



Helpful Resources

Books:

UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World
- Michele Borba, Ed.D.

Sand in my Shoes: Kids Learning About Empathy
- Bob Sornson

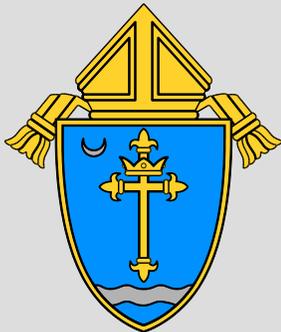
Just Because
- Amber Housey

Websites:

<http://www.ahaparenting.com/>

www.parentingscience.com/teaching-empathy.tips.html

www.momentsaday.com/empathy-game/



Published by:
Catholic Family Services
School Partnership
Program
9200 Watson Rd.
Suite G101
St. Louis, MO 63126-1528
314-544-3800 phone
314-843-0552 fax
www.cfsstl.org

School Tools

APRIL 2018

Encouraging Empathy



Dear Parents and Teachers,

We all hope our children and students will develop into healthy, mature, and loving individuals. We dream for them fulfilling lives, meaningful relationships, and strong character. But did you know that one of the keys to attaining many of these hopes is not measured just in grades or extracurricular activities?

Empathy, which is the ability to recognize and experience the feelings and thoughts of others, is an important aspect of a person's success and wellbeing. Research from Oxford University shows that individuals with higher levels of empathy are more sensitive, helpful, maintain more positive relationships, have better mental and physical health, and are more cooperative during conflict – all traits that will help our kids continue becoming the wonderful people we know they are! Empathy is a skill that can be practiced and improved and is useful both for our children and ourselves to learn! We can help create greater empathy in our schools and homes by understanding and modeling empathy verbally – by what we say – and non-verbally – by what we do.

Kids Corner

Build a “Stand in my shoes” shoe box!

Find a shoebox and put a pair of your shoes inside. Then add anything you want other people to know about you. What makes you happy? What makes you mad? You can add items, color words inside or outside of the box, or decorate it with pictures or stickers. This is a great activity for a family or classroom to do; when everyone has put together their boxes, take turns sharing what it's like to be you and learning about other people's points of view. You could also make a box for a favorite character from a book or movie or try to guess what would be in your mom or dad's box.

Empathy Builders for Home or School

Make a feelings word wall or dictionary!

The first step to teaching a child empathy is teaching them to recognize and communicate their own feelings and those of others. You can talk through with kiddos what the various words mean and then put them in a notebook or post them up somewhere. Begin using them with your child, and model relating someone's feelings, etc.

Example: “I can tell you are frustrated that we aren't getting ice cream today. I get frustrated too when I can't do something I want to do.”

Reverse roles

Next time you are reading a story or watching a movie and a character encounters a problem or succeeds at something, take a moment to ask your child or students how they think that character is feeling. *What makes them think that? What about the other characters in the story? How would your kid feel if this event was happening to them?*

Practice empathetic words and actions

You can role play instances or use real time examples as they happen, to get kids comfortable with empathetic words and actions. Let the kids brainstorm empathy responses and help them out if they get stuck.

Example: “Let's pretend someone near you falls down and hurts their knee. You notice they are crying. How have you felt before when you've gotten hurt? What could you say to let them know you understand how they feel? (i.e. ‘Ouch! That hurts! Are you okay? I don't like when I fall down either. Do you want some help?) What could you do to show them you know how they feel?”

Important info. For
Parents & Teachers!

Catholic Family Services
School Partnership Program
9200 Watson Rd.
Suite G101
St. Louis, MO 63126-1528