



Parent Page

The Trait of the Month is: **Compassion**

*I expect to pass through this world but once.
Any good therefore that I can do or any
kindness or abilities that I can show
to any fellow creature, let me do it now.
Let me not defer it or neglect it,
for I shall not pass this way again.*
--William Penn

Compassion – The deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another, together with the need to give aid and support. The picture on the right is compassion at its best. Please spend some time with your child this month explaining the virtues of compassion and suggest ways to serve those who are less fortunate.

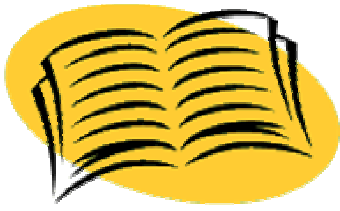


As parents/guardians, we should set aside time to teach our children character traits that will make them outstanding, admired citizens. Everyday is filled with opportunities for helping them learn about the character traits we value and want to encourage.

This character trait package provides suggestions of good activities for compassion. But you, as the child's most important teacher, are the best judge of which activities are the most appropriate.

To Do List

1. Go over the **Compassion Poster** together and put it on the refrigerator.
2. Read the attached **Story** with your child and discuss the **Questions** at the end.
3. Do at least one **Additional Activity** to reinforce the compassion character trait.
4. Write a short comment on the **Puzzle Piece** about what your child has learned about compassion, cut out the puzzle piece, and have your child return it to school.



Odd Man Out

By Kelly Weg

"Watch out!" Too late. The basketball sailed out of bounds, smashing into a surprised boy.

"Sorry." I said.

"No problem," he shrugged.

"My name's Jacob. You want to play?"

"What are you doing, Jacob?" interrupted Bret, the self-designated captain. "We've got enough players. We don't need him."

The school bell rang ending recess. Speechless, I watched the guys clear the basketball court and head to class. *Why were my classmates so rude to this new kid?* Shifting my feet, I tried to break the awkward silence. "Maybe next recess."

"No sweat! By the way, my name's Andrew," he replied.

I hurried into school. A hand reached out of nowhere, grabbing my shirt and pulling me into an empty classroom.

"What are you trying to do, Jacob?" It was Bret.

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't tell us you haven't heard about that new kid? He's got a disease," Bret's voice was almost a whisper. "Joel saw him sticking a needle in his arm in the boys' bathroom. He's got diabetes. Our teacher keeps a drawer full of snacks in case he gets dizzy. It's weird."

"Next time you decide to get friendly with diabetes boy, leave the rest of us out. We don't want to be catching what he's got."

The next morning on the school bus someone slid into the seat beside me. *It was Andrew.* I was trapped!

"I know everyone calls me diabetes boy. This isn't the first time people have freaked out."

I felt a little sorry for him. "How did you get it, anyway?"

"I was just kind of born with it," he said matter-of-factly.

"It's not that bad. I just have to keep an eye on my blood sugar. But all the pricking and poking with needles gets old . . ."

Yikes! I thought. *I can barely stand getting a shot every few years.*

Andrew kept his distance after that.

I wasn't the only one avoiding him. In class, he always worked alone. I wanted to change that.

At the dinner table one night, I was thinking about Andrew.

"Is it possible to get diabetes from somebody?" I blurted.



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Odd Man Out (continued)

"Why do you ask?" my mom asked.

I told them about Andrew.

"Sounds like Andrew could use a friend," Dad said.

"Jacob, the first thing you should know is that diabetes isn't contagious, like a cold. You can't catch it. But Andrew has to be careful. If his blood sugar gets too low, he could get a little confused."

"Any disease can be scary if we don't know enough about it," my mom replied. "But from what we know, people with diabetes can live perfectly normal and active lives if they take care of themselves."

I couldn't wait to get on the school bus and ask Andrew to sit with me. I really wanted to be his friend.

I went to bed early that night.

"Jacob, didn't you hear your alarm? Mom stopped short and gasped. "Oh, Jacob, look at you!"

Looking into the mirror later, I was shocked to see that I resembled a strawberry. I was covered in hives and itched like crazy.

After staying home because of my allergic reaction to strawberries, Mom finally agreed I was well enough to go back to school. A few red blotches still covered my face, but I felt fine.

Kids started teasing me the moment I walked into school.

People treated me differently. When the lunch bell finally rang, I sprinted for the door.

"I got the basketball!" one of my classmates yelled. "Let's start a game."

"Count me in!" I shouted.

"Jacob, I think you should sit this one out." Bret took charge of the court. "We don't want you spreading those hives or cooties or whatever you got."

"But guys, you can't catch it from me!" I tried to protest, but they weren't listening.

I plopped down on the side of the court. Andrew surprised me by sitting down next to me. "I see you're back."

"Hi, Andrew." We hadn't talked since we had shared the bus seat. "The guys don't want me to play. They're afraid of me because of the rash." I shook my head in disgust and took a swig of juice from the bottle I had taken from my lunch box.

"I know how you feel," Andrew replied with a smile.

Without hesitating, I offered him my juice. "Want a drink?"

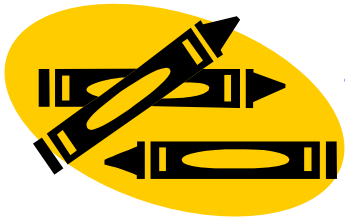
His eyes showed surprise. Grinning, he slowly took the bottle.

"Thanks."

That was the first of many things Andrew and I shared as best friends.

Story Questions

1. Who showed compassion in this story? Was it Jacob or Andrew? Or did both of them show compassion?
2. Have you ever known someone who has a chronic illness, disease, or disability of some sort? If so, do you treat them differently? How? What do you do that shows compassion?
3. If you had a chronic illness, disease, or disability, how would you want to be treated by others? Being safe is good, but even people with contagious sicknesses need compassion.



Additional Activities

1. Work with your child to solve this word search.

Hidden Words:

- KIND
- CONCERNED
- GOOD
- CARING
- HELPFUL

Z	R	X	V	U	Z	K	H	D	Y
V	I	Z	L	G	P	Y	A	O	L
K	W	X	C	J	Z	Y	A	D	B
G	I	R	H	C	F	P	M	H	B
C	O	N	C	E	R	N	E	D	K
C	A	O	D	S	L	X	R	K	R
A	P	R	D	R	Y	P	N	T	T
D	P	B	I	X	T	H	F	H	I
V	S	L	Z	N	P	I	N	U	X
O	D	Z	P	B	G	O	W	I	L

2. Work with your child to pick out 5 toys or games in your closet, and take your child to donate them to a collection site in your community. Be sure to explain to your child what donating is, and why you are doing it.
3. Help your child draw a card for an elderly relative or friend who lives far away.