

Week 5 :

Responsible Contribution Skills



Responsible Contribution

Random Acts of Kindness

Objective:

- To increase awareness of our responsibility to help others
- To foster an awareness of how ignoring a wrong is to condone its continuance
- To increase awareness of our opportunities for contributing to the lives of others

Materials:

- The story of 'Kyle' (attached)
- Newsprint or several sheets of paper for brainstorming ideas
- Family Bulletin Board marked ***"I Spied a Random Act of Kindness"***

SEL Home Activity: Introduction:

Begin by reading the story of "Kyle".

Ask, "How do you feel toward the bullies? About the kids who just walked on and did/said nothing?"

How do you feel about the boy who stopped to help?"

Discuss what the consequences of stopping to help Kyle versus walking on and doing nothing might have been.

Briefly watch the video clip below from the movie *Batman Begins* and discuss its meaning for us all. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLTrHcbO_MU) and how it relates to the story of Kyle.

Together, brainstorm lists of things we can do as "*Random Acts of Kindness*" in our family, our school, with friends, with our neighbors, and so forth. Post your list on a bulletin board, refrigerator, or someplace in plain view to all. Add that more ideas can be added anytime.

Closure: Challenge all family members commit to engaging in at least one random act of kindness daily for the week (or longer!). Whenever anyone observes another family member commit a specific "act of kindness" they can write what & who they saw on a 'sticky note' or pre-printed "Acts of Kindness slips" and post it on the Family's. ***"I Spied...."*** Bulletin Board.

[NOTE: Parents should take the lead and become "talent scouts" by posting at least one act by every family member every day.

Start or end each day in your household by reading and discussing together the new 'random acts of kindness' posted in the past 24 hours.

Other Possible Family Learning Activities:

- Parents and children can each write/share a short story of a time they "stopped to help" someone in distress.
- Parents and children can each write/share a short story about a time someone stopped to help them and how you felt about it.

The Story of Kyle

One day when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all his books home for the weekend. I remember thinking to myself, “Why in the world would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd”. I had quite a weekend planned a party that night and then a pickup football game with my friends Saturday morning. So, I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking a bit further, I saw a bunch of kids running toward hi. They ran at him, knocked all his books out of his arms and tripped him so that he landed in the dirt; then walked off laughing with while taunting him with the comments, “Geek, Nerd”! His glasses went flying and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet away. As he looked up, I saw this terrible sadness and hopelessness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I could see a tear in his eye.

As I handed him his glasses, I said, “Those guys are just a bunch of jerks. They really should get lives!” He looked at me and said, “Hey thanks!” There was a big smile on his face; one of those smiles that shows genuine gratitude. I helped him pick up his books and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he’d gone to a private school before now and had just transferred to the public high school this fall to save his parents the high expense of tuition. Private school kids and public high school kids didn’t really hang out much with each other in our town. We talked all the way home and I helped him carry some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty neat kid so I asked him if he would like to play football on Saturday with me and my friends. He said, Yes

We hung out together all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. And my friends all thought the same. Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with that huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, “Dang boy, you are going to really build some serious muscle carrying this pile of books everyday!” He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began applying to colleges. Kyle decided to go to Georgetown University and I went to our state university. I knew that we would always be close friends and that the miles would never be a problem. Kyle was going to study pre-med and go on to medical school I had a football scholarship and planned to get a degree in business. Kyle was named valedictorian of our graduating class. I would tease him all the time about being such a book nerd. As valedictorian, Kyle had to prepare a speech for graduation, I was just glad it wasn’t me having to get up there and speak.

On graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He even seemed to have more dates than me and all the girls loved him! Sometimes, I must admit I felt a bit jealous. And today was one of those days. I could see that he was really nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, “Hey, big guy don’t worry, you’ll do great!” he looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful kind like on that first day we met) and just smiled. “Thanks”, he said.

As he started his speech, Kyle cleared his throat and began, “Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your brothers and sisters, maybe a coach or neighbor but, mostly your friends! I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story.” I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had been planning to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so that his Mom wouldn’t have to do it later and that was why he was carrying all his stuff home. He looked right at me and gave me a little smile. “Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unthinkable”.

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment when the teasing, bullying and loneliness seemed just too much bear. I saw his mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that very moment did I realize its depth.

