacher, family member, or friend.

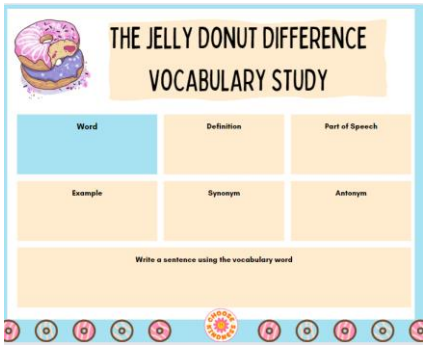
Conclusion:

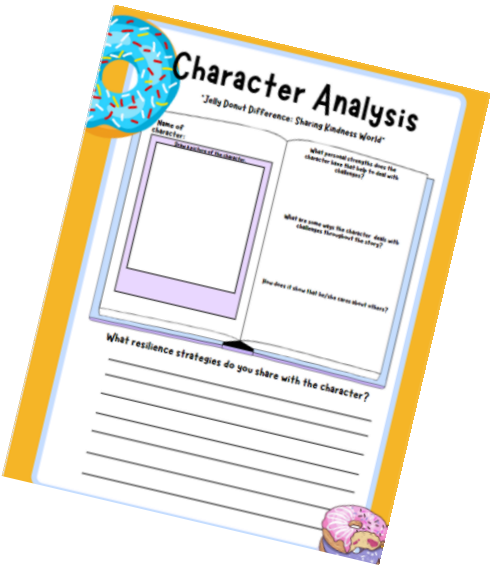
The "Those Shoes" lesson plan is designed to engage children in thoughtful discussions about empathy, gratitude, and selflessness through the captivating story. By journaling their reflections and participating in acts of kindness, students will develop a deeper understanding of these essential values and carry them into their lives beyond the classroom. Encourage ongoing discussions about empathy and gratitude and celebrate acts of kindness whenever they arise in the classroom and school community.

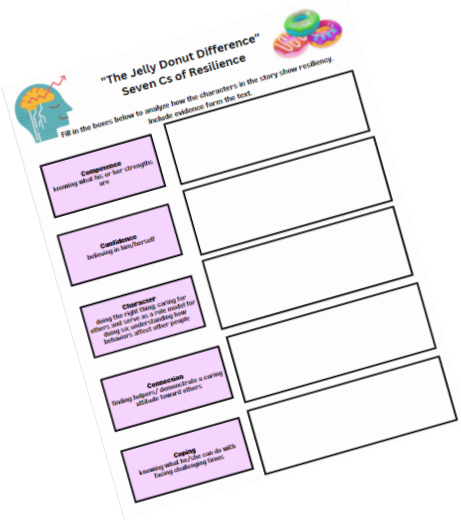
Examples of Resources

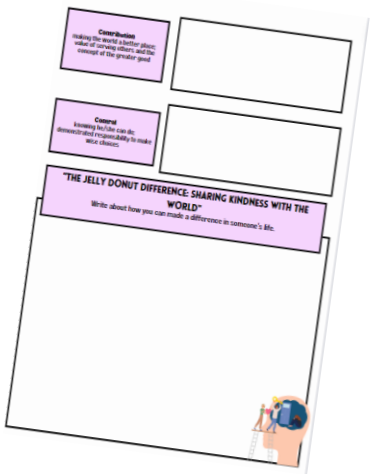












Extension Activity for Upper Grades (5th -12th)

"Those Shoes" by Maribeth Boelts and The Jelly Donut Difference: Sharing Kindness with the World by Maria Dismondy books inspire themes of empathy, gratitude, and selflessness, making it excellent books to use as a foundation for a Kindness Club.

Creating a Kindness Club: Fostering Gratitude, Empathy and Compassion in Middle and High School

Introduction

Kindness and Gratitude are powerful forces that can positively impact individuals and communities. To promote gratefulness, empathy, and compassion within our middle and high school. This club will provide a platform for students to engage in various activities and projects that promote gratefulness, kindness, empathy, and inclusivity. By fostering a culture of compassion, the Kindness Club will help create a supportive and caring environment for all students and staff.

Kindness Club Mission Statement

To foster a culture of kindness, empathy, and compassion within our school community. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive environment where every student and staff member feels valued and appreciated. Through various activities and initiatives, this club strives to spread kindness and positively impact individuals' lives and the broader community. The Kindness Club is dedicated to promoting acts of kindness, raising awareness of social issues, and empowering students to be compassionate leaders.

Objectives:

- Cultivate a culture of gratefulness and kindness: Instill values of empathy, compassion, and kindness among students to create a more inclusive and supportive school community.
- Promote positive mental health: Encourage acts of kindness to boost individuals' well-being and reduce stress and anxiety.
- Create leadership opportunities: Empower students to take on leadership roles within the club, fostering their leadership and organizational skills.

