Compassion in Elementary Schools
Ideas for a School-wide Theme and Lesson Plans

Hand art created by “Guido Daniele”

Developed in 2006 with collaborative contributions from teachers in Vancouver, Coquitlam and New Westminster School Districts
Lessons on Compassion – Elementary and Secondary

In late spring and summer of 2006 several teachers in the Vancouver, Coquitlam and New Westminster school districts participated in developing lesson plans to use with students in preparation for the “Educating the Heart” Dialogue with the Dalai Lama in September that year.

Nurturing Compassion Dialogue
On the morning of September 8, 2006, the Dalai Lama engaged in a student-led dialogue titled, “Nurturing Compassion” at the Orpheum Theatre in Vancouver. Students from various Lower Mainland school districts had been chosen to participate in dialogue based on stories of compassion that they had submitted to a selection committee that June. The students met over the summer to develop the agenda, identify key questions to pose and prepare for the session. On September 8th, the students were able to confidently host the event, moderate the dialogue, and engage in conversation with the Dalai Lama in front of a full audience of peers and adults from schools across the Lower Mainland.

That entire Nurturing Compassion dialogue with students is available for viewing on-line on the website of the Dalai Lama Center.

In follow up to this session, young people’s stories, poetry, artwork and photography has been collected by the Stories of Compassion Project and published in a book called This is Compassion: British Columbia’s youth (ages 12 to 18) reflect on giving, receiving, witnessing, observing, listening, accepting, action, courage, hope and understanding compassion (ISBN 978-0-9812721-0-8). This book is being provided to all elementary and secondary Vancouver school libraries.

Lesson Plans
For the elementary lessons on compassion, the teachers decided to develop a complete set of lessons on the topic for primary and intermediate students as well as provide ideas for implementing a school-wide theme of compassion. In the elementary collection you will find lesson plans, ideas for “Morning Messages” to be read by students on the school’s PA system and a literature list.

The secondary lessons were intended to help teachers plan ways of examining compassion from various subject area perspectives, as well as provide some background about the Dalai Lama and his life, in preparation for listening to the student dialogues on September 8, 2006.

These lessons later became the starting point for a new set of lessons and teaching ideas developed by Seattle teachers in preparation for a similar event called Seeds of Compassion, in April 2008, in Seattle. Those adapted lessons and other resources are also available on the educators’ portion of the Seeds of Compassion website.
Ideas for a School-wide Theme of Compassion for Elementary Schools

List of Lessons and Resources:

- Ideas for a School-wide Theme of Compassion for Elementary Schools
- Compassion Morning Messages
- Compassion Morning Messages (with Activities)
- Lesson 1 – Collective Prose: Writing with and About Compassion
- Lesson 2 – Exploring Compassion: The Rag Coat
- Lesson 3 – The Rag Coat: Showing Compassion by Using Kind Words
- Lesson 4 -- “The Memory Basket” Recognizing Feelings and Demonstrating Compassion
- The Memory Basket (Black Line Master)
- Lesson 5 -- “Mile-High Apple Pie”: Treasured Memories and a Memory Box
- The Memory Box (Black Line Master)
- Lesson 6 – Cultivating Compassion
- Lesson 7 – Expanding Our Compassion
- Lesson 8 -- Compassion: The Quilt Makers Gift (Grades 3-8)
- Quilt Shapes (Black Line Master)
- Giving (Black Line Master)
- Lesson 9 -- Compassion and Current Events (Social Studies-Intermediate)
- Lesson 10 -- Compassion-Current Events 2 (Social Studies-Intermediate builds on Lesson 9)
- Current Events Assessment (Black Line Master)
- Lesson 11 – Cultivating Compassion Through Music, Movement and Drama
- Seed Ideas for Teaching Compassion through the Performing Arts
- Dalai Lama Resources: A Selected Bibliography
- Dalai Lama Background Lesson (Grades 4 to 7)
- Additional Books on Social Responsibility
- Contributing Teachers Acknowledgements
Compassion Theme -- Contributing Teachers

Thank you to the following individuals, who shared their expertise and developed lesson plans and ideas to nurture compassion in the elementary school:

Brenda Buss – Teacher Librarian, Coquitlam
Diana Clark – Music Teacher, Coquitlam
Tammy Ferdinandi – Teacher, Coquitlam
Karen Kurnaedy – Teacher, Coquitlam
Sharon LeClair – Social Responsibility Support Teacher, Coquitlam
Lisa Pedrini – Manager, Social Responsibility & Diversity, Vancouver
Zahara Rawji – Teacher, Coquitlam
Mark Roberts – Teacher, Vancouver
Sarah Shinkewski – Teacher, Coquitlam
Deb Taylor – Learning Facilitator, Social Responsibility, New Westminster
Doreen Unrau – Teacher, Vancouver
Sandra Wallin – School Counsellor, Coquitlam
Ideas for a School-wide Theme of Compassion for Elementary Schools

These resources are intended to provide elementary school staff with a starting place for creating their own School-wide Theme of Compassion. Staff will need to consider their own students and school to develop a plan suited to their school community. Hopefully these resources will spark educators’ creativity to delve into nurturing compassion within their classrooms and schools.

Many schools have developed goals about students’ development in social responsibility and social/emotional learning and have been working with the British Columbia Ministry of Education Performance Standards for Social Responsibility (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/social_resp.htm). A school-wide theme of compassion offers an excellent opportunity to further develop social responsibility.

Using the Lesson Plans and Resources

Pick and choose from the ideas presented here, and develop other ideas of your own. Some of the lessons are more suitable for younger children, while others are designed for older elementary students. These lessons do not need to be used in the order suggested.

Possible Components of a School-wide Theme of Compassion

As school staff plan a school-wide theme, these ideas may provide a starting place:

- Adult or student-led assemblies on the topic of compassion
- Morning Messages about compassion read daily over the PA system (suggestions are provided)
- Cooperative playground games or Intramural activities
- Student-created banners, posters and announcements about the theme to post within the school or community
- Service Learning Projects in which students take compassionate action in their communities and the wider world
- Classroom topics in addition to the lessons available here, including:
  - Definitions of compassion, empathy, altruism
  - Additional literature studies
  - Discussing media examples of compassion and empathy
  - Examining social justice issues, inclusion and acceptance
  - Fine Art (drama, dance, artwork, etc.)
  - Identifying and learning about compassionate heroes
  - Compassion and the environment; taking care of our planet
  - Interviewing parents, siblings or elders about experiences with compassion
- Celebration of the theme with families
Morning Messages (without Curriculum Suggestions)

These brief messages are designed to be read aloud over the PA system in the school each morning, for the month long compassion theme. Many schools have students take turn reading the messages, which can be followed up by classroom activities (see separate suggestion sheet).

Day 1

In honour of the Dalai Lama’s visit to Vancouver this week, our social responsibility focus for the month of September will be compassion.

What is compassion?
It is having kind feelings towards people. It is caring deeply and wanting to help others. It is also about being able to forgive if you have been hurt.

Practice compassion on this wonderful Wednesday!

Day 2

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. You learned about who the Dalai Lama is in your classes yesterday. The Dalai Lama suggests that for the world to become a better place we all need to be more compassionate. We need to act in kind and caring ways each day. We need to act “from the heart.” Practice being compassionate today. Have a socially responsible Thursday!

Day 3

Our social responsibility focus for this Opening Week has been compassion. Compassion is a verb, it is an action word. Compassionate people notice and feel what others are feeling. Then they take action to help out or show they care. Practice noticing how people are feeling and actively show someone you care today! Have a compassionate day and a wonderful weekend!
**Day 4**

Our social responsibility focus this week continues to be compassion. We have learned that compassion is about being kind, caring and forgiving. You are practicing compassion when you notice someone who seems sad or troubled, and are able to put yourself into their shoes...you imagine how you would feel if you were that person.

See if you can practice compassion today. Have a marvellous Monday!

**Day 5**

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Compassion is about acting in kind, caring and thoughtful ways. Practicing compassion sounds like: “Why are you sad?” “How can I help?” “I’m sorry that happened to you.” Practicing compassion looks like noticing when someone is sad or needs to be included. It looks like taking time to show someone you care by listening attentively and finding ways to help out. Practice compassion on this terrific Tuesday!

**Day 6**

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. The Dalai Lama said that “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.” He also said “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion...if you want to be happy, practice compassion.” Practice compassion and have a happy Wednesday!

**Day 7**

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. What would compassion look like if your friend is confused about what the teacher is asking the class to do? What would compassion sound like if your father came home from work looking tired and sad? Take time to imagine acting and talking in compassionate ways this morning in your classrooms. Have a compassionate Thursday!
**Day 8**

Our social responsibility focus this week has been compassion. ___(insert Student’s name)_____ and ___( insert Student’s Name)__________ from Division ____ took time yesterday to talk and write about what compassion would look and sound like in a variety of situations. Here’s what they wrote.

Thank you, ________________ and ________________. Practice compassion today and every day! Have a wonderful weekend!

**Day 9**

Our social responsibility focus this week continues to be compassion. Compassion for others is an attribute of being a socially responsible citizen. When you are able to feel compassion and express it through kindness, you make yourself a better person and the world a better place. Help to make the world a better place by practicing compassion today! Have a marvellous Monday!

**Day 10**

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Kind, compassionate people:

- recognize and express appreciation for others’ talents and skills;
- put others’ needs before their own wants; and
- help others because they want to, not because they have to.

Does this describe you? Are you a compassionate person? Take time to reflect on this terrific Tuesday!
Day 11

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Kind, compassionate children:

- Listen and provide others a “shoulder to cry on”
- Show kindness without expecting rewards
- Tell and show others that they care

Think of a time you did one of these. Share your story with a friend. Practice compassion on this wonderful Wednesday!

Day 12

Our social responsibility focus this week has been compassion. Compassionate people recognize and help those less fortunate than themselves. What are some ways ______(insert school name)______ students have helped less fortunate students?

We have:

- ______(insert activity)______________, and we have
- ________________________________, and we have
- ________________________________, and we have
- ________________________________, and we have
- ________________________________, and much, much more!

What picture comes to mind when you think about actions you have taken to show compassion?

Draw that picture! Draw compassion and share it with a friend today! Have a socially responsible Thursday!
Day 13

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Compassionate people are empathetic. They are in tune with their own feelings and as a result are better able to identify feelings in others. Empathetic people are aware of how tone of voice, body posture, language and facial expressions give hints as to how someone is feeling.

Practice noticing how others are feeling by the way they act and talk. Practice being empathetic and compassionate today and everyday! Have a marvellous Monday!

