

'Summer Kindness'

Bumper Edition Newsletter



Summer Time! Sunshine, flowers, the smell of BBQs and suntan lotion. We didn't quite plan for this Summer but we can certainly put things in place to make it memorable.

Did you know that kindness is like a muscle?

If you exercise it, it gets bigger and stronger, if you don't it can get smaller and weaker. Kindness is not something that some people have and some people don't. It's a decision, a habit, a routine, something we nurture. In fact, it is a fruit of the Spirit.

Fruit grows when we learn about growing fruit; prepare the ground, sow the seed, water the plant and tend to the tree. In this Bumper Edition Kindness Newsletter, that is exactly what we are going to do and we will trust God to do the rest. We will:

1. **LEARN KINDNESS FROM THE MASTER TEACHER**
2. **PREPARE THE SOIL FOR PLANTING KINDNESS**
3. **SOW SEEDS OF KINDNESS**
4. **NURTURE KINDNESS**
5. **SPREAD KINDNESS FURTHER AFIELD**

This Summer let's have fun practising kindness. Kindness towards others. And kindness towards ourselves.

Parents, remember you are parenting through a remarkable time in history so if you have days or seasons of being gripped with anxiety or grief, or feeling completely overwhelmed or times when you are weary, weepy, agitated and just not coping, these are normal responses to an abnormal situation. Yes, someone else might be worse off than you. Yes, you should count your blessings. But don't diminish your own struggles. They are very real and very valid. Invite God into your circumstances. Ask Him to bring

RECIPE FOR kindness

MIX TOGETHER EQUAL PARTS:

*friendliness
helpfulness
laughter
encouragement
& love*

ENJOY THIS TREAT FROM A FRIEND AND
PASS IT ON IF YOU CAN!

His peace in the storm. And if that involves extra telly for the kids while you take quiet time, do it.

Now is the time to be kind to yourself. Our coping reserves are finite. God's reservoir of Love is not. Go to him to refill.

The following are very simple ideas to do together as a family. Some will suit your family, some won't. But gently bringing faith into everyday life reminds us of God's presence and love, and allows peace to flourish and kindness to grow.



*Kindness
Tree:
Acts of
Kindness make
me Bloom*



1. Rooted in Kindness (Learning Kindness)

When we take time to connect with God and with others, we become more aware of His presence and of His heart. We are more aware of how He sees things, how He sees us and others. This roots us in His Kindness. Below are different ways to access Scripture to help ground us and focus us on God.

Play: Great Bible Apps

Bible App for Kids by YouVersion is a Bible Story App. It's completely FREE and available to download for iPhone, iPad and Android devices. Through interactive adventures and beautiful animations, kids explore the big stories of the Bible. The app includes touch-activated animations for Bible stories, games and activities.



Superbook Kids Bible App from CBN has great content and graphics. This app contains games, Bible trivia, videos, and cool sections for your children to mark their favourites. The graphics are EXCELLENT and it's FREE! Available for iPad and Android devices. Superbook also has a wonderful online free game centre for kids.



Guardians of Ancora from Scripture Union is a FREE adventure Game app for kids. Bring the light back to the city of Ancora by recovering the stories of the Saga! You will join the other Guardians of Ancora to protect the city, a place where light delivers goodness, peace and well-being. The light has been taken away from the city and your role is to bring it back, as you discover the truths that are held in the great stories of the Saga Available for iPad, iPhone and Android devices.



The Beginner's Bible App is designed for children ages 2-6 years and the first "story pack" is FREE (a great way to try out the app and enjoy the features, determining if it works well for your children.) This app includes colouring pages, puzzles, and games. Each story pack contains 6 stories. The in-app purchases of \$1.99 each can be made for additional story packs. Available for iPad only.



Watch: YOUTUBE

What's in the Bible - The Fruits of the Spirit: <https://whatsinthebible.com/video-archive/the-fruits-of-the-spirit/>

DDYC JIGSAW is Down and Dromore Diocese Children's Ministry Curriculum. They post All Age Talks teaching about the Bible and then have activity sheets about the different talks on their Facebook and Instagram pages @jigsawddyc

This one is great. It's all about the Lord's Prayer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5unH66ZO2z8>



Pray Together as a Family by watching 'Hannah Prays' videos with different creative prayer ideas. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJQ3Y4ksbg0&feature=youtu.be>



Memorize: Memory Verses

Ephesians 4:32

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

MEMORY PUZZLE

Using the back of a cereal box, write the memory verse out, cut up the card and then work together to put it back together again.