Goals:

- Spread Kindness: Promote acts of kindness and compassion throughout the school, encouraging students and staff to engage in thoughtful and caring actions.
- Raise Awareness: Organize workshops, discussions, and awareness campaigns about social issues, mental health, and the importance of empathy.
- Foster Inclusivity: Create a welcoming and inclusive school community where all students feel accepted, valued, and supported.
- Collaborate: Partner with other school clubs, organizations, and community groups to expand the impact of kindness-related initiatives.
- Empower Leaders: Provide opportunities for student leadership, allowing members to develop essential skills while making a difference in the community.

Benefits:

- Improved School Climate: The Kindness Club will contribute to a more positive and supportive school environment, leading to better overall well-being for students and staff.
- Empowered Student Leaders: Students involved in the club will develop leadership, teamwork, and organizational skills as they plan and implement kindness initiatives.
- Increased Student Engagement: The club's activities will engage students meaningfully, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose within the school community.
- Positive Social Impact: By promoting empathy and compassion, the Kindness Club will extend its positive impact beyond the school, reaching families and the broader community.

Suggested Member Roles:

- President: Lead and coordinate club meetings, ensuring all members actively participate and contribute to the club's initiatives.
- Vice President: The Vice President will support the President in their responsibilities and step in when needed. They will also help organize and oversee club events and projects.
- Secretary: Responsible for communicating important information to members and updating the club's social media platforms.
- Kindness Ambassadors: Kindness Ambassadors will be student representatives from each grade level who actively promote kindness initiatives and encourage their peers to participate in club activities.
- Event Coordinators: Event Coordinators will be responsible for planning and executing various kindness events, workshops, and projects in collaboration with other members.

Who will be part of the club?

- Begin with a few dedicated students and ask them to "Spread the Word" to recruit people for the club. Also, you will need one or two staff members willing to act as the advisor. An advisor is vital to supervise and assist in organizing the projects as well as to offer suggestions when you need them.
- Another idea would be to join forces with other clubs and organizations at the school, such as FEA (Future Educators of America) or NJHS (National Junior Honor Society).

How to Spread the Word to make to recruit members?

- Launch Event: Organize a Kindness Club launch event during an assembly or school-wide gathering to introduce the club's mission and invite students to join.
- Social Media: Utilize various social media platforms to share updates on club activities, events, and kindness challenges.
- Flyers and Posters: Create eye-catching posters and flyers to display throughout the school, promoting upcoming events and initiatives.
- Collaborate with Teachers: Engage teachers to discuss the club's objectives during class and encourage students to participate.
- Parent Communication: Share information about the Kindness Club with parents through newsletters, school websites, or parent-teacher meetings.

- Club Fair: Set up a booth during the school's club fair or orientation to attract new members and generate interest in the Kindness Club.

Activities and Initiatives:

- Kindness Week: Organize a week-long event to spread kindness throughout the school. Activities may include compliment walls, random acts of kindness challenges, and encouraging students to write letters of gratitude to teachers, staff, and peers.
- Kindness Projects: Plan and execute various projects, such as organizing food drives, clothing donations, or fundraisers for charitable causes. Engage with local nonprofits to support community needs.
- Kindness Ambassador Program: Select a group of student ambassadors responsible for leading kindness initiatives, promoting events, and encouraging others to participate in the club's activities.
- Gratitude Workshops: Reach out to the school counselors or mental health adviser to create workshops and discussions on empathy, kindness, and the power of gratitude and volunteerism to educate students and promote understanding.
- Kindness Challenges: Issue monthly kindness challenges, where students are encouraged to perform specific acts of kindness, such as helping a struggling classmate, expressing gratitude to a teacher, or offering a listening ear to a peer.
- Partnering with Other Clubs and Organizations: Collaborate with other school clubs and community organizations to support and expand the impact of kindness-related initiatives. For example:
- SOCKS Drive for Children in Need: Organize socks drive at your school to collect new socks for needy children. Donate the collected shoes to a local charity or shelter that serves underprivileged families (e.g., Camila's House).
- Kindness Letters for Seniors: Encourage children to write letters or create handmade cards expressing their gratitude and appreciation to an elderly nursing home or senior center residents. These acts of kindness can brighten the recipients' day and foster connections between generations.
- Community Clean-up: Collaborate with your community to clean up local parks, playgrounds, or public spaces. This hands-on activity demonstrates care for the environment and fosters a sense of community pride and teamwork.

- Assisting Animal Shelters: Reach out to animal shelters to see how your group can help.
- Reading Buddies: Pair older children with younger students for reading sessions. The older students can read books or stories to their younger buddies, promoting literacy, and encouraging empathy and friendship. Students can use the reading guides included in the package and assist young students in completing the Reading Activities.
- Clothing Drive for Winter: Organize a winter clothing drive to collect warm coats, hats, gloves, and scarves for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or financial hardship.

Conclusion:

Establishing a Kindness Club in middle and high school environments will create a lasting impact by promoting gratitude practices, empathy, compassion, and kindness among our students and staff. By actively engaging in kindness initiatives, students will develop essential life skills and contribute to creating a more caring and inclusive school environment. Together, we can build a better future through acts of kindness and understanding.

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