Day 14

Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. We have learned that empathetic people show compassion for others. Compassionate people use their words and actions to help others who are hurt or troubled. They care deeply and want to help, even if they don’t know the person involved.

What are some of the ways your feelings guide your actions? Think about a time when you noticed a friend was sad – write about what you did to help. Tell about how it made you feel.

Share your stories of compassion on this terrific Tuesday.

Day 15

Our social responsibility focus continues to be compassion. Yesterday, some of us shared stories of compassion in the classroom. Today, _____(insert Student’s name)_____ and ____ (insert Student’s name) __________ are here to share their stories with you.

Thank you _____________ and __________________. Those were wonderful examples of showing compassion.

Have a compassionate Wednesday!
Day 16

Our social responsibility focus this week continues to be compassion. Compassionate people show respect for all living things. They do not hurt harmless creatures in the world. They only pick the things in nature that they really need. How do you show compassion in the world?

Think about this! Have a compassionate Thursday!

Day 17

This ends our month of focus on compassion. Being compassionate is one very important characteristic of being a socially responsible citizen. Remember, one kind action is better than a thousand kind thoughts! When you feel compassion and express it through your kind and caring actions, you become a better person and the world becomes a better place. Practice being compassionate everyday – together we can make the world a better place! Have a fabulous Friday!

Additional Background for Teachers

The Dalai Lama says, “Compassion can be roughly defined in terms of a state of mind that is non-violent, non-harming and non-aggressive. It is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of their suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility and respect towards others.”

The Dalai Lama tells us that “compassion can be put into practice if one recognizes the fact that every human being is a member of humanity… regardless of differences in religion, culture, colour and creed. Deep down there is no difference.” How do you see the people in our world?

In discussing the definition of compassion, the Tibetan word Tse-wa, there is also a sense to the word of its being a state of mind that can include a wish for good things for oneself. In developing compassion, perhaps one could begin with the wish that oneself be free of suffering and then take that natural feeling towards oneself and cultivate it, enhance it, and extend it out to include and embrace others.
Day 1

Morning Message:
In honour of the Dalai Lama’s visit to Vancouver this week, our social responsibility focus for the month of September will be compassion. What is compassion? It is having kind feelings towards people. It is caring deeply and wanting to help others. It is also about being able to forgive if you have been hurt. Practice compassion on this wonderful Wednesday!

Classroom Follow-up Activity:
On a chart paper, begin a language web on compassion. Ask children what words they heard on the morning announcements helped them better understand the meaning of compassion. (E.g. Caring, kindness, forgiveness…) Take time to add new language to your web each day.

Day 2

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. You learned about who the Dalai Lama is in your Classes yesterday. The Dalai Lama suggests that for the world to become a better place we all need to be more compassionate. We need to act in kind and caring ways each day. We need to act “from the heart.” Practice being compassionate today. Have a socially responsible Thursday!

Follow-up Activity:
Review – Who is the Dalai Lama? What did students learn about him during their class activities?

Teacher Information:
The following is taken from An Open Heart – Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life – the Dalai Lama edited by Nicholas Vreeland

“…His Holiness the Dalai Lama shows how we can open our hearts and develop true and lasting compassion towards all beings. His Holiness’s entire life has been a testament to the power of openheartedness. His own spiritual training began when he was just a child. Upon being recognized as the reincarnation of the thirteenth Dalai Lama as the age of two, he was taken from his home in north eastern Tibet to the
Tibetan capital of Lhasa. He assumed temporal rule of Tibet as sixteen and was forced to put his beliefs in non-violence and tolerance to the most extreme of tests as the Communist Chinese army brutally invaded his country. He did his best to protect his people and keep his aggressors at bay while also pursuing his studies and his practice of the Buddha’s path to salvation.

In 1959, as the Chinese Communist forces prepared to bomb his summer palace, the twenty-five year old Dalai Lama fled his country. More than 100,000 Tibetans followed him. Living in India and throughout the world, they now devote themselves to an extraordinary non-violent campaign for Tibetan freedom…

His Holiness has worked hard to preserve all aspects of Tibetan culture, but at the centre of his efforts is Tibet’s spiritual tradition, for in Tibet, spirituality and culture are inseparable. He has maintained his own practice of study, contemplation, and meditation and has tirelessly taught the Buddhist path to people throughout the world.

Add – “from the heart” and other new language to your compassion web.

Day 3

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus for this Opening Week has been compassion. Compassion is a verb, it is an action word. Compassionate people notice and feel what others are feeling. Then they take action to help out or show they care. Practice noticing how people are feeling and actively show someone you care today! Have a compassionate day and a wonderful weekend!

Follow-up Activity:
Brainstorm ways to “take action”…”to show others you care.”
List students’ ideas on a T-chart:

COMPASSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looks Like:</th>
<th>Sounds Like:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

You may choose to use the Looks Like, Sounds Like and Feels Like symbols from Michele Borba’s *Respect for Self and Others* book.
Day 4

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week continues to be compassion. We have learned that compassion is about being kind, caring and forgiving. You are practicing compassion when you notice someone who seems sad or troubled, and are able to put yourself into their shoes...you imagine how you would feel if you were that person. See if you can practice compassion today. Have a marvellous Monday!

Follow-up Activity:
Today’s message focuses on imagining how others feel. Have students close their eyes, and visualize the character you describe. First describe a happy, carefree, sun-loving clown...ask students how they think the clown is feeling. Next describe a sad clown, who fumbles and trips while people laugh at him. Ask students how they think this clown is feeling. Have a discussion about how we identify feelings in others. (E.g. facial expression, body language, behaviours, positive or negative talks etc.)

Now look back to your caring T-chart from Friday. Have students think about one way they might practice being compassionate today.

Sentence starter: If I see someone who looks __(describe the feeling) _________I will _____(describe the action)__________. You could have several children share their sentence.

Day 5

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Compassion is about acting in kind, caring and thoughtful ways. Practicing compassion sounds like: “Why are you sad?” “How can I help?” I’m sorry that happened to you.” Practicing compassion looks like noticing when someone is sad or needs to be included. It looks like taking time to show someone you care by listening attentively and finding ways to help out. Practice compassion on this terrific Tuesday!

Follow-up Activity:
Make a list of what being compassionate Sounds Like: (e.g. Why are you sad? I’m sorry that happened to you! How can I help?)

Review what it looks like and sounds like to listen attentively.
Day 6

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. The Dalai Lama said that “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.” He also said “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion…if you want to be happy, practice compassion.” Practice compassion and have a happy Wednesday!

Follow-up Activity:
If age appropriate, read other quotes by the Dalai Lama, and discuss.

The Dalai Lama says, “Compassion can be roughly defined in terms of a state of mind that is non-violent, non-harming and non-aggressive. It is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of their suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility and respect towards others.”

The Dalai Lama tells us that “compassion can be put into practice if one recognizes the fact that every human being is a member of humanity…regardless of differences in religion, culture, colour and creed. Deep down there is no difference.” How do you see the people in our world?

Day 7

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. What would compassion look like if your friend is confused about what the teacher is asking the class to do? What would compassion sound like if your father came home from work looking tired and sad? Take time to imagine acting and talking in compassionate ways this morning in your classrooms. Have a compassionate Thursday!

Follow-up Activity:
In small groups have students discuss the scenarios introduced by the student leader reading the morning messages.

1. What would compassion “look like” and “sound like” if your friend is confused about what the teacher is asking the class to do?
2. What would compassion look and sound like if your father came home from work looking tired and sad?

Have students write (could be written in their groups) about what compassion looks and sounds like in one of the above or in any other situation. They could choose to write a fully meeting expectations scenario, and/or a not yet within expectations scenario.
Day 8

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week has been compassion. _____(Student)____________ and __(Student)________________ from Division ____ took time yesterday to talk and write about what compassion would look and sound like in a variety of situations. Here’s what they wrote. (Student reads the writing.)

Thank you, ________________ and ________________. Practice compassion today and every day! Have a wonderful weekend!

Follow-up Activity:
Ask students what they liked about the journal entries they heard on the morning messages. Share one or two of the scenarios written by the students in your classroom on Thursday. Have the students who are listening rate the scenario (fully meeting expectations or not-yet within.)

Day 9

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week continues to be compassion. Compassion for others is an attribute of being a socially responsible citizen. When you are able to feel compassion and express it through kindness, you make yourself a better person and the world a better place. Help to make the world a better place by practicing compassion today! Have a marvellous Monday!

Follow-up Activity:
Explicitly teach the idea of practicing compassion. What could students do at school? What could they do at home?

Look at the ideas on the T-Chart you started on September 8th. Add more ideas. Ask for volunteers to role-play one of the ideas.

The audience could provide feedback to the performers.

Ask older students to make a note in their student planners (in the weekly goal section) about how they plan to practice compassion this week.
Day 10

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Kind, compassionate people:

- Recognize and express appreciation for others’ talents and skills
- Put others’ needs before their own wants
- Help others because they want to, not because they have to

Does this describe you? Are you a compassionate person? Take time to reflect on this terrific Tuesday!

Follow-up Activity:
After listening to the message ask students to share their ideas about how they are practicing showing compassion, with a partner. Students may refer to the idea they recorded in the weekly goal section of their student planners on Monday. Remind them to listen attentively to their partner, as they will be asked to share his or her ideas with the whole class. After about 3-5 minutes of discussion time, ask for volunteers to share their partner’s ideas.

Day 11

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. Kind, compassionate children:

- Listen and provide others a “shoulder to cry on”
- Show kindness without expecting rewards
- Tell and show others that they care

Think of a time you did one of these. Share your story with a friend. Practice compassion on this wonderful Wednesday!

Follow-up Activity:
This morning, have students find a new partner and share a story about when they either:

- Listened and provided a shoulder for someone to cry on… OR
- Showed kindness with expecting anything in return…OR
- Told or showed someone they cared.

After 5-6 minutes of discussion, ask for volunteers to share their powerful story.
Day 12

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week has been compassion. Compassionate people recognize and help those less fortunate than themselves. What are some ways (Name of your School) students have helped less fortunate students? We have:

☐ _______________________
☐ _______________________
☐ _______________________
☐ and much, much more!

What picture comes to mind when you think about actions you have taken to show compassion? Draw that picture! Draw compassion and share it with a friend today! Have a socially responsible Thursday!

