

“Virtues to Live by”

KINDNESS

Before You Begin – An overview for teachers

“Never neglect to show kindness and to share what you have with others.” (Hebrews 13:16)

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better or happier.

Be the living expression of God’s kindness;

kindness in your face,

kindness in your eyes,

kindness in your smile,

kindness in your warm greeting”

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Definition

KINDNESS – I show kindness when I think about how others feel and I choose to do something good to bring help, comfort or happiness. I choose to be kind because I see that everybody and everything is part of God’s creation.

Virtue to Live By

I know that every act of kindness helps build God’s kingdom

Biblical sources

“Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.” (Matthew 5:42)

“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts of the Apostles 20:35)

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people...” (Galatians 6:10)

“And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

“Never neglect to show kindness and to share what you have with others; for such are the sacrifices which God approves.” (Hebrews 13:16)

Other sources

“Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can.” (John Wesley)

"Loving kindness is greater than laws; and the charities of life are more than all ceremonies." (*Talmud*, Judaism)

"Those who act kindly in this world will have kindness." (Qur'an 39.10)

"Him I call a Brahmin ever true, ever kind. He never asks what life can give, But, 'What can I give life?'" (*Bhagavad Gita 8.3*, Hinduism)

"We reach the immortal path only by continuous acts of kindliness." (Buddhism)

"The heart benevolent and kind the most resembles God." (Robert Burns, *A Winter Night*)

"That best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." (William Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*)

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." (Anonymous)

Why Practise Kindness?

When we are kind to other people we recognise their God-given dignity as a child of God. When we are kind we reach out to other people and show that they are important to God and to us. Being kind brings people together, combats suffering, dispels loneliness and builds up community and God's kingdom. When we show kindness to animals and God's creation we show our faith and love for God who asks us to take care of creation. When we are kind we show our humility because we know we depend on God and His creation for everything.

How do we Practise Kindness?

We think of other people, are sensitive to their needs, and notice that they are in need of help or care. We greet them with courtesy, we smile, say kind words and make them feel valued. When someone is in need of help we perform an act of kindness to bring comfort, support or happiness. We learn what ways of acting (habits) show kindness and build up community and try not to be cruel or insensitive. We take good care of animals and God's creation.

Key Words:

Kind, kindness, care, compassion, comfort, help, support, happiness

Signs of living the virtue of kindness:

I look for ways to help others by following the example of Jesus

I show kindness to any person or animal I see

I look for ways to care for God's creation

I share what I have with other people

I am kind to myself

Reflection Questions:

Let us reflect on how kindness can help bring God's love to others.

When have small kindnesses made a big difference in my life?

In my picture of a successful life, what part does kindness play?

What helps me to have the self-restraint to listen and speak with kindness?

How far do I reach out in kindness?

I am thankful for the gift of kindness. It opens my heart to others.

There are so many opportunities to be kind. Today, I plan to take advantage of them.