

Possible Activities for 'Pay It Forward' Week

Middle School:

"Pay It Forward" cards

This activity can be done school-wide or in individual classrooms. Each student is asked to do three good deeds during the week. One deed is for someone at their school and the other two can be completed at home, in school, or during extra-curricular activities. The recipient of one of the student's good deeds will also receive a "Pay It Forward" card that asks them to *pay it forward*. This creates a chain reaction of positive actions.

You may want to brainstorm ideas for good deeds at home or in the community.

Videos:

[Clip from the movie "Pay It Forward"](#)

[Clip demonstrating the "Pay It Forward" philosophy](#)

After watching a clip about "Pay it Forward," split up the class into small groups and instruct them to find some ways to *pay it forward* to the community and then have them present their ideas to the class. Each student then picks one good deed to do. At the end of the week, ask students how they did in accomplishing their good deeds and how it made them feel.

Reflection:

Students are asked to do a good deed each day of the week if possible. Thursday, they choose one of those good deeds and write about it -specifically giving details on: what the act of kindness was; to whom it was rendered; describe the recipient's reaction; describe the feeling you felt yourself. These papers are handed in on a Friday and just a few read out anonymously. The papers are handed back to the students so that they can reflect on their random acts of kindness.

Addressing a Community Need:

Students are placed in small groups. Each group researches a community need that they might be interested in addressing. [The teacher could have a master list from which the students choose]. For example:

e.g. Backpacks for the Homeless:

The group organizes a fundraiser to purchase simple backpacks, which they then fill with bought or donated items suitable for the homeless. These items could be books [in good condition], sunglasses, toothpaste and toothbrush, soap, deodorant, shampoo, vest, socks, perfume, magazines, gloves, sunhats, beanies, scarves, etc. Many families have discarded backpacks – a backpack drive could be quite productive.

Cards of Thanks:

The students make cards to thank the parents and/or staff who work in the school- perhaps in the cafeteria, library, office, etc.

Competitions:

Kindness essay about the benefits of helping others.

Poem or song about Kindness

Artwork depicting some act of kindness

Poster of kind words and compliments

Create a Kindness slogan

Kindness Stories:

1. In small groups or pairs, write a story that encapsulates the idea of “Pay It Forward” week. Write, illustrate and publish for presentation to the class.
2. Collect newspaper stories of good deeds and make a scrapbook.

Validation Activity:

At the conclusion of each day/period, students gather in a circle. One student begins by complimenting another. This is then passed on until all students have received and been given a compliment. It is a very positive way to conclude the day and the students leave for home happy and feeling good about themselves and their classmates.

Literacy with a “Pay it Forward” purpose:

Students could talk with a family member and make notes on the stories they impart. You may want to help draft interview questions to break the ice. Back at school, they would then publish these stories in a ‘book.’ The book would then be given back to the family member with a thoughtful card and, of course, the “Pay It Forward” card attached.

If you have ideas not listed above or want to modify any of the activities listed, please feel free to do so. You know your students and what will resonate with them. Please share your stories of kindness with us on social media using the hashtag #SanJuanForAll, and help us spread joy!