Follow-up Activity:
Have students visually represent a time they showed compassion. You may want to begin by giving students time to reflect and visualize, with eyes closed. Perhaps you could describe your picture to them to spark their ideas. You may choose to use a specific instructional strategy in terms of the finished product. Students could draw a three or four frame cartoon strip and include the character’s dialogue. As children complete their artwork, create a “Gallery of Compassion” on the bulletin board for all to enjoy.

Day 13

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week has been compassion. Compassionate people are empathetic. They are in tune with their own feelings and as a result are better able to identify feelings in others. Empathetic people are aware of how tone of voice, body posture, language and facial expressions give hints as to how someone is feeling. Practice noticing how others are feeling by the way they act and talk. Practice being empathetic and compassionate today and everyday! Have a marvellous Monday!

Follow-up Activity:
Remind students about the discussion you had about identifying feelings in others (refer to September 11th activity.) Provide practice time for students to identify a variety of emotions in others. Ask for volunteers to spontaneously act out a particular emotion (e.g. fear, excitement, confusion etc.)
Day 14

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week is compassion. We have learned that empathetic people show compassion for others. Compassionate people use their words and actions to help others who are hurt or troubled. They care deeply and want to help, even if they don’t know the person involved. What are some of the ways your feelings guide your actions? Think about a time when you noticed a friend was sad – write about what you did to help. Tell about how it made you feel. Share your stories of compassion on this terrific Tuesday.

Follow-up Activity:
As requested in the message, have students talk about how their feelings guide their actions. (Example: When you feel sad, you often like to spend time alone. When you feel confused, you ask someone you can trust to help you.)

Next, have them think of a time when they noticed a friend was sad and have them write a journal entry about that experience. Older students should rate themselves for how compassionately they responded to their friend. They could end the paragraph by writing: In this story I was (exceeding expectations, fully meeting expectations, meeting expectations or not yet within expectations) for showing compassion to my friend.

Day 15

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus continues to be compassion. Yesterday, some of us shared stories of compassion in the classroom. Today, ________________ and ________________ are here to share their stories with you.
Thank you ________________ and ________________. Those were wonderful examples of showing compassion. Have a compassionate Wednesday!

Follow-up Activity:
Before the message is read, divide your class into two groups – the Caring and Kindness groups. Partner students up…one Caring and one Kindness student per partnership.

As they listen attentively to the morning message, the Caring partner should be listening for examples of caring in the message and the Kindness partner listens for examples of kindness. When the message is over, each partner shares what they heard the student leader read. Together, they write one kindness sentence and one caring sentence on a paper sentence strip. These can be ideas they heard, or they can make up their own original caring and kindness actions. Post them on a “Caring and Kindness” bulletin board for all to read.
Day 16

Morning Message:
Our social responsibility focus this week continues to be compassion. Compassionate people show respect for all living things. They do not hurt harmless creatures in the world. They only pick the things in nature that they really need. How do you show compassion in the world? Think about this! Have a compassionate Thursday!

Follow-up Activity:
Brainstorm ideas with your students about ways to show compassion at home, at school, in the neighbourhood and in the world.
Leading questions:
- What can kids do at home to show more compassion for their family members?
- What can students do at school to show more compassion for their classmates?
- What can children do in their neighbourhoods to demonstrate compassion?
- What compassionate actions help to make the world a better place?

Help students generate ideas for neighbourhood and world by sharing some examples. (e.g. take action when you see cruelty to animals, visit a senior citizen home, donate to the food bank, bring used clothing to the goodwill centre etc.)

Day 17

Morning Message:
This ends our month of focus on compassion. Being compassionate is one very important characteristic of being a socially responsible citizen. Remember, one kind action is better than a thousand kind thoughts! When you feel compassion and express it through your kind and caring actions, you become a better person and the world becomes a better place. Practice being compassionate everyday – together we can make the world a better place! Have a fabulous Friday!

Follow-up Activity:
Ask students to reflect on their learning over this month and have small group discussions about how being compassionate can help to make the world a better place. Older students could think about the Dalai Lama’s quotes shared on September 13th and the connection between compassionate people and a peaceful world. Younger students could focus on how kind and caring people impact them.
Additional Teacher Background Information:

The Dalai Lama says, “Compassion can be roughly defined in terms of a state of mind that is non-violent, non-harming and non-aggressive. It is a mental attitude based on the wish for others to be free of their suffering and is associated with a sense of commitment, responsibility and respect towards others.”

The Dalai Lama tells us that “compassion can be put into practice if one recognizes the fact that every human being is a member of humanity…regardless of differences in religion, culture, colour and creed. Deep down there is no difference.” How do you see the people in our world?

In discussing the definition of compassion, the Tibetan word Tse-wa, there is also a sense to the word of its being a state of mind that can include a wish for good things for oneself. In developing compassion, perhaps one could begin with the wish that oneself be free of suffering and then take that natural feeling towards oneself and cultivate it, enhance it, and extend it out to include and embrace it.
**Lesson 1**

**Collective Prose: Writing With and About Compassion**

**Objective:**

- Students will, through the written word, demonstrate an understanding of the concept of compassion.

**Materials:**

- A class set (plus 10) of art cards or photographs that display a variety of powerful images, conveying compassion or acts of kindness.
- A class set of envelopes.
- Scrap paper cut into small pieces (approximately 3 cm x 6cm). Each student will need the same number of papers as there are people in their group. Eight is a good sized group for this activity but you may want to experiment doing this with your whole class in which case you’ll need more cut paper.

**Introduction:**

1. Engage students in a discussion about compassion to ascertain their pre-existing knowledge on the subject.

2. Have students describe, using their own rich and powerful language, what compassion looks like, sounds like and feels like.

**Lesson 1: Writing with and About Compassion**

**Teacher and Student Activities**

1. Place a variety of art cards of photos around the classroom. These cards should display powerful imagery that are associated with compassion.

2. After the initial class discussion (see introduction), have students walk around the room in order to view all of the cards you have laid out.

3. When they have finished their viewing, have them choose a card to which they felt a strong connection. (Have more cards than there are students.)
4. When students have chosen a card, have them place that card on their desk, upon which you have placed an empty envelope and a corresponding stack of cut paper. (After this, students will be working in groups.)

5. Students will now view all of the chosen cards in their small group. As they look at each one, they will take the time to write a few words or phrases about the impressions/emotions/thoughts evoked by each image. They will then place their notes anonymously into the envelope that corresponds with each card.

6. When students have completed this for all of the cards in their group, they will return to their desk to collect their art card and its corresponding envelope. Inside their envelope they will find the notes/impressions from the other students in their group, from which they will build/create/compose a piece of collective prose or poetry. (Alternatively, You may want to have them go further with this and write a whole story.)

7. When everyone has completed their prose (usually overnight), they may share their card and their writing with the class.

Students love to listen to how their own words are woven into the final pieces and to notice how themes seem to emerge from their images. Mount their images and prose on a wall or bulletin board dedicated to ongoing compassionate studies though out the year.

Lesson 1 - Extension Activities:

- You may do a similar activity with any form of impetus such as different pieces of music; films; poetry; sculptures; role plays…the possibilities are endless.

- Try this activity with different sized groups.

- Mount their images and prose on a wall or bulletin board dedicated to ongoing compassionate studies though out the year.
Lesson 2

Exploring compassion in the story, *The Rag Coat*

**Objectives:**

Students will…
- learn to explain what compassion looks like, sounds like, feels like;
- identify compassion in the words and actions of the story characters; and
- use pictures and words to create a rag square showing their ideas about compassion.

**Materials:**

- Chart Paper/felts for brainstorming
- 8x8 squares of white paper

**Introduction:**

1. Write “compassion” on the board. Ask: *What do you think compassion means?* (Compassion is an understanding others’ feelings, caring about others, and showing concern through kind thoughts, words, and actions). Accept a couple of responses and comment/direct as appropriate.

2. Ask students to think of examples of compassion they might know about or have experienced. Allow about 1-2 minutes of conversation. Let students know they will be asked to share their ideas.

3. While students pair/share, write the following titles on each of three chart papers:
   - Compassion is listening and being patient.
   - Compassion is saying kind words.
   - Compassion is helping and giving.

4. As pairs share their ideas, write their examples on the 3 charts as applicable.

5. Tell the students they will be listening to a story, *The Rag Coat* that will help them understand more about compassion.
Lesson 2: The Rag Coat, continued

Activity:

6. Tell students they will need to listen for examples of compassionate behaviour in the story. Ask them to raise hands when you come to a compassionate act, or words.

7. Read aloud *The Rag Coat*. Be ready to prompt students if they don’t recognize compassion when it occurs.

8. As students discover the acts of compassion in the story, pause and write them under the correct heading on the charts used in the introduction.

9. When finished reading and noting the acts of compassion, discuss and review their findings.

10. Ask students to share similar acts of compassion from their own experience; share something from your own experience.

11. Ask the students if they have ever seen a quilt; what do they feel like (cozy, warm, soft, etc)? Tell them they will be making a quilt to reflect their ideas about compassion.

12. Ask students to draw a picture about an act of compassion from the story, from their own experiences or from imagination; add a caption to help explain; use bubble language if needed.

13. Tell students their pictures about compassion will be “patched together” to make a “Quilt of Compassion” for the hallway of the school.
Lesson 3:

**The Rag Coat** - Showing Compassion by Using Kind Words

**Objectives:**

Students will...
- be able to provide examples of both put-downs and of kind things to say;
- use role play to demonstrate their understanding; and
- write or draw messages of welcome to friends, teachers, support staff.

**Materials:**

- Chart Paper/felts for brainstorming
- Statements on papers (various statements that students might make at school)
- Welcome Heart Messages

**Introduction:**

1. Review the part of the story in which Minna proudly wears her coat to school and her classmates react. Ask the students to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” depending on whether they hear a put-down or kind words.

2. Ask students:
   - *Are Minna’s classmates are showing compassion to Minna?*
   - *How does Minna react?*
   - *Does she get angry, does she try to understand why her classmates are reacting the way they do?*
   - *Does Minna react with compassion?*

3. Tell students they will be practicing ways to respond kindly to others in order to be compassionate at school. Either briefly review the Performance Standards for Contributing to Classroom and School Community with the students, or briefly review the school’s code of conduct with a focus on any aspect that refers to kindness, caring or supportive behaviour. Be sure that students are familiar with the phrases, “fully meeting expectations” and “not yet within expectations”.

4. Ask students to partner up for “Say Something Kind”. Partners are to choose one person to be partner “A” and the other to be partner “B”. Tell them they will get a piece of paper with a statement that could possibly be made by one of their classmates.

5. Partner A reads the sentence; partner B makes either a kind word (compassionate) response or a put-down. Let them know the others in the class will rate the response as “fully meeting”, or “not yet within expectations” regarding showing compassion by using kind words.