Colossians 3:12-14

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

VERSE CATCH

All you need for this game is a ball. Say one phrase of the verse. Have your child repeat the phrase with you. Then, toss a ball back and forth. As you toss the ball, say one word of the phrase. Your child catches the ball, then tosses it back to you, saying the next word.



Listen: Podcasts

For daily quiet time together listen to: <https://www.wewonderpod.com/>

We suggest calling the family together, maybe at the table, and inviting children to bring colours, playdough, something they can fiddle with as they listen.

For a more energetic reading and you can do an entire book of the Bible together: <https://faithinkids.org/podcast>

Read: Bible Stories About Kindness

<https://www.kidsofintegrity.com/lessons/kindness/bible-stories>

Here you will find 7 Bible Stories on the theme of Kindness. Read one together each week and chat through your thoughts and feelings about the story.

1 John 4:12

"No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us."

BUILDING BLOCK VERSES

Tape each word of the memory verse to a large building block. Mix the words. Repeat the verse several times with your child. Then, challenge your child to use the building blocks to build a wall or shape, while getting the Bible verse words in the correct order.



1 Thessalonians 5:11

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing."

CRASHING VERSES

Write the Bible verse onto a sheet of paper. Cut the verse into individual words and tape each word to the short end of a Jenga game piece. Build a Jenga tower with regular Jenga pieces and the verse pieces mixed together, placing the verse words in one direction and in order so that it can be read. Play Jenga as usual. Each time someone successfully removes a Jenga block, repeat the verse together. At first, you will be able to read the Jenga verse pieces, but it will get harder as the verse pieces get more and more mixed up. When the Jenga tower falls, put your verse together in the correct order.



These memory verse ideas and others are found at: <https://paththroughthenarrowgate.com/12-bible-memory-verse-bible-games/>



Pray

There are great morning and evening prayers for all ages here: <https://www.diddydisciples.org/tcahprayersthroughtheday>
Prayers like the Rainbow Prayer and the Five Finger Prayer can be used over and over again

I can pray a rainbow...

Genesis 9 v 13

"I am putting my rainbow in the clouds as the sign of the agreement between me and the earth"



God placed a rainbow in the sky as a symbol of his promise to never again send a flood like the one that Noah had survived in the ark. Today the rainbow is a symbol of hope for us, a reminder that God keeps his promises. Here are some rainbow inspired activities for you and your family to explore together.

Rainbow prayer hunt

Go on a search around your house and try to find something of each of the colours below. Here is a prayer you can say for each colour as you find them.



RED

Thank you, God, that you love us and that you are always with us.



ORANGE

Dear God, please help us to be patient, to wait and listen to you and to be obedient while we wait for this crisis to end.



YELLOW

Dear God, please help all those who are scared. May they know your perfect peace that takes away all fear.

GREEN

Dear God, please look after all those who are sick, give them the treatment and help they need to recover, send your healing power into all the world.



BLUE

Dear God, please protect all those who are working for our emergency services, thank you for all they are doing to protect us.



PURPLE

Thank you, God, that we are children of the King of Kings. Thank you that even though we are in difficult times we can trust in you and pray your Kingdom come.



PINK

Thank you, God, that we know you will bring us through this crisis to safety on the other side just as you protected Noah and brought him and his family through the flood.



Make an encouragement rainbow

You will need: Paper and pens or any other craft materials you have around the house

All around the country people are putting rainbows in their windows to encourage people in their street.

Use whatever craft materials you have in your house to decorate a rainbow and put it in your window where your neighbours can see it.



Some promises to share

Here are some more of God's promises from the Bible. Ask God who needs encouraging today and then send them a promise verse.

Joshua 1:9- Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid because the LORD your God will be with you everywhere you go.

