

Send North America: New Orleans

Games and Activities

Compassion Word Web

Items needed:

- Whiteboard or similar
- Dry-erase markers or similar

Write the word compassion in large letters in the middle of the board. Ask the children to name some of the characteristics of a compassionate person. Some characteristics named could be: loving, caring, helpful, comforting, thoughtful, considerate, kind, understanding, listens, etc. Write the words around the word *compassionate*.

If time allows, ask the children to give examples of situations where someone showed compassion or give some of your own.

Are You Compassionate?

Through this game, children can learn to identify acts of compassion and be encouraged to do them. They will also learn that harm is done when we are not compassionate.

Items needed:

- Red construction paper
- Scissors
- Smiley stickers or stars
- Index cards (10)
- Tape
- Black marker
- List of 10 scenarios (See next page)

Prepare: Write the word yes on five index cards and the word no on five index cards. Cut out a large heart from a piece of red construction paper. Have the list of 10 scenarios handy. Suggested scenarios are on the next page.

If your group is larger than 10, either form more than one group or make more *yes/no* cards. You can repeat some of the scenarios.

Play: Seat the children in a circle on the floor. Shuffle the yes/no index cards and place them face-down in the center of the circle.

Make sure the children understand that compassion means feeling concern for the hurts of other people and helping with acts of kindness.

Show the children the paper heart and tell them it represents a person. When we are not compassionate toward people, we hurt them—we hurt their hearts. Tell them that on their turn, you will read from your list of possible opportunities to show compassion. They will then draw the top card from the pile to see if they chose to be compassionate or not.

If they draw a yes card, they can put a happy sticker on the heart. If they draw a no card, they should make a small tear in the heart.

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Games and Activities

Choose a child to go first and move the play either clockwise or counterclockwise. After each child has had a turn, hold up the heart. The children will see that though good was done (indicated by the happy stickers), the uncompassionate acts still left wounds on the person (indicated by the torn places).

Invite the children to try to repair the damage by taping the torn places. Help them see that though the repair job helped a little, the damage is still there. It is the same with people. When we don't show compassion to people, we hurt them, and it can leave scars. Maybe we can't see the hurt, but it is there nonetheless.

Jesus wants us to treat other people the way we would like to be treated—even our own family members. We are not to be mean to others, and we are to help those who need it. Jesus wants us to show compassion to others just as He shows compassion to us.

Encourage the children to intentionally look for opportunities to show compassion in their everyday lives. Tell them that their actions may not always be appreciated and that they may even be made fun of by mean people when they take up for someone, but the important thing is to do what is right and to be obedient to the Lord.

Scenarios: (Use these or make up your own.)

1. Some new kids are being bullied on your school bus. Did you offer to share your seat with them?
2. Your elderly neighbor is lonely. Did you make time to visit her?
3. A friend is in the hospital. Did you go by to visit?
4. You notice a classmate struggling to complete homework. Did you offer to help?
5. A friend has lost a beloved pet. Did you offer a hug?
6. You know of a student in your school who needs food. Did you give him some?
7. You notice your mom is overwhelmed by housework. Did you take out the trash and wash dishes without being asked?
8. Your younger brother needs help with his homework. Did you offer to help? (Child may pretend, if he has no younger brother.)
9. There are new kids in your neighborhood. They are sad because they left behind old friends. Did you go to their house and offer friendship?
10. A classmate has lost her lunch money. Did you share your lunch with her?

I'm Going to New Orleans

Item needed:

- Ball or beanbag

Give the children some information about New Orleans from the document titled "New Orleans Fun Facts." The information will hopefully prove useful in helping the children decide what to bring on their trip to New Orleans.

Arrange the children in a circle facing inward. Decide who will go first, and give that child the ball or beanbag.

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Games and Activities

The first child says, "I'm going to New Orleans, and I am going to take a _____ with me." He names something and tosses the ball or beanbag to another child.

The second child says, "I'm going to New Orleans, and I'm going to take a _____ (the item named by the first child) and a _____ (another item). He then tosses the ball or beanbag to another child.

Each child in turn names all the things previously named and adds one of his own. The children can even add something they are going to do along with items they are going to take.

This game can be played just for fun or competitively. If competitively, a player who misses an item is out and the ball is thrown to another player to pick up the game. The last player is the winner.