6. Allow students about 5 minutes to read the sentences and come up with a response.

7. Ask each pair of students to present their statements/responses.

8. Ask the class to vote either: “fully meeting” or “not yet within expectations” (response must be kind and caring to be considered compassionate). If used, make the link back to the school’s code of conduct.

9. Compassionate people show they care by using kind, caring, positive language. They take action to demonstrate their attitude. As a gesture of welcome and a way to practice using kind, caring, positive language -- tell students they are going to create a message to welcome a student, teacher or other school community member back to school.

10. Students colour the heart message card and write welcoming words on the inside or back and sign their name. Let students know their messages will be given passed to others during the week. They will also receive a message.
Lesson 4

“The Memory Basket” Recognizing Feelings and Demonstrating Compassion

Objectives:

Students will …

- understand that compassion is being able to recognize when someone is suffering by noticing/identifying their behaviors, body language and facial expressions;
- learn that compassion is demonstrating caring, comforting and supporting behaviors to try and ease another’s suffering; and
- know that certain stories, songs, poems or objects can trigger precious memories for the elderly.

Materials:

- Graphic organizer: The Memory Basket
- Chart Paper and felts for brainstorming

Introduction:

1. Discuss -- compassion is being able to feel empathy for someone when they are suffering, but how do we know when someone is suffering or how they feel? (listen to them, look at body language and facial expressions)

2. Play the game, “Guess How I’m Feeling?” Teacher demonstrates acting out a feeling using body language and facial expression while students guess. Students take turns acting out feelings while teacher records them on chart paper.

3. Explain that once we can “see” how another person might be feeling and can empathize with them, then we can take action to show we care and hopefully help to ease their suffering.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 4 continued: Teacher Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Reading: (3 – 5 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Say: I’m going to read you a story about an elderly woman who is suffering from memory loss. A boy who feels compassion towards this elderly woman does something to ease her suffering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your job is to listen to find out how the elderly woman is suffering, and what the boy does to demonstrate compassion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Reading: (2-3 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Stop after reading the first 5 pages. Questions for discussion:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who can describe how the character is suffering?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the boy suffering too?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ask students if any of them can make personal connections to the central character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Reading: (10 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Explain that students will work in pairs to describe the memories that certain objects triggered in this story (use graphic organizer.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ask students to provide evidence from the story to show their understanding of compassion, by asking them to explain how Wilfred showed compassion towards Nancy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Memory Basket: Student Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will listen to find out how the elderly person is suffering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will listen to find out what the boy does to show compassion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class will discuss how the character is suffering and how her suffering affects others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will make personal connections to their own lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students work with a partner and take turns to fill in the graphic organizer to record the memory that each object triggered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students give evidence from the story to show how Wilfred demonstrated compassion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extension Activities:

- Brainstorm other ways that children can demonstrate compassion for the elderly in care homes, who are sick, lonely or have lost some or all of their memories.

- Are any of these ideas actual possibilities for your school community?
Lesson 5

“Mile-High Apple Pie”: Treasured Memories and a Memory Box

Objectives:

Students will…

• abstract background knowledge of an elder in the story to think about what they value in life, what is important to them, and what objects might trigger memories for them such that they are able to create a written memory box for that character (guided practice); and

• think of an elder they know well, and create a memory box for him or her in order to demonstrate a compassionate understanding towards the elderly (independent practice).

Materials:


• Graphic Organizer: (Make an overhead transparency.)
  - Write 3 interesting facts that you’ve learned about Grandma that tell you about her as a person. State them, “Remember when…you used to make mile high apple pie and added the bruised ones because you said it made it sweeter?” (older children)
  - Write about or draw three objects that you would include in Grandma’s memory box and explain why you would put them there. (Younger primary students could create pictures of three to six objects instead of writing the memories. An older buddy could scribe “Remember apple pies?”)

Introduction:

1. Say, *In the last lesson, we learned how a boy demonstrated compassion towards his elderly friend by creating a memory basket for her using some of her own precious memories. Today you will hear another story, where a little girl feels angry when her Grandma doesn’t recognize her. By the end of the story, the little girl realizes that having the opportunity to spend time and do things with her Grandma helps her to remember things.*

2. Explain: *Feeling compassion for others means that you try to understand what others are feeling and thinking about, and finding ways to help them feel better or comfort them. For people losing their memories, sometimes telling them stories about your own special memories or one they may have told you in the past, might remind them about another or a similar memory.*
3. Further explain, As you listen to the story, you will be using compassion when you
  - try to determine what is important to Grandma;
  - think about what she values; and
  - think about what important objects might trigger memories for her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 5 continued: Teacher Activities:</th>
<th>Student Activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Reading: (2-3min)</strong></td>
<td>Students…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ask students to look at the title and cover of the book. Say, Who do you think the two people are? How do you think the girl feels towards her grandma? As I read it will be your responsibility to listen to the talk about Grandma to figure out what’s important to her.</td>
<td>• predict the relationship between the Grandma and her granddaughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During Reading: (5 –10 min.)</strong></td>
<td>• listen for evidence to explain what’s important to Grandma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Read the story <strong>Mile-High Apple Pie</strong> to page 15. Stop and ask: How might Margaret be feeling at this moment? What makes you think so?”</td>
<td>• discuss how Margaret feels when her grandma didn’t know who she was. (hurt, angry, confused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Read the rest of the story.</td>
<td>• may make connections and share a similar story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After Reading: (10 min. Together on OH)</strong></td>
<td>• share ideas from the story that could help to create memories for Grandma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Say: Your responsibility is to think about stories, songs, words, or memories Grandma might have, and possible objects that would be important to her and would reflect her values. Think about what kind of person Grandma is. What is she passionate about?</td>
<td>• watch as the teacher demonstrates how these ideas would transfer to a “memory box”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Brainstorm:</td>
<td>(Students will need extra time to complete this activity.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• three important objects to represent Grandma</td>
<td>• Students pair up with their older buddies and complete the remember when parts of the box, while the younger buddy illustrates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• three memories she might have (e.g. Teacher prompt: Remember when you had your art gallery down by the sea…)</td>
<td>• Colour, cut, fold and glue memory box together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate how these ideas can now be written down onto a cube net to cut out and make a memory box.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extension Activities:

- Extra memory boxes can be copied and made for an elder who is special to each child.

- Arrange to visit a senior’s home and visit the elderly to play games and read stories.

- Establish Pen Pals with a Senior’s Home - write letters and make seasonal cards to send.

- As a class, adopt a grandparent (older family friend) to visit.

- Interview an elder and write a story about him/her including interests, values, and memories.

- Invite an older member of the community in to tell the class about memories of the neighbourhood and ways it has changed over time (connection to social studies).
### Lesson 6

**Cultivating Compassion**

**Objective:**
- Students will understand that compassion can be shown in many different ways to different living things, such as animals.

**Materials:**

**Introduction:**
1. Ask students to think about the school or community in which they live. Ask,
   - Have you noticed people who are challenged in some ways? (e.g. braces, glasses, wheelchair, medical difficulties)
   - How do we respond when we see people with these challenges?
   - How do we show compassion towards these individuals?

**Teacher Activities:**
2. Introduce *Goose’s Story* by Cari Best, pausing at various points throughout the story.
3. On page 7, The little girl says, “Oh Goose, what happened to you?” Ask the students to predict what might have injured Goose’s leg.
4. On page 9 &10, the character says, “I never thought geese could be so mean.” Ask students to make a personal connection to this part in the story. Ask:
   - Why do you think the other geese stay away from the goose with the broken leg?
   - Why do they exclude him?
   - Can you think of a time when people have behaved this way?
   - Have you ever been excluded? How did it feel?

**Student Activities:**
- Students share various predictions about how Goose might have injured his leg.
- Have students think, pair, and share with a partner in the class. Invite students to share their responses with the whole class when done.
- Discuss these questions with the whole class and invite students to share their ideas out loud.
5. On page 12, it says, “A wild Goose has to learn to live with her weakness. Or she won’t live at all.” Ask the students what the little girl’s parents mean by making this statement. Ask
- How does the little girl’s idea of showing compassion compare with her parents idea of compassion?
- What might be a negative consequence if the little girl took Goose home to take care of it?

6. After reading page 22, ask, What is it called when you imagine what it would be like to be injured like Goose? When you put yourself in someone else’s shoes it is called empathy.

7. After reading the rest of the story -- ask the class if the little girl’s idea of what would be best for Goose changes throughout the story. Ask why.

**Extension Activities:**

Suggested whole class activities to explore the question: How can we show compassion to people in our school community who are different?

- Brainstorm a list of people in the community who are challenged in different ways. This list might include people using wheelchairs, seeing-eye dogs, hearing aids, canes, people who are mentally challenged etc.

- Create a Venn diagram comparing similarities and differences between various people – students would immediately be able to see there are many more similarities than differences.

- Ask students how they could demonstrate compassion to people in the school community who are different. What would that look like, feel like and sound like? Have students break into small groups to record their ideas and designate a spokes person to report out to the whole class.

- Students compose an independent journal response about someone in their own life and write how they could show compassion toward them. An example of this could be a Grandma or Grandpa who is hard of hearing, a sibling with Autism or another medical condition.

- Have students share possible answers.
• In gym classes place physical limitations on the students so they can imagine what it was like to be in Goose’s shoes or someone else’s with physical challenges.
  - Try to tie your shoes with one hand
  - Lift one foot up (like Goose) and try to kick a ball with the other foot
  - Play volleyball with one arm
  - Cover eye with a patch and catch and toss a ball at a target

Through oral discussion encourage students to reflect on these limitations. What was it like to tie your shoes with one hand? How did it feel? Imagine how others feel when they have similar limitations. Back in the classroom setting they can write in their journals about this experience and how it helped them understand what it might be like to be in another person’s shoes.
Lesson 7

Expanding Our Compassion

Objective:

- Students will obtain a greater understanding of homeless people in their own community and generate ideas about how they can demonstrate compassion toward them.

Materials:

- Pencils and paper for generating a list
- Large pieces of paper (heart shaped would be great) and whatever medium you choose for drawing/painting pictures
- Student Journals

Introduction:

1. Brainstorm a list of all the places people in our community live. (No teacher prompting at this point).

2. Now, ask students to listen to the story and see if they can discover another place where someone lives that was not mentioned in our list.