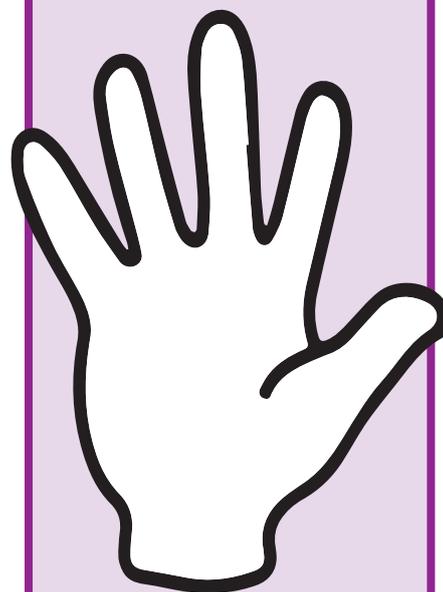
Jeremiah 29:11 – "I say this because I know what I am planning for you," says the LORD, "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future."

Mark 11:24 – So I tell you to believe that you have received the things you ask for in prayer, and God will give them to you.

Romans 8:28 – We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him.



THE FIVE FINGER PRAYER



THUMB: Those closest to you, your family

POINTER: Those that point you in the right direction (teachers, doctors, priests) ask for wisdom & support.

INDEX: (tallest) Those that lead us, (Government) ask for guidance & wisdom.

RING: (weakest) Those that are weak, in trouble, or in pain. We cannot pray too much for them.

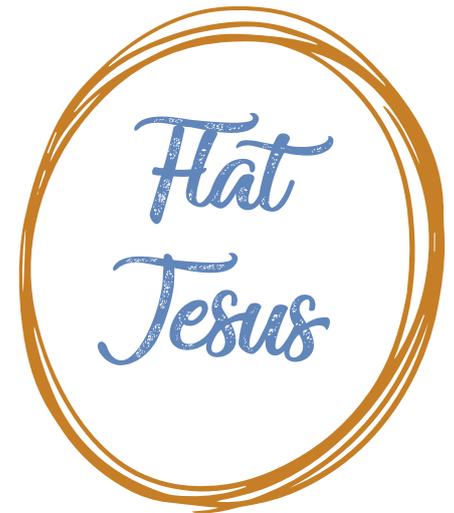
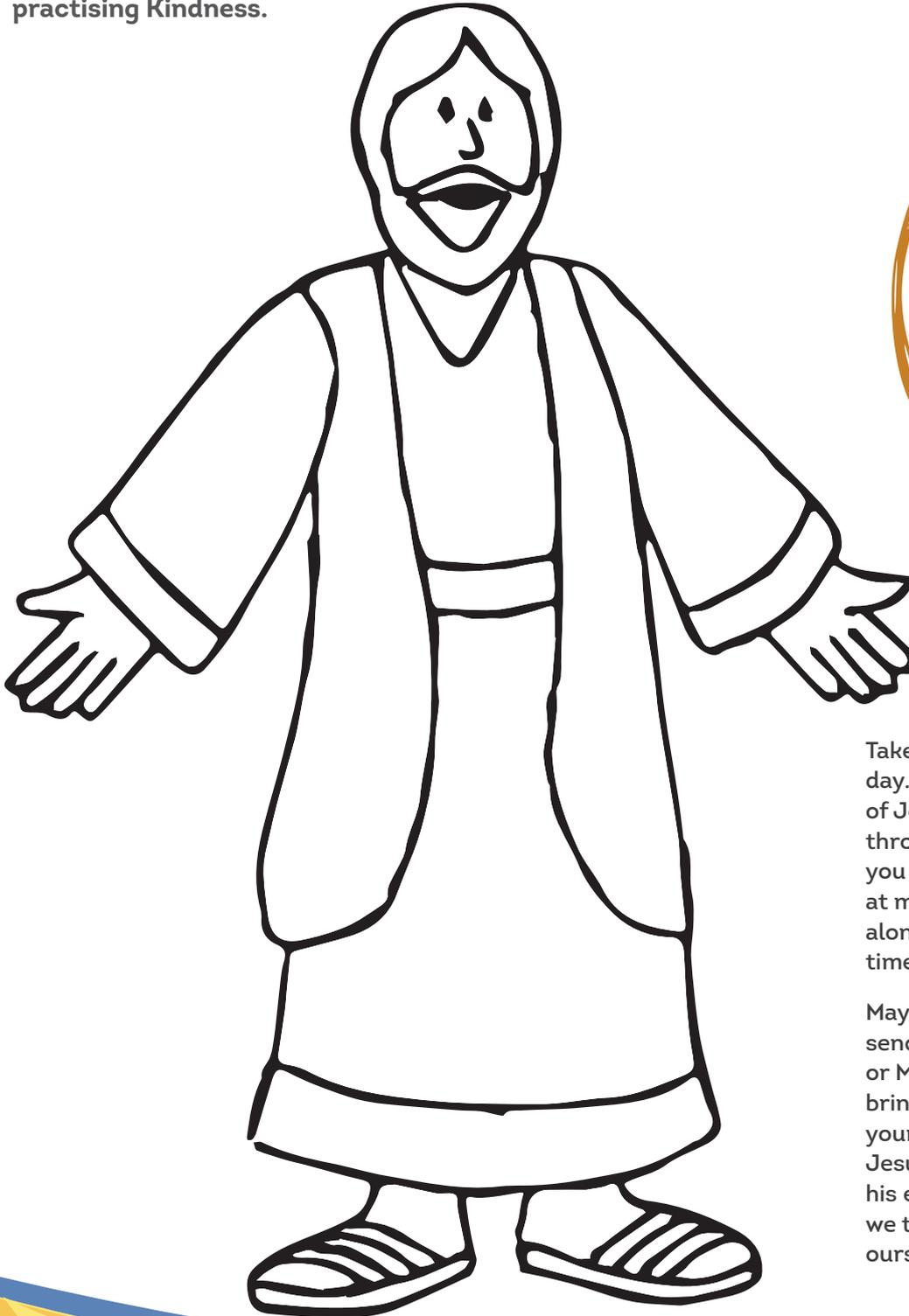
PINKIE: (smallest) Our prayers for ourselves & our own needs.



