

Caring for each other and having compassion for all living things

Lesson 2 - Caring

Time: 60 minutes

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT:

A Home for Dakota by Jan Zita Grover, Circle of Compassion Paper, Compassion Pictures and Scenarios, Coloring/drawing utensils

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

The students will be able to define caring and compassion are, and to feel compassion for all types of people and animals.

ENGAGE (5 MINUTES):

Introduce, repeat, write on board, and define Caring. Introduce Compassion as a synonym for caring, but includes thinking about how that person or animal feels. Ask for volunteers to share someone or something they have compassion for.

ACTIVATE (20 MINUTES):

Read *A Home For Dakota*. Stop throughout the book to ask how you think certain people and animals are feeling (i.e. Dakota in a new house, Emma taking care of her, Sweetie being mean - this is a huge place to have compassion for Sweetie, although she was mean to Dakota, she feels bad about herself for having cancer and no hair, and is taking it out on Dakota).

REFLECT (25 MINUTES):

Pass out the circle of compassion paper, and explain that in the circle students are to write (or draw) things and people they care about. Give them 3 minutes, and have some students share. Then show them the Compassion photos; the homeless person, the homeless dog, and the deforestation (one at a time). For each one, pause and ask: Who feels compassion (cares for) this person/animal(s)? Why might this person/animal be in this situation? What could you do to help this person/animal?

After they have seen all the photos, they should add anyone or thing else to their circle of compassion they can think of.

Introduce the animal and call students over during this time to meet and greet.

CLOSURE (10 MINUTES):

Talk about how the circle of compassion on their papers can be made into real life and they can wear it like a hula hoop. The circle of compassion can grow and grow and grow to be as big as imaginable, when now things and people are added. Ask them what the world would be like if everyone always wore their circle of compassion and everyone cared about everyone and everything. Ask them to wear their circle of compassion always and include as many people and things in it as they can. Ask for volunteers to share how they will show compassion to someone that day that they normally wouldn't have.



MODIFICATIONS:

If there is no animal for the presentation, teachers can contact local Animal Welfare organizations to see if they would be willing to bring in an animal for students to meet. Stuffed, plush animals will also work well to showcase pet care & interaction.

Possible extension activity; read book *A Home for Dakota* or *Maggie's Second Chance*. As the story goes along, ask open ended questions about who is showing compassion.

Puppet show can be about any animal stereotypes, not just barn/farm animals. If there are no animal puppets available, students can make animal puppets out of brown paper bags or stuffed animals can be used as alternatives.

Photos of any stereotypes can be shown to the class during circle of compassion activity (i.e. a black cat on the street, pigs in mud, etc.).

Circle of Compassion created by the Institute of Humane Education