Teacher Activities:


4. Ask students,
   - Where did Solomon Singer live?
   - Was that on our list?
   - Does this make you think of any other places we haven’t mentioned? (tent)

5. Say, In the story we learned that Solomon Singer was suffering in many different ways. How many can you remember? What did he miss most about living in a hotel?

Student Activities:

- Actively listening for another type of home not mentioned in their brainstorm list.

- Hopefully students will respond with “hotel”. Divergent thinkers might come up with other interesting ideas.

- With a buddy students list all the evidence given in the story. (no window, no pets, lonely, didn’t love where he lived, no balcony etc).
### Teacher Activities (Continued):

6. Ask students what they love about where they live that makes it so special that they wouldn’t ever want to live without it? Give them paper and ask them to draw about their homes.

7. Small group activity. Ask students, *I’m wondering if anyone has drawn about the same ideas? Let’s listen and find out.*

8. Continue and ask students, *Now let’s imagine that what makes your home so special has been taken away or not allowed. How would that make you feel?*

9. Compare with the character in the story -- *Let’s think about Solomon Singer again – do you think he might be experiencing similar feelings? Do you think he wants to live this way?*

### Student Activities (Continued):

- Students draw about what makes their own home special using whatever medium the teacher chooses. Heart shaped paper could be used.

- Divide students into small groups for sharing their artwork so that each student gets a chance to talk.

- Journal Response: students write their feelings about losing something so special in their lives. (These could be shared or just kept private – perhaps students who felt comfortable would volunteer to share their responses.)

- Students participate in whole class oral discussion.

### Extension Activities:

- Ask students to think of their own community and the people in it who live like Solomon Singer. *What are some of the ways we could/or already do demonstrate compassion toward these individuals? (Think, Pair, Share Strategy).*

- Brainstorm ideas here:  
  - volunteering in a soup kitchen  
  - having a sale and donating proceeds to a local shelter  
  - bringing mittens/hats/coats for the less fortunate during winter months  
  - participating in a blanket drive  
  - collecting pennies for presents for children at Christmas  
  - adopting a child  
  - holding food drives to support the local food bank

- Ask the students to participate in making an action plan that would demonstrate showing compassion for some of the less fortunate people in their own community. First they must decide on a focus. They might choose to support a non-profit society or organization such as Big Brothers or a local Soup Kitchen or something else from the list they generated.
Extension Activities (Continued):

- Students must then **brainstorm ways in which to provide support**. After much discussion they should be encouraged to **choose just one idea** from the list to try first. For example they might choose to hold regular Freezie sales every Friday and donate the proceeds to the Local Food Bank.

- Encourage students to **think of ways to make their efforts successful**. This might include students being involved in making posters to put up around the school, writing announcements to be read over the P.A. system or shared at whole school assemblies reminding their student population of their goals and commitment to their cause, or perhaps writing letters to local businesses asking for some form of support.

- Help students **celebrate their successes**. How do they know they have been successful? Perhaps they have received letters back from the place or people they have chosen to support. Discuss the intrinsic reward of just knowing you have been compassionate and have tried to make a difference in the community in which you live.
Lesson 8

Compassion: The Quilt Makers Gift (Grades 3-8)

Objectives:

Students will...
- explain, through drawing and writing their answer to the question, “What is compassion?”; and
- identify one or two ways of showing compassion at home, at school or in the community.

Materials:

- Journal pages (Quilt Journal)
- Blank quilt template (hexagonal or square shapes)
- Art supplies such as black ink, water colours, wax crayons etc.

Introduction:

Teacher background:
This is a lovely fable about an old quilt maker who teaches a greedy king about the joy of giving. Through giving, he learns about compassion for the people both inside and outside his kingdom.

Teacher Activities (Session One):

1. Connecting to Text:
   - Sorting activity: (see words provided below.) It is suggested that the number of words used equal the number of students.

2. Accessing Prior Knowledge – pairs to large class discussion. Guiding questions:
   - What do you know about quilts?
   - What do you know about gifts?
   - What are the most meaningful or special gifts you have received/given? Why?
   - What makes a gift meaningful?

Student Activities:

- Students sort vocabulary words as a way of predicting about the text.
- Students participate in Think/Pair/Share and then whole group discussion activities.
### Teacher Activities (Continued):

3. **Processing the Text**
   - Read the first two pages. Stop at, “They are not for the rich.”

   Read the next four pages to “He was not happy at all.” Stop. After pairs have had 3-5 minutes to discuss, share ideas as a class.

4. Quickly re-read from the beginning to “I want one of those quilts!” the king demanded. “It might be the one thing that will finally make me happy.” Ask the students to choose to listen as either the King or Quilt Maker. They are to put themselves into either the King’s or the Quilt Maker’s shoes.

### Teacher Activities (Session Two):

5. Read to “The woman thought for a moment” to the bottom of the next page, “I’m sure he will make a very fine breakfast of you.”

6. Read from “Later when the bear’s eyes opened...”(next page) ...having a breakfast of berries and honey.

7. Read from ‘Now the king completely forgot about... “Oh, all right,” he muttered, “If I must give away my treasures, then I must!”’ Give students the quilt piece template and give them the following drawing task...

### Student Activities:

- In pairs, then quads, then full class sharing, consider and discuss the question, “Why do you think the quilt maker will not sell her quilts?”

- In pairs discuss “If you had everything you wanted in the world, why wouldn’t you be happy?”

- **Task:** Write and draw to show what the king or quilt maker is thinking, feeling and saying.
  
  **Guiding questions:**
  
  For the king: Why do you think this will be the thing that will make you happy?

  For the Quilt Maker: What are you thinking about the King and your decision to give quilts only to the poor? Will you change your mind?

### Student Activities:

- Turn to your partner and discuss and/or role play - What will the bear do?

- Ask students to use their quilt journal, and take 5 minutes and write to show what they think the King will think, say, and feel. When they have finished, have them find a partner to share predictions with.

- Pretend you are the King and going home to your house. Think about what you would give away. On the outside of the quilt piece draw all the treasures that you would give away and then draw the quilt piece that you think you would receive.
Teacher Activities (Session Three):

8. Read from “The king went to his castle…“Next the king fetched a hundred waltzing blue…as clear as glass.”
   - Generate a class list of ideas.

9. Read from “Then the king ordered his merry-go-round….”The king’s royal clothes were now in tatters and his toes poked out of his boots.”

Student Activities:

- Ask students to turn to their partners and discuss why they think the king kept going back into his castle to find more things.
- Write and draw to show what the king is thinking, feeling and saying when the quilt maker finds him. Your drawings could include speech and thinking bubbles.

Teacher Activities (Session Four):

10. Read to the end of the story.

Student Activities (Session Four):

- Talk with your partner about what you think the author’s message or “lesson to be learned” is. Is this an example of compassion? Explain why or why not.
- Engage in a class discussion to share other’s perspectives.
- Students can represent their thinking in a poem or poster, incorporating their vision of the quilt.

Extension Activities:

- Each student could design their own quilt piece incorporating either their understanding of compassion or ways that they will show compassion in their home, school or community. Quilt pieces could be glued together to form a class compassion quilt. If there are several classes reading this book, then a larger paper quilt could be displayed in a focal place in the school.

- Depending on the ages of the students, they could draw on fabric or sew quilt piece which could be put together and given to a children’s or senior’s facility in their community. Children presenting the quilt could share the story *The Quilt Maker’s Gift*. 
Lesson 9:

Compassion and Current Events (Social Studies-Intermediate)

**Objectives:**

Students will…
- understand compassion by searching through newspapers to find examples of compassion in the Global Community;
- practice reading and listening for information;
- explore critical analysis and critical thinking skills;
- make inferences and reach conclusions; and
- connect a current events article to the school Code of Conduct: Take Care of Yourself, Take Care Others, Take Care of this Place (or the Code of Conduct of the school, if it is different from this one).

**Materials:**

- Current events article from newspaper
- Newspapers (or access to the internet news)

**Introduction:**

1. Note: If you have not yet taught any lessons on compassion, you may want to explore these questions:
   - What is compassion?
   - How do you express compassion?

2. Brainstorm news stories that have made students feel compassionate. Ask, *What did you feel? Why do you think you felt that way?*

3. Write student responses on the chalk board or a chart paper for future reference, if desired.
### Teacher Activities

4. Teacher presents a newspaper article (current), giving each student a copy.

5. Teacher reads article.

6. Teacher asks one POWERFUL question to students which will encourage them to think about and share their understanding about what the article means to them.

### Student Activities

- Students have individual copy of the article.
- Students follow along.
- Students express their thoughts, ideas, and thinking.

### Extension Activities:

- Have students divide into small groups to discuss the article: (Review expectations for group work and advise that one student will be asked to report out when the discussion is over.)
  - Who the article is about?
  - What the article is about?
  - Where it happened?
  - When it happened?
  - Why or how it happened?

- Bring group back together and one person shares their groups’ thoughts and ideas.
- Teacher restates what the article is about and reviews the focus on compassion.
**Lesson 10**

**Compassion-Current Events 2**
*(Social Studies-Intermediate builds on Lesson 9)*

**Objectives:**

Students will...
- understand and feel compassion through using newspaper articles or current events news items; and
- practice listening for information and use critical thinking skills to analyze then share their feelings.

**Materials:**

- Newspaper articles, one per student
- A double entry journal page

**Introduction:**

1. Teacher begins lesson by reviewing the article and the brainstorm from previous class (lesson 9).
2. Teacher asks if students have changed their definitions or thoughts revolving around compassion.

**Teacher Activities:**

3. Students are provided with a copy of a newspaper article (current) that has to do with compassion.
4. Teacher begins to read the article and stops at various parts of the article.
5. Teacher continues this process a few more times depending on the article.

**Student Activities**

- Students are given a “Double Entry Journal” page.
- The left side of the journal is titled “Summary” and on the right “My Thoughts”. When teacher stops reading, students write facts in the left column -- events, persons involved, what happened, who it affected, etc. Then on the right side students write about their reactions, thoughts and feelings. (e.g.: This reminds me of…, I remembered when…, I noticed…, I feel…, etc).
- Students continue this process again.
**Extension Activities:**

- The teacher may choose to have three short articles so students can practice listening, summarizing and expressing their thoughts and feelings.

- Students share their ideas and reactions.

- Teacher continues adding words to the brainstorm from the previous day.

- Using a similar format, students are given the assignment of finding their own newspaper article and presenting it to the class. Use the attached Current Events Assessment Form, if desired.
Current Events Assessment

Ask students to find an article in the newspaper about an act of compassion and present it to the class (lesson 9). The presentation should be about three minutes in length.