2. Preparing the Ground for Kindness

- Flat Jesus
- Conversation Cubes
- Conversation Starters
- Kindness Cloud Craft

When we get to know people better, we walk in their shoes, we see the world from their point of view. That means we build empathy for their feelings and needs. Empathy is one of our biggest tools for practising Kindness.



Take Jesus with you through your day. Draw or print this cut out of Jesus and take him with you throughout your day to remind you that his presence is with you, at mealtimes, when playing, when alone, when with others, in good times and in bad.

Maybe involve your Church by sending your Sunday Club leaders or Minister pictures of your family bringing Jesus with you throughout your day. Reminding ourselves that Jesus is with us helps us to follow his example in our own lives, in how we treat others, and how we see ourselves.



The Bible often puts the word 'Kindness' alongside the word 'Righteousness' which is a big word for 'Right Relationships'. This Summer as we potter or gallop through a Summer we didn't plan for, kindness is particularly needed to make sure our relationships with ourselves, with each other and with God are flourishing.

Do you realise that there are things about the people closest to you that you don't yet know? Maybe it's things they did before you were born. Or feelings they have or favourite things or memories or hopes and dreams or old photos or embarrassing secrets! Spend time this Summer getting to know the people around you better:

Conversation Cubes & Games

Conversation cubes: you can buy them or make your own from a square cardboard box or dice. Here is the link to a free conversation cube resource: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Getting-To-Know-You-Counseling-Conversation-Cube-Icebreaker-Dice-Freebie-4053107>

If you can't make cubes, you can still play the conversation game!

Why not add some questions to learn more about someone's faith? Like

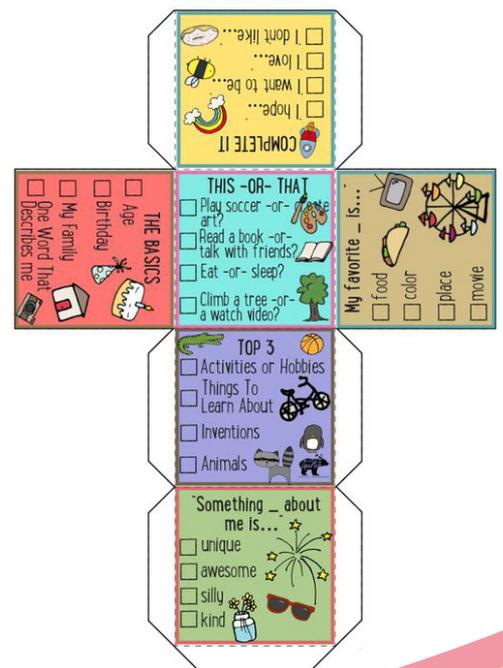
- 'Was there ever a time when you knew God was with you?' or
- 'What are you most thankful to God for a) today b) this year c) in your whole life?'

