

A Good Neighbor

Materials and Preparation

- “The Watchman of Merryville” (found at the end of the lesson)
- Copies of “The Eyes of Your Heart” (1/student)
- Crayons or markers

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 glad*
- *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 decides to help Ol’ McDonald when he is hurt.*
- *Helping Ol’ McDonald is more important than helping himself.*

What does Nicholas do when his heart changes?

- *He starts doing chores around Ol’ McDonald’s farm.*
- *He returns all the stuff he had stolen from the folks in Merryville.*

Attributes

Kindness, Love

First-Grade Skills and Objectives:

Looking for ways to help others in their neighborhood and in their school teaches students how to look at others with the eyes of their hearts. In this lesson, children will learn the following:

- To look for others who might need their help
- To help their classmates and others by being a friend in a time of need

What happens to Nicholas' 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 doesn't 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 help them.*
- *Nicholas' heart gets so big, 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.*

Give your students copies of “The Eyes of Your Heart” activity sheet. Ask them to draw a pair of eyes inside the heart. They may add other facial features, too, such as a nose, rosy cheeks, a smile, etc. When they complete their coloring, remind them to look at others with the eyes of their hearts as Cap'n Nick learned to do. To look at others with the eyes of your heart means looking for opportunities to help them instead of hurting them. Hang the “Eyes of Your Heart” activity sheets in your classroom as a reminder for students to look for opportunities to help others.

Definitions:

KINDNESS

Showing care and consideration in an unexpected and exceptional way

LOVE

Genuinely caring for another, unconditionally

Offer these closing thoughts to end the lesson:

- Just as the eyes of Nicholas' heart open to helping the folks of Merryville instead of hurting them, the eyes of 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 hear about all the ways you helped someone.

EXTENDING CHILDREN'S LEARNING

1. During recess, have the children look for ways to help others. Give them suggestions, such as pushing a classmate on the swings, getting the soccer ball when it's kicked off the field or helping a classmate who has fallen down instead of laughing at him or her.
2. Have your students consider how to help someone in three different scenarios:
 - Ask one child to sit down on the playground or in the classroom and pretend to be hurt. Ask the children what they should do if their classmate is hurt.
 - Using a crutch or a cane, if available, ask a child to pretend to have a broken foot. Ask the children how they could help their classmate who is using crutches or a cane.
 - Ask a child to stand alone on the playground. Ask your students what they could do to help their lonely classmate.
3. Teach your students how to use 9-1-1 to help someone in the case of an emergency.
 - Teach them when to call:
 - Call if someone in your home falls, and they can't get up.
 - Call if you cannot wake someone up from their sleep.
 - Call if someone is hit by a car.
 - Call if there is a fire.
 - Teach them how to talk to the call-taker:
 - Speak loudly, slowly and clearly.
 - Give your first and last name.
 - Tell them where you are (e.g., your address).
 - Teach them to not hang up until help arrives.
4. The book *The Berenstain Bears Lend a Helping Hand* by Jan and Stan Berenstain (Random House, 1998) is an ideal way to reinforce the importance of helping others. Before reading the book, allow children to preview it by going on a picture walk and reading the title. Ask what they think the story will be about. During and after a reading of the book, discuss some of the things that Brother and Sister Bear do to help others and why doing such things are important. Ask the children to relate the story to their lives, asking them how they can help other people. Encourage students to help others in new ways.