

Our Democracy: Active Citizens

Activity: Kindness Jars

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." — Coretta Scott King

Get kids thinking ...

There are big problems in our world that need big solutions. That can feel overwhelming to young kids, who may wonder, "how can I make a difference?" Let kids know that their day-to-day acts of kindness, empathy, and responsibility within their own families, friendships, school communities, and neighborhoods all make a difference in creating a better world.

Open up a conversation about kindness and what it means. Adults and kids can share examples of what kindness means to each of them.

Let's get started

Community starts with kindness. Being kind might sometimes feel like a muscle that needs to be exercised. Here's a simple idea for families or youth groups to try.

Find an old jar and decorate it if you like. Have each child write down a random act of kindness on a strip of paper and add it to the kindness jar. Kids can add more than one strip at a time if they are inspired, or you can go more slowly and have kids contribute one idea each day, until the jar is filled up.

Next, invite kids to dip into the jar to choose a kindness idea. Talk about it together and decide if this is something you can do right away, or plan to do in the near future. Give kids the chance to talk about their act of kindness.

What will your kindness notes say? Here are a few ideas, in case you need to get the brainstorming going:

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- Make a handmade card for a family member or friend
- Do a chore without being asked (for example, putting my toys away)
- Ask someone to share their “roses and thorns” from that day
- Invite a child to join your game — someone who may be shy or lonely
- Offer a hug to someone and tell them why you like them so much
- Write a silly poem

Try this!

You can also use a kindness jar to *collect* kindness: collect change to donate funds to help others or use your jar to grow a plant that everyone takes care of.

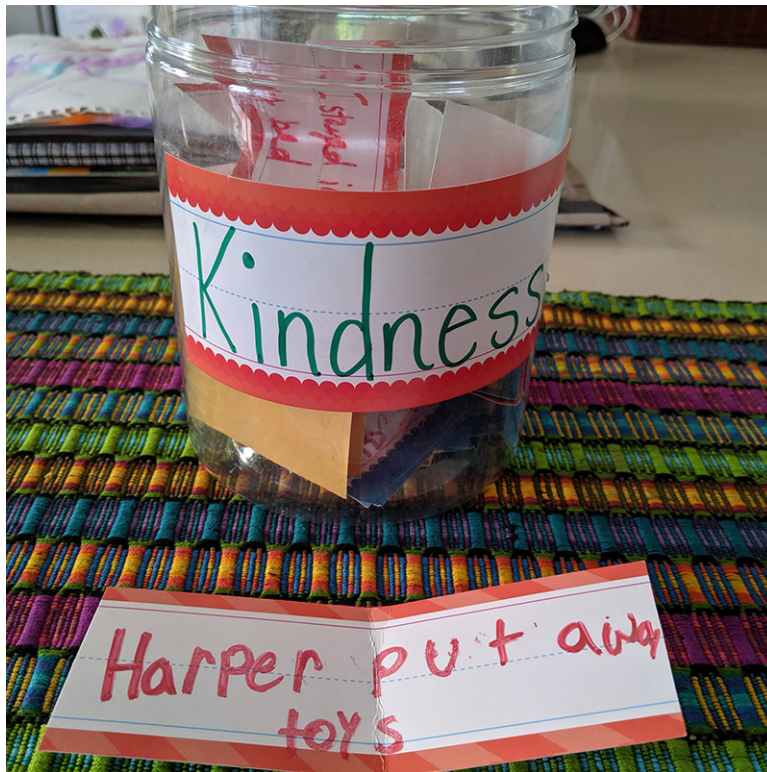


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