Parenting for Faith have really good



conversation starter printable pages around the current Covid-19 crisis: <https://parentingforfaith.org/post/me-god-and-covid-19>

the Getting To Know You conversation cube





Kindness Cloud Craft

Let people know what you think of them. Bring a smile to their face. Maybe do one for yourself. What are your qualities that you should take time to celebrate?



3. Planting Seeds of Kindness

- Bingo
- Kindness in a Bag
- Family Time Capsule
- Family Tree Collage
- Blessing Stick

Random Acts of Kindness BINGO!

Taken from <https://afineparent.com/positive-parenting-faq/kindness-activities-for-kids.html>

- Make a grid on a piece of paper. Make as many squares as you wish but sixteen or twenty-five work well. For very small children, nine squares help to achieve a "Bingo" a little more quickly.
- The kids can decorate the Bingo sheet with images that come to mind when they think about kindness (hearts, rainbows, helping hands).
- In each Bingo square, write an act of kindness. Get your kids involved and encourage them to think up ways to be kind: say hi to a neighbour down the street, help younger sibling pour the milk, set the table without being asked, etc. Leave a square or two blanks for spontaneous acts of kindness that aren't specified on the Bingo sheet.
- Make, decorate and cut out small hearts. Then, stick the hearts to the bingo board when the kids complete the acts of kindness. You could also stamp the square with a Bingo stamper or highlight it if you prefer.
- When the Bingo square is complete have some way to celebrate: a special dessert, or a half-hour later bedtime, for example.





Kindness in a Bag

Put every family member's name in a bag. Each person takes out a name and makes a special effort to be nice to the person whose name you pick. You can chat about ideas for how to do this beforehand – helping that person with chores, sharing a treat with them, doing something special for them, praying for that person and writing them a note to let them know etc. You can add an extra element by making the game a secret, so people have to guess who their Agent of Kindness is!



Family Time Capsule

This is a great one for looking back in years to come to see how kindness has grown as it is practised in your family, even during difficult times.

list of every family member's favourites (included in the printable set at the end of the article)

- ✓ family photos
- ✓ children's artworks
- ✓ letter to your future self
- ✓ keepsakes (drawings, hand prints, special items)
- ✓ postcards
- ✓ a list with a short explanation for each item
- ✓ toy figurines
- ✓ newspaper / magazine pages
- ✓ facts about the current year
- ✓ favorite quotes
- ✓ memorable family memories
- ✓ a note from you to your children



Open it on New Years Eve 5 years from now. Downloads of printables here: <https://playfulnotes.com/wp-content/uploads/Time-capsule-printable-set-Playful-Notes-9.pdf>



A Collage Prayer Tree

This shows how you might create a prayer tree as a collage.

Paint 3 sheets of paper with stripes of different colours, focusing on greens, reds and browns:



Take the brown painted paper and tear it into strips.

On a fresh white piece of paper stick the strips of brown paper onto the background to create a trunk and branches:

Tear up the reds and greens to create leaves. These can be all different shapes and sizes.

Write the names of the people you want to pray for on the leaves and stick them in the gaps between the branches.

This is a great activity for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy. It can also be done as a group activity. Maybe your Church would like to see all of your trees brought together at Harvest Thanksgiving?

There is another prayer tree idea with a template here: <https://www.benandhannahdunnett.com/week-one-creating-a-prayer-tree/>



Blessing Stick Templates:

Get a jar and spend time decorating it. This will be your blessings jar. Either use lolly sticks or strips of hard card and do up some blessings that you pray for people in your life.