REMEMBER: Everyone you meet is fighting a battle inside that you know nothing about. So, be kind, ALWAYS! Never underestimate the power of your actions! With one small gesture you can change a person’s life, for better or for worse depending upon what you choose to do, or not to do. Stop and think about how you impact those around you; recognize what incredible potential we each have to make this a better place for ourselves and for others.



Responsible Contribution

Parachute Packing

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of how important we each are in making the lives of others better.
- Improve awareness of how we can contribute to the betterment of one another's lives.

Materials:

- The story of Captain Plumb (attached)
- Internet connection to listen to Capt. Plumb speaking
- Writing paper
- Small pieces of paper each with a picture of a opened parachute, pens and tape.

SEL Home Activity:

Read together the true story of Captain Plumb. Discuss how we each can “pack one another’s parachute” every day our family.

List things we’ve heard people say or see them do that was like a “SAM” missile shooting someone down and hurting our or another’s feelings.

Then, list what we can say or do each day to help “pack” each other’s parachutes.

Write a story about a time you stopped to help or support someone in distress, upset or discouraged about something. Include what you did, how you felt, and how that person responded.

[NOTE: parents should write their own stories also and all share in one folder marked “*Our Family Packing Parachute Stories*”]

Closure: Agree that for the next week (or longer) you will each do things to pack one another’s parachutes. Keep a stack of the paper parachutes, a pen, and some tape next to a wall, refrigerator or bulletin board. Everyone is to write down daily something they did that day to pack someone’s parachute, **OR** something someone else do to pack my or somebody else’s parachute. At dinner or just before going to bed for the night take a moment to read and talk about each new parachute posted that day.

Other Possible Family Learning Activities:

- Look through newspapers, magazines, and news reports to find stories of people who demonstrated an act of caring and kindness. Share these news stories with one another.
- Develop a collection of photos (from family albums or take photos yourselves) of relatives, friends and/or neighbors who have been caring and kind. Create a “*Parachute Packers Family Gallery*” by posting the photos on a sheet of poster board with a caption for each as to what act of caring and kindness each person has demonstrated
- Together bake and decorate cookies or cupcakes and deliver to people who feel isolated or lonely such as Children in hospitals, elderly in nursing homes /assisted living, group home for disabled adults, etc..

Captain Charles Plumb's Story

[A true story]

Captain Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot during the Vietnam War. He flew 74 successful missions off the aircraft carrier, Kitty Hawk. But, on the 75th mission his fighter jet was shot down by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb managed to eject from his plane and parachuted safely to the ground. There, he was quickly captured and spent the next 6 years as a North Vietnamese Prisoner of War.

Captain Plumb survived the ordeal and at the end of the war returned home to his wife and family. But one day many years later, Charles Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant. He noticed a man at another table who kept looking at him. Eventually, that man came over to his table and said, *"You're Plumb, aren't you?! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"*

Plumb was shocked and surprised. "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

The man replied, "I packed your parachute".

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man shook his hand and said, *"Well, I guess it worked!"*. Plumb replied *"It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."*

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb would later say, *"I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat, a bib in the back and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything, because, you see, I was an officer, a fighter pilot, and he was just a sailor."*

Plumb thought of all the man hours that sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute Each time knowing that in his hands he held the possible fate of someone's life. Someone, he didn't even know.

Plumb also thought about how his survival had required many different kinds of parachutes. When his plane was shot down over enemy territory, he needed his physical parachute. But surviving six years as a POW also required his mental parachute, his emotional parachute and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety. These parachutes were "packed" by many people in his life such as his parents, family, wife, children, colleagues and friends. The people who supported him, made his life happy and fulfilling. Thinking of them gave him the strength to endure until he could get back home again.

So, who packs your parachute? And, whose parachutes do you pack?

We all face our own "surface to air missiles" in our daily lives. Sometimes it's struggling against failure in a school subject, being rejected or overlooked by peers, criticism from others, and so forth. We can often feel as if we'd been "shot down"!

Sometimes in the course of our busy, challenging daily lives with all the tasks confronting us, we can all too easily miss what is really important. We may fail to say "hello," "please," or "thank you" or to congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them. Just by giving a compliment, saying something kind or encouraging, or just doing something nice for no reason we are actually helping to pack their parachute just as that young sailor had done in the bottom levels of that aircraft carrier.

Click here to listen to Capt. Plumb himself telling his story and sharing his message.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2t0E-yaHNs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJWYEz2MDO8>