

# Compassion

**COMPASSION** means a sympathetic understanding of another person's pain with the desire to relieve it.

## LESSON 1

Read the definition of **COMPASSION**. Ask students to identify a person who they feel is compassionate and discuss their ideas. (Examples include: teacher, friend, parent, grandparent, etc.) Read: **Florence Nightingale is a great example of compassion. She was born in 1820 in Florence, Italy. She was a nurse who dedicated her life to caring for others. She was affectionately called "The Lady with the Lamp," because she carried a lamp as she worked long into the night comforting her patients. She was also a talented mathematician and used her calculations to graph medical statistics. Her charts showed how improved sanitation could help save lives.** Discuss how she contributed to the betterment of others by showing compassion. As time allows, have students find the statistical range ( $x - y = \text{range}$ ) between 3,168 deaths in January and 104 deaths in August after seven months of improved sanitation and medical care. (Answer:  $3,168 - 104 = 3,064$ )

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to tell a family member about Florence Nightingale.

## LESSON 2

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **ostracize, commiserate, apathetic**. Instruct students to use context clues to determine the meaning of each word in the following sentences.

- 1) **People with compassion include others and do not ostracize people who are different.** (banish or exclude)
- 2) **Compassionate people understand and commiserate when someone is discouraged.** (feel or express sympathy)
- 3) **If someone is apathetic about another's feelings, it is impossible to express real compassion.** (no interest or feeling)

As time allows, have students write a short paragraph about compassion using each of the vocabulary words.

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to talk with a family member about compassion.

## LESSON 3

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Ask students to draw **KWL** chart (K-What I Know, W-What I Want to Know, L-What I Learned) on a piece of paper. Have students pair with their neighbor and fill in the "K" and "W" columns of their charts with what they know and want to know about dolphins. Share the following fun facts: **Dolphins are mammals, live and cooperate in groups called pods, can stay under water for up to 15 minutes, and have about 100 teeth.** Read: **Dolphins are known to be friendly, intelligent, and helpful. Once, a mother and baby whale got stuck on a sandbar near the coast of New Zealand. They could not find their way back to deep water. Some compassionate people tried to rescue the whales by helping them back into the water, but the whales kept getting disoriented and ended up back on the sand in the shallow water. They were in great distress, and in danger of dying when a dolphin swam up to help the whales. The dolphin guided the whales to a deep-water channel where they were able to swim past the sandbar into the safety of the ocean.** Discuss the different acts of compassion in the story. As an extended activity, ask students to research information about dolphins to complete their KWL charts.

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to do an act of compassion for a family member.

## LESSON 4

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Read and discuss the following quote by Albert Einstein: **"Until mankind can extend the circle of his compassion to include all living things, he will never, himself, know peace."** Instruct students to write the word **COMPASSION** vertically on a sheet of paper. Have students write an acrostic poem about compassion by using each letter as the first letter in a short sentence. Share the following examples if needed: **Care about others. Open your heart. Make friends with someone who feels alone.** As time allows, ask students to read their poems to the class.

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to share their acrostic poem with a family member.

## LESSON 5

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Read: **Abraham Lincoln had a tender and compassionate heart that was evident in his treatment of people and animals. Once, he noticed two baby birds that had been blown out of their nest by strong winds. He searched the nearby grove of trees until he found their nest and returned them safely to their home. When his friends teased him for his kind-heartedness, he replied: "I could not have slept unless I had restored those little birds to their mother."** Ask students to think about how they feel when they show and are shown compassion and discuss their ideas with a partner.

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to talk with a family member about a time when he or she showed compassion for another person, even if it was hard.