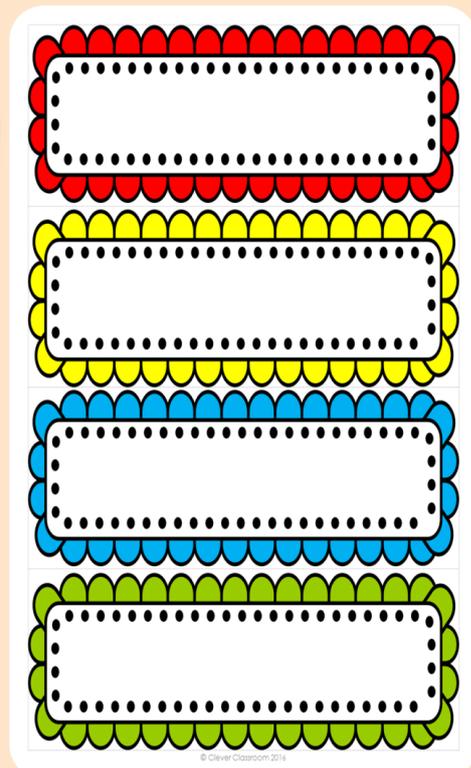
Some examples are:

- 'May you know the deep peace of God'
- 'You are Loved'
- 'You are Known'
- 'You are Special'
- 'God's face is towards you.'
- 'May you be blessed.'

Decide how you are going to distribute your lolly sticks to bless those around you.



(Alternatively you can leave the card strips or lolly sticks blank but as you pray blessings on others, or are grateful for the blessings in your life, you can take the time to fill in a lolly and see how many have been filled in by the end of the week.)



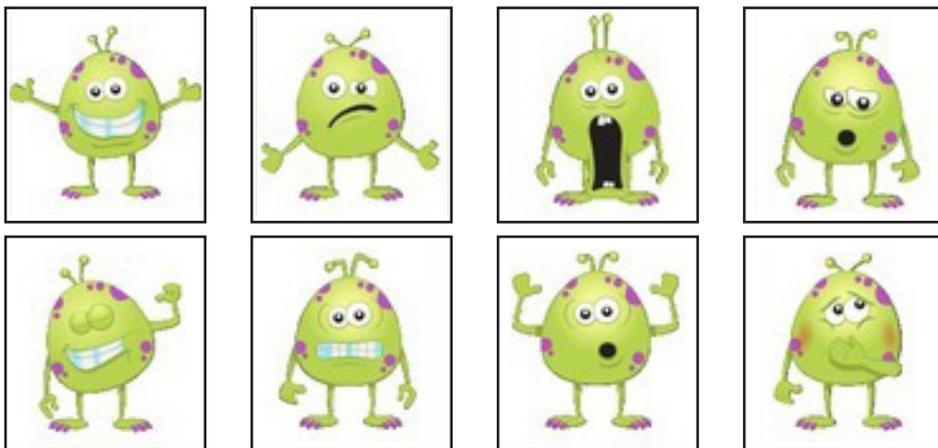
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4. Nurturing Kindness

- Monster Feeling Cards
- Kindness Tower
- Simon Says with Feelings
- Finger Painting Feelings
- 'I just want to be with me' prayer by Rev Cathy Hallissey from CMN
- Shoots from Scraps

Monster Feeling Cards



All of us have days where being kind is really hard. We all have days where we are irritable, grumpy and quick to snap. This happens sometimes when we are adjusting to new routines or processing change or disappointment. Sometimes we can't even pinpoint why!

These feelings can bring on bigger feelings of guilt, anger, loneliness, or feelings of being unloveable and worthless. These feelings are experienced by adults and children alike.

Have you ever said things to yourself like: 'I'm useless at that' or 'Oh, I'm so stupid!' or 'I can't do this, make this, achieve this' (before even trying) or 'this is horrible' about something you have made?

Often we are quicker to put ourselves down than we are others. We can sometimes be so hard on ourselves that we can forget about and limit the fullness of who we are.

The Bible says that we are made in God's likeness. Those big feelings can make us forget this and can impair our decision making. They can slow down the decisions we make that help us to feel better, safer and calmer. Everyone

has blips and bumps along the road. But when our thoughts and eyes are looking at the mountain instead of at God, the mountain becomes too big to climb.

Sit with your feelings. It's ok to feel how you feel. It's ok to feel angry, frustrated, sad. Now notice that you are not alone with your feelings. Jesus is sitting with you, holding you. He loves you just the way you are. Even with the big feelings that make you want to shout and cry and throw things and be mean.

Use the monster emotion cards to match the feelings to the monster faces. How do you feel today? Practise making the faces associated with those feelings

To download the printable version click here: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Monster-Feelings-and-Emotions-Cards-Freebie-2131826>

Top Tip: If you don't have a printer, use emojis to chat about feelings.

