

# 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. (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. During the Crimean War, she was put in charge of nursing care at a hospital that had about 2000 sick and wounded soldiers. By improving sanitation, meals, and medical care, the death rate dropped from 40% to 2% in six months. She was affectionately called "The Lady with the Lamp," because she carried a lamp as she worked long into the night comforting her patients.** Discuss how she contributed to the betterment of others by showing compassion. As time allows, ask students to determine how many of the 2000 soldiers might have died without Nightingale's compassionate care. (Answer:  $2000 \times 38\% = 760$ .)

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

## LESSON 2

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Write the following cause or effect transitions on the board: **so, since, consequently, and because**. Write the following sentences about compassion on the board:

- 1) **Damian didn't want Curt to go without lunch. He shared his sandwich.**
- 2) **Janie did not stop to help when Joe fell. She was thinking only of herself.**
- 3) **Al was compassionate. He didn't hesitate when his help was needed.**

Instruct students to combine the two sentences using the correct cause or effect transition. (Answers: so, because, consequently). As time allows, have students write a sentence using one of the transitions.

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

## LESSON 3

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Read: **A man was walking down the beach when he noticed a young girl picking up starfish and throwing them back into the ocean. Seeing how many starfish had washed up on to the beach, he confronted the girl on her useless endeavor. He said, "There are far too many starfish to throw them all back into the ocean. You will never make a difference." The young girl looked down at the starfish she was holding in her hand and tossed it back into the water. She replied, "It made a difference to that one."** Ask students to evaluate how the story applies to them and discuss. Explain that compassion is seeking out individual opportunities to help one another. As time allows, ask students to identify a person who has made a difference in their lives and write a short note to thank him or her.

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

## LESSON 4

Review the definition of **COMPASSION**. Write the following quote by William Penn on the board: **"If there is any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not deter or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."** Explain that deter means to prevent or discourage taking action. Ask students to explain what the quote means in their own words. Encourage students to help others each day, since they may not have the opportunity again.

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to share William Penn's quote 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.