

# Helping with an Open Heart

## Materials and Preparation

- “The Watchman of Merryville” (found at the end of the lesson)

## Wilbur’s Words of Wisdom

Always help those who are in need.  
That’s how to be a friend, indeed!

## Guiding Children’s Learning

Begin today’s lesson by reading “The Watchman of Merryville” to your students. (NOTE—Read it with great gusto!)

After the reading, lead the children in a discussion about what happens in Cap’n Nick’s heart when he helps Ol’ McDonald rather than hurt him. Use the questions and answers below as a guide. Encourage the children to give their own answers first.

Why does Nicholas want to steal from the folks of Merryville?

- *Because his treasure chest of gold has been lost at sea.*
- *Because stealing is the only way of life he knows.*
- *Because his heart isn’t right.*
- *Because no one has ever been kind to him.*

What happens to Nicholas when Ol’ McDonald is kind to him?

- *His heart starts changing.*
- *He learns that giving is better than taking.*
- *He wants to help Ol’ McDonald when he is hurt.*

## Attributes

Kindness, Love

## Second-Grade Skills and Objectives:

With each act of goodwill, the hearts of your students unlock to the possibilities around them. In this lesson, children will learn to look for ways to help others, such as the following:

- Offering to carry bags for others
- Opening doors for others
- Picking up dropped items for others

What does Nicholas do when his heart changes?

- *He starts doing chores around Ol' McDonald's Farm.*
- *He returns all the stuff he has stolen from the folks in Merryville.*
- *Helping others becomes more important than helping himself.*

What happens to Nicholas's heart as he starts returning the stolen goods?

- *His heart grows bigger every time he helps someone else.*
- *The more he helps others, the more he wants to help them.*
- *He does not want to steal from anyone ever again.*
- *His heart grows because it is filled to overflowing with love.*
- *He has lots of love and kindness to give away, so he doesn't want to hurt the folks of Merryville, but rather to help them.*
- *Nicholas's heart gets so big that he doesn't think about himself any longer, but only how he can help the folks of Merryville.*

What do the townspeople do for Nicholas after his heart changes?

- *They love him in return.*
- *They give him a place to live in the lighthouse.*
- *They give him a new name.*
- *They make him a hero.*
- *They become friends.*

Now, offer these thoughts from lessons learned from Nicholas' heart change:

- *When your heart fills with love and kindness, you want to help others.*
- *As you help others, your heart grows bigger and bigger.*
- *The more you help others, the more your heart will grow.*

What are ways you can help others?

- *Playing with my brothers and sisters*
- *Offering to help carry bags*
- *If someone drops something, picking it up*
- *Opening the door for others*

To end the lesson, offer these closing thoughts:

- *Just as Nicholas's heart opens to helping the folks of Merryville instead of hurting them, your heart can open, too.*
- *Look for ways to help others this week.*
- *Remember, the more you help others, the bigger your heart will grow.*
- *The bigger your heart grows, the more you will want to help others.*
- *Helping others makes your heart feel good because it fills up with all the good stuff, like love and kindness!*
- *Next week, I want to hear about all the ways you helped someone this week.*

If time allows, choose one or more of the **Extending Children's Learning** activities.

# EXTENDING CHILDREN'S LEARNING

1. Use scissors, coloring utensils, a stapler and copies of the "Helping with an Open Heart" activity sheets (1/student). Ask students to cut out the second heart, being sure to cut it down the middle on the dotted-line. Have your children color pictures and words on the first heart to show the "goodness" inside their hearts. Place the two pieces of the cut-out heart on top of the first heart. Staple the outside edge where indicated. Hang the "Open Hearts" in your classroom as a reminder for students to look for opportunities to help others. Thank your students when you see them being kind and helpful toward one another; and remind them that these acts of helpfulness will become easier and easier as their hearts grow.
2. Help your students understand the objective of a growing heart by using the "Growing Heart" activity sheet. Explain to the children that each time they do a good deed for someone else, their heart grows with kindness and love. Also, explain that every time they hurt someone, their heart shrinks or hardens with anger.
3. Extend the exercise above by making a "Growing Heart" poster with your students. Let the children cut out progressive-sized hearts and glue to a sheet of poster paper. Around the hearts, ask them to write ways to help others. Talk again about how each act of kindness makes the heart grow to overflowing.
4. Pick up a pack or two of animal-sponge magic capsules. There are several online sources, or you can purchase them at a local dollar store for a couple of dollars. Remind your students that their hearts will grow every time they help someone else. In the same way their little creature expands by being filled with water, their hearts will grow when they're filled with kindness and love toward others. Place bowls of water on your work table, and let the kids drop their magic capsule in the water until they reach full size.
5. Show your students pictures of children in need. Ask your students ways they can help them. Make a list on the board; then take on a class project to help the children.

## Definitions:

### **KINDNESS**

Showing care and consideration in an unexpected and exceptional way

### **LOVE**

Genuinely caring for another, unconditionally