Name: ________________________________

Date: _________________________________

Title of the Article: ____________________

Criteria: The presenter will be able to:

1. tell about the article, in his/her own words; including details on the following:
   - Who the article is about
   - What the article is about
   - Where it happened
   - When it happened
   - Why (and/or) how it happened

2. make a connection to our school Code of Conduct:
   - Take Care of Yourself
   - Take Care of Others
   - Take Care of This Place

3. explain why he/she felt this article was important to
   - the rest of the students in the class

4. ask one POWERFUL question to the audience,
   - that will encourage students to think about and share their understandings about the compassionate feelings or actions demonstrated in the article
   - ask for two questions or comments from the audience after the presentation is finished

5. demonstrate positive public speaking traits, as follows:
   - wait to have the attention of the audience before beginning
   - introduce self and the title of the article
   - make eye contact with the audience
   - speak clearly, fluently (pacing)
   - project voice so all can hear
   - use expression/intonation

4 – Exceeds Expectations
3 – Fully Meets Expectations
2 – Meets Expectations (minimally)
1 – Not Yet Within Expectations
Lesson 11

Cultivating Compassion through Music, Movement and Drama

Objectives:

Students will...
- brainstorm and list a variety of different compassionate acts that they have seen or done;
- demonstrate acts of compassion through movement / dramatic actions set to music; and
- observe others' compassionate movements and further their understanding of what compassion can look like

Materials:

- CD of classical, slower, mood-inspiring music
- Chart paper or board for recording idea

Introduction:

1. Review definition of compassion, what it is, how we show it, especially focusing on personal experiences that the children have seen or of which they have been a part. (You could break down ideas into the areas of taking care of yourself, taking care of others, taking care of this place – or to your own school’s code of conduct.)

2. Record ideas as they are being brainstormed, possible suggestions might include:
   - Take care of yourself:
     - have patience with yourself
     - remember that mistakes can be great learning experiences
     - ask for help if you need it
   - Take care of others:
     - food and clothing drives to benefit the homeless or others in need
     - visiting seniors' homes to sing
     - collecting donations for various charities
     - noticing when a friend is feeling down, and talking with them to cheer them up, or just being a good listener
     - noticing a person who being left out and then inviting them to play
     - forgiving others when they have made an apology
     - notice when another person is being picked on and stand up for them
     - help someone who needs it (helping to clean up, help to carry a heavy load, etc.)
     - volunteer to help with the charitable groups (working in a soup kitchen, rolling coins in a penny drive, sorting canned goods at a food bank)
Take care of this place (showing compassion to the earth and our community):
- recycling our paper, our drink containers and other items so that they don't end up in a landfill
- planting trees or other plants
- cleaning-up litter
- conserving water

**Lesson Activities:**

1. After brainstorming, students can then be placed into groups. In their groups, they can choose an example of compassion and then act-out an instance of compassion using their bodies, not words.

2. Students should be given some time to discuss ideas in their group then the teacher can play the CD (to set the mood of their miming or to give students the opportunity to set their movement to music).

3. Teacher can circulate to assist students who have trouble, need refinement of their ideas, or movement suggestions. The groups, scenes should be quite short, 30-60 seconds.

4. After students have had the opportunity to create a wordless skit or dance, bring the group back together to create a compassion, dance or movement piece.

5. Explain the idea of “Tableaux” where the groups will be “frozen, in their opening position until it is their turn to perform, and then freeze again when they are finished and it is the next group’s turn. (Decide who is to go first, second, etc, until all groups have had the opportunity to perform.)

6. Another alternative would be to have groups enter and exit the stage after their short presentation.
Current Events Assessment

Ask students to find an article in the newspaper about an act of compassion and present it to the class (lesson 9). The presentation should be about three minutes in length.

Name: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
Title of the Article: ____________________

Criteria: The presenter will be able to:

1. tell about the article, in his/her own words; including details on the following:
   - Who the article is about
   - What the article is about
   - Where it happened
   - When it happened
   - Why (and/or) how it happened

2. make a connection to our school Code of Conduct:
   - Take Care of Yourself
   - Take Care of Others
   - Take Care of This Place

3. explain why he/she felt this article was important to
   - the rest of the students in the class

4. ask one powerful question to the audience,
   - that will encourage students to think about and share their understandings about the compassionate feelings or actions demonstrated in the article
   - ask for two questions or comments from the audience after the presentation is finished

5. demonstrate positive public speaking traits, as follows:
   - wait to have the attention of the audience before beginning
   - introduce self and the title of the article
   - make eye contact with the audience
   - speak clearly, fluently (pacing)
   - project voice so all can hear
   - use expression/intonation
The Quilt Maker’s Gift

Name: ___________________

Things I will give away…
Seed Ideas for Teaching Compassion through the Performing Arts

Drama:

Who is widely recognized for their compassion?

Use such techniques as biography study, character study, or interview skills. Working in pairs, students:

♥ Choose a “compassionate being” to study in detail: a Nobel Peace Prize winner, or any other well known person or figure recognized for their compassion or activism; could be from any historical period, any religion, any background, or any country. (Include the Dalai Lama.)

♥ Research the life and work of their “compassionate being”, taking notes on what their “compassionate being” might look like, wear, or things they might do and say.

♥ One student will play the role of interviewer; they might choose a famous interviewer to spoof, or just play the part. Interviewer student asks probing questions of the “compassionate being” student -- also playing their character part to the fullest!

♥ Extension for the creative thinkers and gifted dancers: Ask, how can you represent your “compassionate being” character through movement only? If others were to watch the movement, are there enough clues to know which “compassionate being” is being depicted?

Music:

Teacher says to students:

♥ “Simply singing songs about love, peace and making the world a better place, is not necessarily showing compassion. Brainstorm ways that we COULD use music to be more compassionate beings.”

(For example, a fundraiser concert for a humanitarian cause; singing to seniors; playing soothing music for palliative care patients, bringing awareness to issues and causes...)

♥ Choose a viable option, and do it!!!

Music in society: debate/ discussion:

♥ Some famous musicians use their fame and influence in music to promote non-musical humanitarian causes: Bono, John Lennon, Bob Geldof... to name a few. Is this ethical? Is it fair to their fans?
The Memory Box

As people get much older, they sometimes start to lose some of their memories. This often makes their loved ones feel very sad. If you were to put objects and memories (stories) into a box for an elder who is special to you, what things could you write or draw to help them remember some warm, precious memories?

Remember when…

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Remember when…

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Remember when…

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

These are the objects I would draw, and here’s why:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remember when…

When I was young I liked to…

Memory Box

______________________’s

Remember when…

Remember when…

When I was young I liked to…
Annotated Bibliography of Social Responsibility Books

Compiled by Renge Bailie and Susan Harman
Vancouver School Board

Almost any book can be used as a Social Responsibility book. The books listed here were chosen to match the descriptors found in the Social Responsibility Quick Scales. You will find the key descriptors under each heading. In each case we’ve provided a summary and indication of how a discussion about the book might proceed. We have chosen picture books as we felt they would be more easily used in a lesson. A list such as this will never be complete as there is always one more book…

Contributing to the classroom and school community
Key themes: kindness, friendship, inclusive and helpful

**Horace and Morris but Mostly Dolores.** Howe, James, 1999
Summary - Horace, Morris and Dolores are the best of friends until Horace and Morris decide to join a boys-only club, leaving Dolores downhearted. Dolores reluctantly joins the girls-only club, “The Cheese Puffs”. Gender stereotypes keep the friends apart until Dolores and another girl get bored and quit the club. They reunite with Horace and Morris and create a club where everyone is welcome.
Discussion points - Gender stereotypes make it difficult to be inclusive in friendships.

**How to be a Friend.** Brown, Laurie Krasny and Marc Brown, 1998
Summary - Using an attractive cartoon format, this is a multifaceted book that explores the definition of friendship and many of its aspects.
Discussion points - This nonfiction book could be taught chapter by chapter. Chapters include themes such as ways to be a friend, how ‘not’ to be a friend, and talking out arguments.
(See also **How to Lose All Your Friends** by Nancy Carlson for a similar message)

**Stone Soup.** Muth, Jon J., 2003
Summary - In this new version of a classic tale, three monks arrive in a troubled village where villagers are untrusting of strangers and even their neighbours. The wise monks set out to bring them happiness by making stone soup. In order to make the soup everyone contributes, and as a result the villagers become friendlier and more trusting.
Discussion points - Working as a community benefits everyone and teaches the value of generosity.
**Sam and the Lucky Money**, Chinn, Karen, 1995  
**Summary** - A young boy in Chinatown on New Year’s Day is excited about spending his four dollars in lucky money. He becomes angry when he discovers how little he can buy with his money. “What is four dollars good for?” he complains. He begins to see things differently when he sees how grateful a beggar is to receive a quarter. Sam realizes that he’s the lucky one and gives his lucky money to the beggar.  
**Discussion points** - Sam learns to empathize with others and finds that his act of generosity helps make him more appreciative of his own life.

**Ballerinas Don’t Wear Glasses**, Manson, Ainslie, 2000  
**Summary** - Ben would like to play with his friends, but since his mother is working late he has to look after his little sister Allison. Ben and his friends pick on her, reducing her to tears. Gradually Ben begins to empathize with his sister and at home that night, he begins to help her get ready for her ballet recital. After all of Ben’s help, Allison’s recital goes very well.  
**Discussion points** - Ben benefits from his act of kindness towards his sister.

**Fox**, Wild, Margaret, 2001  
ISBN1929132166, Kane/Miller Book Publishers [picture book]  
**Summary** – When Dog saves Magpie from a charred forest, he tries to convince her that life is still good despite the fact that she can no longer fly. He argues that while she can’t fly and he is blind in one eye, together they can become a new creature. Their friendship blossoms. With Magpie on his back directing him, Dog can run through the forest almost as if he is flying. Their friendship is tested when Fox comes along, jealous of their friendship. He entices Magpie to run away with him. When they are far away he deserts Magpie saying “Now you and Dog will know what it is like to be truly alone”. Magpie would like to give up and die, but thinks of Dog and slowly begins the long journey home.  
**Discussion points** - This beautifully illustrated book explores the nature of friendship and loyalty.