We also really recommend two activities from Barnardos: <https://www.barnardos.ie/how-you-can-help/fundraising/covid-19-crisis-appeal-for-children/heart-body-and-mind>

Kindness Sculpture

(With thanks to Connor Diocese CM)

Build Each Other Up in Love!

Cut out squares of strong card and build a sculpture tower together, encouraging each other & helping each other, even as the structure wobbles and falls!

1 Thessalonians 5:11

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing."



Simon Says with Feelings

Simon Says with Feelings – you can play this with the people in your household or have a game with other people on Zoom!



Finger Painting Feelings

Children (and adults) can colour code their feelings (green = happy; purple = sad; red = angry etc) and use them to paint how they feel. There is an excellent recipe for homemade edible paint too so this activity can be done with children as young as 6 months!

<https://www.barnardos.ie/media/7578/finger-painting-feelings-heart-activity-w-logo.pdf>

Ingredients for edible paint:

- 4 tablespoons of corn flour (corn starch)
- Cold water - 1 cup (237ml) of boiling water
- Liquid food colouring

Method to make edible paint:

1. In a medium saucepan, mix the cornflour with enough cold water to make a paste. (Not too runny).
2. Pour in 1 cup (237ml) of boiling water and stir thoroughly so there are no lumps.
3. Turn on medium heat on the hob and mix. The mixture will start to

change and you will notice some clear streaks forming in the mixture. Once you see this, turn off the heat and continue stirring. It will start to thicken and turn into custard-like consistency.

4. Spoon equal amounts into empty jars, cups or containers and add food colouring. Mixing until completely combined. eg. 3 drops of yellow, green, red and blue. To make orange, add 1 drop of red and yellow and to make purple, add 1 drop of blue and 2 red.
5. This paint can be stored in the fridge covered with cling film for up to 2 weeks. This paint recipe does not have any preservative in it, so it is



Benefits of FINGER PAINTING



important to check that the paint has not expired before giving it to children.

Dear God,
 I love my family they fill me full of glee
 There's no where else on this wide earth,
 I think I'd rather be.
 But sometimes things get squishy
 All together in one place
 Sometimes it makes me 'wishy'
 That I had a bit more space.
 So lately I have taken time (because there is a LOT!)
 Within the garden or the house to find the perfect spot.
 There's really so much going on from morning until tea
 It does me good to just admit I want to be with me!
 To sit and stare and just be there and take a little rest
 So when I come back in or down I really am my BEST!
 I thank you God for showing me the quiet way to be
 And helping me with knowing that
 I want to be with me.

CH.





GROWING FOOD AT HOME FROM SCRAPS

(with thanks to Children's Ministry in Connor Diocese)

The Bible says to Love our Neighbour as Ourselves. But how does that work if we're so hard on ourselves? If we only see failure, disappointment, ugliness, 'not good enough'.

The Bibles also says repentance is 'turning around'. Turning back to face God. Maybe that includes turning away from self hatred and hardness and facing back towards a God of infinite Love. Saying sorry when our feelings and behaviour hurt others is important. We're not saying sorry for feeling, we're saying sorry for acting in a way that upset someone else. When we repent (turn around) and focus on God, that's when we start to let go of guilt and self loathing and start to journey with him, one step at a time.

Jesus was kind to people who saw themselves as worthless. Who thought they weren't good enough to be loved. With a little bit of kindness, they had a turn around, they revived and they began to live fully again. Jesus can turn mourning into dancing, sorrow into joy. Use scraps to make food at home. Thank God that he sees so much worth in you. Ask him to help you cherish yourself, and give yourself a little love.

How to grow carrot tops from scraps -

- Cut an inch off the top of the carrot.
- Place carrot tops in an old glass. Don't stack them, give each one room at the bottom of the glass.
- Then fill the glass with water up to the base of the plant or the top of the root.
- Set the glass in a lighted area but not directly in the sun.