**Me and Mr. Mah**, Spalding, Andrea, 1999  
**Summary** - When his parents split up, Ian has to leave his father on their farm and move to the city with his mother. Ian misses his old home on the farm. He slowly befriends an elderly Chinese man who works in his garden next door. They discover they each have a special box, filled with important mementos. Later Ian and his mother move to a nicer house across the city. Ian realizes something has happened to Mr. Mah when he finds his box in a second hand store. Mr. Mah, now in a nursing home, is thrilled to get his special box back. It had been sold by mistake. The two continue their friendship.  
**Discussion points** - This story of an unlikely relationship explores the nature of friendship.
Nobody Likes Me, Krischanitz, Raoul, 1999
Summary - When Buddy the new dog in town asks other animals to play with him they all say no. Buddy assumes they don’t like him. Finally, a fox suggests that he goes back and ask the other animals why they won’t play with him. In each case, this begins a conversation that leads to friendship.
Discussion points - Unfortunately this book is now out of print but if you can find a copy we feel it illustrates an excellent strategy for making friends and how assumptions can sometimes stand in the way of forming new bonds.
(See also: Franklin’s New Friend by Paulette Bourgeois for a very similar message)

The Very Best of Friends, Wild, Margaret, 1989
Summary - Jessie and James are a couple who run a small farm. James and his cat William are the very best of friends, but Jessie doesn’t like the cat. When James dies suddenly, a grief-stricken Jessie rejects William. Forced to fend for himself, William becomes wild. When he bites Jessie one day, she realizes what she has done and brings him back into the house. Gradually they come to love each other.
Discussion points - This book explores the nature of friendship. Friendships need to be cultivated and worked on in order to flourish.

Chester's Way, Henkes, Kevin, 1988
Summary - Chester and Wilson are the very best of friends. They do everything together and are like two peas in a pod. When Lilly comes along with her very different way of doing things they are unwilling to be friends until she scares away some older bullies. As the friendship blossoms, Chester and Wilson teach Lilly some of their practical skills while Lilly teaches the pair to be more imaginative. Then Victor moves into the neighbourhood….
Discussion points - Valuable friendships can be found in people who are different from us.

Rosie and Michael, Viorst, Judith, 1974
Summary - Rosie and Michael are best friends and they accept each other through a variety of circumstances.
Discussion points – This book explores the nature of friendship.
(See also The Best Friends Book by Todd Parr)
Solving Problems in Peaceful Ways

Key themes: empathy, problem solving, anger management, conflict resolution

Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse, Henkes, Kevin, 1996

Summary - Lilly the mouse loves school and especially her teacher Mr. Slinger. One day Lilly brings her new purple plastic purse to school. After several warnings Mr. Slinger takes away the purse for the rest of the day. Lilly is angry and puts a nasty note in his book bag. At the end of the day when Mr. Slinger returns her purse she finds a nice note and some treats in it. Lilly realizes she has made a terrible mistake and finds several ways to say she is really, really sorry.

Discussion points - This book teaches the problem solving technique of owning up to your mistakes and saying you’re sorry.

Hunter’s Best Friend at School, Elliott, Laura Malone, 2002

Summary - Hunter and Stripe are best friends and do everything together. When Stripe starts to misbehave Hunter follows along and gets into trouble. Hunter talks with his mother and she teaches him that being a best friend doesn’t always mean doing what your friend does. Hunter solves the problem by helping his friend to be his “best self”.

Discussion points - Sometimes one friend can be put in a difficult situation when the other one does something wrong. This book offers a strategy for dealing with this problem. For another response to a similar problem please see below for the entry on The Day the Whale Came.

The Day the Whale Came, Bunting, Eve, 1998

Summary - Tommy and his best friend Ben have the opportunity to see a dead whale which is being brought to their small Midwestern town by train. Ben wants Tommy to help him cut a piece of the whale off as a souvenir. Tommy refuses to help, making Ben angry. When the train breaks down just outside of town, the residents are forced to pull together to bury the rotting whale. When Ben once again wants to cut off a piece of the whale Tommy realizes that he hasn’t made a good choice of friends.

Discussion points - Tommy realizes that when friends have different values it’s sometimes necessary to end the friendship.

Enemy Pie, Munson, Derek, 2000

Summary - Life is good for a young boy until Jeremy Ross moves into the neighbourhood and becomes the one and only person on his enemy list. His father tells him he can get rid of his problem with a recipe for enemy pie. His father bakes the pie but in order for the recipe to work the boy must spend an entire day with his enemy and be nice to him. When he and Jeremy spend the day together he ends up liking him.

Discussion points - This book teaches a problem solving strategy for handling relationships and conflict.
**Chicken Sunday**, Polacco, Patricia, 1992  
ISBN0399221336, Philomel Books [picture books]  
**Summary** - A young girl and her friends Stewart and Winston visit a neighbourhood hat store run by a Jewish man, to look at Easter bonnets for the boys’ grandmother. When some bigger boys throw eggs at Mr. Kodinski’s store he thinks the three children did it and calls the grandmother. She believes that they didn’t do it but convinces the children that they need to do something to change his mind. After some consideration, they paint several Easter eggs and take a basket of them into his shop as a peace offering. He is thrilled with the eggs and they become friends.  
**Discussion points** - By making a gift of their time, children find a way to solve the problem of their damaged relationship with Mr. Kodinski.

**Peace Begins With You**, Scholes, Katherine, 1989  
**Summary** - This book provides readers with a definition and description of peace. It suggests ways of solving problems so that peace is maintained.  
**Discussion points**: This book teaches strategies for solving problems in your own life because peace begins with you.

**The Ant Bully**, Nickle, John, 1999  
ISBN0590395912, Scholastic [picture book]  
**Summary** - When Lucas is bullied by the neighbourhood bully he in turn bullies the ants. The ants capture Lucas and shrink him to their size, forcing him to work along side them. After Lucas learns many lessons about what a community is, the ants return him to his original size.  
**Discussion points** - There is an important note to be made here about the nature of bullying - Lucas is a bully as a result of being bullied. This book also teaches the value of working together as a community as well as the value of friendship.

**Mean Soup**, Everitt, Betsy, 1992  
**Summary** - When Horace has had a very difficult day his mom makes some soup and she and Horace take turns screaming into it. After Horace has growled, stuck out his tongue and banged on the pot he begins to feel much better. His mother tells him the soup is called “Mean Soup”  
**Discussion points** - This story illustrates an important strategy for dealing with anger.

**When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry**, Bang, Molly, 1999  
**Summary** - Sophie is having a terrible day; she gets very angry and kicks and screams. Feeling like she is a volcano ready to explode, she runs and cries and then she begins to notice the things in nature all around her. She is comforted and heads back home when everything is “back together again”.  
**Discussion points** - This story teaches an important strategy for dealing with anger.
The Meanest Thing to Say, Cosby, Bill, 1997
Summary - Little Bill and his friends at school are faced with a new boy Michael who introduces a game that involves saying mean things about other people. Little Bill’s parents teach him an important strategy to deal with the bully. Later when Michael is feeling lonely Bill reaches out in friendship to him.
Discussion points - This book shows children there are ways to resolve conflicts with other children without losing face or resorting to violence. As well, students learn that sometimes a potential bully can be turned around with kindness.

The Recess Queen, O’Neill, Alexis, 2002
ISBN0439206499, Scholastic [picture book]
Summary - Mean Jean rules the school playground through bullying and intimidation. When the new girl, Katie Sue, comes along she refuses to bow to Jean’s intimidation and instead invites Mean Jean to play. No one has ever asked Mean Jean to play and a friendship ensues.
Discussion points - This book demonstrates another strategy for dealing with bullies.

Hands Are Not For Hitting, Agassi, Martine, 2000
Summary - This nonfiction book explores the negative results of violence and offers better options for using our hands.
Discussion points - Children learn that violence is never an option and that they are capable of loving, constructive actions instead.

Why? Popov, Nikolai, 1996
Summary - A frog is sitting peacefully in a land full of flowers when a mouse comes along and hits him. The frog brings two friends to retaliate and the violence escalates. In the process the land around them is destroyed. In the end nothing has been achieved and much has been lost.
Discussion points - Violence and war are futile and do nothing to solve the problems we have. It is much more useful to solve our problems in peaceful ways. (See also The Butter Battle Book by Dr. Seuss for a similar message.)
Valuing Diversity

Key themes: empathy, respect, accepting of differences, supporting human rights

**Stellaluna**, Cannon, Janell, 1993

**Summary** - This is an “ugly duckling” story in which Stellaluna is separated from her bat mother and accepted into a bird family. Stellaluna must adapt to the way of life in the nest, but is always more clumsy than her bird ‘siblings’. When she rediscovers her bat family, Stellaluna and the birds realize that she has valuable yet different ‘bat’ skills. In the end, they muse that they can be very different, yet feel so much alike and still be friends.

**Discussion points** – This story teaches the value of honouring differences, and the acceptance of a variety of strengths.

(See also **Horace** by Holly Keller for a similar ugly duckling story about Horace the leopard who has been adopted by a loving tiger family. If you can find this out-of-print book it delivers a positive message about adoption, as Horace’s mother repeatedly tells Horace he is their “chosen child”.)

**All Families are Special**, Simon, Norma, 2003

**Summary** - Students in a classroom discuss the makeup of their families. They discover there is a vast diversity, including families with adoptions, same sex parents and single parents. There is discussion about bad and good things that can happen in families.

**Discussion points** - This and other similar books about diverse families empower children to talk about their own family structures.

**The Araboolies of Liberty Street**, Swope, Sam, 1989

**Summary** - The houses on Liberty Street are all very similar until the colourful Araboolie family moves in. Everything about the Araboolies offends the Pinch family. They call in the army to remove the family that looks different. The children in the neighbourhood secretly spend the night decorating all of the houses except that of the Pinches. As ordered, the army moves in and removes the house that looks different – the Pinch house.

**Discussion points** – As with other ugly duckling stories, this book makes the point that something that is “odd” or “wrong” in one context may just as easily be the norm in another context.

**Weslandia**, Fleischman, Paul, 1999

**Summary** – Wesley, an unusual child, is tormented by other children. He decides to grow his own food and found his own civilization. As his colourful garden grows he finds imaginative ways to use the crops, including making his own clothes, suntan lotion and ink. He begins to include neighbourhood children in the games he has invented. When school starts again in September he has no shortage of friends.

**Discussion points** - This book explores the nature of individual diversity. One particular illustration in this book showing Wesley’s colourful yard in comparison to the rest of the drab neighbourhood, makes this book an interesting companion piece to **The Araboolies of Liberty Street**.