- Lastly, watch your carrot tops grow roots and grow leaves.
- Use the leaves in your salads or stir fry

How to grow spring onions from scraps -

- Cut off the white bottom and place them in a glass with a centimetre of water at the bottom.
- Transfer to soil after 5-7 days
- Watch them grow

How to grow an onion from scraps -

- cut the root end off an onion, leaving a little onion on it. Peel the skin off

- place root down into a container of water, making sure the root is submerged in water
- leave them on your windowsill or in a greenhouse for a week. Keep checking they are still submerged in water
- plant in soil, root down
- watch them grow

How to grow tomatoes from scraps -

- cut ripe tomato into slices
- lay tomato slices on top of soil
- sprinkle a thin layer of soil on top
- watch them grow



5. Spreading Kindness

'One Act of Kindness won't change the world, but it may change one person's world.'

There's a lot of talk about how quickly things spread. Mainly the talk is about how quickly a virus can spread. Emotions can spread too: In fact, research says that although fear can be seen as contagious - we respond to the emotions we see in others so it can be said to 'pass' between people - so too kindness is contagious.

A Long Distance Hug

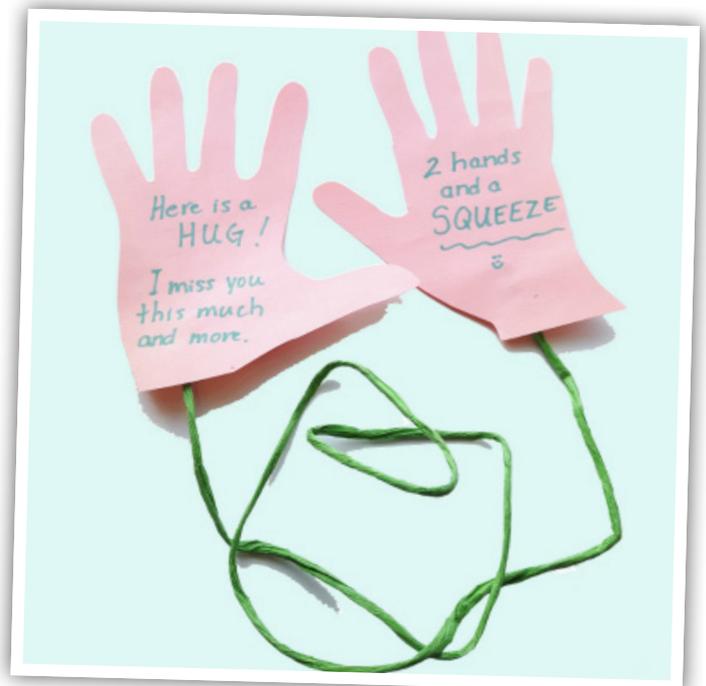
<https://afineparent.com/positive-parenting-faq/kindness-activities-for-kids.html>

If someone you know is going through a hard time, whether they've lost a family member or a pet, or are dealing with an illness, sending a long distance hug is a great way to talk to your kids about what the person is dealing with and emphasize how kindness can make others feel better. This is a great way to encourage thoughts of kindness toward friends and family far away, or even someone in the same city who might need a hug.

What you need: construction paper; crayons or markers; yarn or string; glue; scissors; envelopes and stamps.

What to do:

- Have the kids trace their hands and cut out the shapes.
- Cut a length of string or yarn and glue one end to each hand cut-out.
- Write a message on each hand, or decorate the hands. Add a small card telling the recipient that they are receiving a long distance hug.
- Mail the hug.



Plant a little Kindness

An Idea for taking your Blessing Sticks a little further...

Template is here: <https://daniellesplacestore.com/downloads/plant-a-little-kindness-plant-stake-craft/>

Use a Blessing Stick to make a plant marker and plant some leftover seeds in a local park or public space so more people can enjoy them. (You may need to ask permission of the park warden for this.)



Kindness is Contagious

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you show intentional kindness to three people today.

The Ripple Kindness Effect

If you do something kind for 3 people and they do something kind for 3 other people, this is how many people could be affected.

Now imagine how many people would be happy if you were kind to everyone every day!

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Mental Health Awareness Week

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
The 7 Day KINDNESS Challenge!	Make a cup of tea for someone in your family	Send someone you haven't seen in ages a letter or a postcard	Donate food or clothes to people in need	Bake a cake or some biscuits to cheer someone up	Ask your parents for a chore that would really help them out	Video call someone you know is feeling a bit lonely	Be kind to yourself and spend some time on YOU!