(See also **Odd Velvet** by Mary E. Whitcomb and **Elmer** by David McKee for similar messages about valuing people [or elephants] that are different.)
**Whoever You Are**, Fox, Mem, 1997  
**Summary** - This beautifully illustrated book offers a message to the children of the world that no matter how different they are their joys and pains are all the same.  
**Discussion points** - This book explores what we all have in common, despite our many differences.  
(See also **All the Colors of the Earth** by Sheila Hamanaka and **The Colors of Us** by Karen Katz for further descriptions of the diversity of the colours of humanity)

**Thank You Mr. Falker**, Polacco, Patricia, 1998  
**Summary** - When Trisha starts school she finds reading difficult and begins to realize she is different. Other children call her ‘dummy’ and her first few years in school are torture. When she starts the fifth grade, her teacher Mr. Falker recognizes her artistic abilities and helps her to overcome her learning disabilities.  
**Discussion points** - This autobiographical story can start a valuable class discussion about honouring a variety of learning styles.  
(For a younger audience consider using **Cleversticks** by Bernard Ashley in which young Ling Sung finds school difficult because he can’t tie his shoelaces or button his clothes or do other physical tasks as well as some of the other children can. He feels validated when he discovers he’s the only one who can use chopsticks.)

**Suki’s Kimono**, Uegaki, Chieri, 2003  
**Summary** - On the first day of school Suki wants to wear a kimono given to her by her grandmother. Her sisters don’t approve, opting to wear “cool” clothes to school. Though initially the other children make fun of her, Suki does a ‘show and tell’ about the wonderful Japanese festival her grandmother has taken her to. The teacher and the class think her demonstration is wonderful. Walking home her sisters grumble that no one even noticed their cool new clothes.  
**Discussion points** – This book teaches about finding the courage to value your cultural background.

**The Skin I’m In**, Thomas, Pat, 2003  
ISBN0764124595, Barron’s [picture book]  
**Summary** - This wonderful non-fiction book provides a first look at the nature of racism. It defines the words race, racism and what it means to be a racist in a simple and powerful way.  
**Discussion points** – This is an excellent book to begin a discussion of racism.

**The Sneetches and Other Stories**, Dr. Seuss, 1961  
**Summary** - In this Dr. Seuss classic, the Star-Belly Sneetches will not associate with the Plain Belly Sneetches. An entrepreneur brings a machine that will put stars on the Plain Belly Sneetches. A vicious cycle begins of adding and removing stars in an effort to remain “different” and presumably better. In the end Sneetches decide that Sneetches are Sneetches regardless of whether they have stars or not.  
**Discussion points** – This story explores the absurdity of thinking you are better than others because of physical differences.
**Amazing Grace**, Hoffman, Mary, 1991

Summary – Grace, a young girl with a vivid imagination, is told by her classmates that she can’t be Peter Pan in the school play because she’s a girl and she’s black. Her supportive family tells her she can be anything she wants if she puts her mind to it. Her Nana takes her to a ballet performance in town which stars a black ballerina in *Romeo and Juliet*. Feeling validated, Grace tries out for Peter Pan and is so amazing that everyone votes for her.

Discussion points - Race and gender stereotypes shouldn’t hold you back from being the best you can be.

**Mr. Lincoln’s Way**, Polacco, Patricia, 2001

Summary - Everyone thinks Mr. Lincoln is the coolest principal in the world except “Mean Gene”, the school bully. Mr. Lincoln discovers that Eugene has a love of birds which he learned on his grandpa’s farm. They make a connection when Eugene helps Mr. Lincoln attract birds to the school atrium. For a time Eugene’s bullying stops but when there is a further race related bullying incident, he reveals that his father bullies him and disapproves of his friendship with Mr. Lincoln because he is black. Eugene is taught that ‘differences’, like those of the birds, are valuable.

Discussion points - This book teaches children to question racial and other hateful attitudes they may have learned from their family and friends. It may be a useful tool for discussion among older students about patterns of learned hate that children may have to overcome.

**And Tango Makes Three**, Cole, Henry, 2005

Summary - The zoo at Central Park is home to many kinds of animal families. In the penguin house, every year at the same time, the girl and boy penguins start to notice each other and become couples. One couple is a little different because Roy and Silo are both boys. The keeper notices that the new couple do everything together and concludes that they must be in love. When he sees that they would like to raise a child like the other couples do, he brings them an egg that needs to be cared for. The keeper names their baby “Tango” because it takes two to make a tango. The new penguin family flourishes.

Discussion points – Based on a true story, this touching book beautifully yet subtly explores the value of same-sex relationship and parenting.

**Everybody Cooks Rice**, Dooley, Norah, 1991

Summary - When Carrie goes from house to house looking for her brother Anthony, each family is cooking rice in the style of their ethnic background. This book includes recipes for all of the traditional dishes mentioned.

Discussion points - This book illustrates both the diversity and similarities of cultures. Also note the companion book **Everybody Bakes Bread** by the same author.
Exercising Democratic Rights and Responsibilities

Key themes: making the world a better place, sense of community, sense of responsibility

**Something Beautiful**, Wyeth, Sharon Dennis, 1998

**Summary** - A young girl living in a ghetto searches for something beautiful in her life. Her neighbours tell her about their own ‘beautiful’ things. In the end, she cleans up the area near her home and plans to plant flowers, creating something beautiful in the most unlikely of places.

**Discussion points** - Even in the most discouraging of circumstances, one person can make a difference.

**Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed**, Pearson, Emily, 2002
ISBN 0879059788, Gibbs Smith Publisher [picture book]

**Summary** - Ordinary Mary changes the world when she picks blueberries and thoughtfully gives them to Mrs. Bishop. Mrs. Bishop is so happy to receive them she gives plates of muffins to five people. Those five people are so thrilled with the muffins they each do kind things for five other people and so on…The book shows mathematically how a small deed like this can reach everyone on the planet and change the world.

**Discussion points** - This classic “pay it forward” story demonstrates how a simple act of kindness can truly make a difference.

(Another great example of a “pay it forward” theme is **Because Brian Hugged His Mother** by David L. Rice. This story illustrates a cycle of kindness beginning and ending when Brian hugs his mother. The author makes it clear that each person on the receiving end of an act of kindness feels more respected and valued and is therefore more likely to perform an act of kindness for someone else.)

**Prince William**, Rand, Gloria, 1992

**Summary** - When an oil tanker sinks off the coast of Alaska causing a major environmental crisis, the entire community pitches in to clean the beaches and care for all the oil covered animals. A little girl named Denny rescues a baby seal, which she names Prince William, and everyone helps him to survive and go back to the wild. This is a fictional version of a true story and an author’s note at the end tells us that local schoolchildren raised money to help save the animals.

**Discussion points** - In this story we see one child and an entire community working together to make the world a better place by improving the environment.

(See also **The Great Kapok Tree** by Lynne Cherry, which offers another look at improving the world through improving the environment. In this case, one man intending to chop down a tree realizes the harm he could do to all of those living in the rainforest and has a change of heart. Another book that deals with working for the protection of animals is **She’s Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head** by Kathryn Lasky which chronicles the true story of two women who campaigned to stop the killing of birds to make fashionable hats.)
**Summary** - Nadeem works in a carpet factory in Pakistan working from dawn until sundown seven days a week. His parents have sold him to the man who owns the factory. Like the other children in the factory Nadeem is ill from the poor conditions. One day another child named Iqbal Masih, a former carpet worker, arrives at the factory to tell the children that there is a new law against child slavery. Nadeem tries to exercise his new rights and is punished. Eventually he leads the other enslaved children to freedom. Information at the back of this book provides the real life story of Iqbal Masih and a variety of resources to help children fight against child labour.  
**Discussion points** - This fictional story honours the legacy of Iqbal Masih, the real boy who escaped from enslavement and went on to crusade against child labour. Iqbal was murdered in Pakistan when he was only twelve years old but he had already made a difference in children’s lives all over the world. Teachers interested in exploring this topic further may wish to investigate the life and works of Craig Kielburger, the American boy who campaigned against child labour.

**The Butterfly**, Polacco, Patricia, 2000  
ISBN0399231706, Philomel Books [picture books]  
**Luba – The Angel of Bergen-Belsen**, Tryszynska-Frederick, Luba (as told to Michelle R. McCann), 2003  
**Summaries** - In The Butterfly, a family in the French resistance help a Jewish family to escape. Luba-The Angel of Bergen-Belsen chronicles the true story of Luba and the other women in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp who sheltered fifty-four children through a winter of starvation and war.  
**Discussion points** - Both of these books tell the powerful stories of the courageous people who risked their lives helping Jewish people during the holocaust. Teachers who wish to expand on this theme may want to have the class study the novel *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry.

**Hana’s Suitcase**, Levine, Karen, 2002  
**Summary** - This is the true story of Hana, a young girl who died in the Nazi Germany, during the Holocaust, but it is also the story of Fumiko Ishioka, the director of the Tokyo Holocaust Center. Fumiko provides guidance to “Small Wings” a group of young Japanese children, aged eight to eighteen, who feel they have the power to create peace in the future. They have used Hana’s suitcase to tell the story of the Holocaust to Japanese people. There is a Canadian connection as Hana’s brother survived the holocaust and ended up living in Toronto.  
**Discussion points** - This book demonstrates the importance of keeping stories like that of the Holocaust alive in people’s minds so that history is not repeated.
**The Story of Ruby Bridges**, Coles, Robert, 1995  
ISBN0590439685, Scholastic Inc. [picture book]  
**Summary** - Six-year-old Ruby Bridges is one of the first black children to be integrated into an all white school in the southern United States in the 1960’s. Every day for months Ruby is escorted into her school by marshals while large crowds of angry white people protest. Ruby stops twice each day to pray for these people who are so full of hate.  
**Discussion points** - Ruby sets an amazing example of courage and forgiveness. This would be a great starting point for discussion of the struggle for racial integration. Other books that expand on the same topic are *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges, *If a Bus Could Talk – The Story of Rosa Parks* by Faith Ringgold, *Freedom on the Menu – The Greensboro Sit-Ins* by Carole Boston Weatherford, and *Dear Willie Rudd* by Libba Moore Gray.  

**I Have A Dream**, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Foreword by Coretta Scott King), 1997  
**Summary** - This book is the actual text of the landmark speech made at the March on Washington in 1963 by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Fifteen illustrations by award winning artists complement the text.  
**Discussion points** - This powerful text by the man who headed the civil rights movement in the United States and preached the doctrine of non-violence will appeal to older students. His efforts culminated in the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace later that year. He was assassinated in 1968 but his legacy lives on.  

**Terry Fox: A Story of Hope**, Trottier, Maxine, 2005  
**Summary** – This non-fiction book is the real life story of Terry Fox – a true Canadian hero.  
**Discussion points** – This book highlights a man who overcame his own challenges to make a difference.