

Classroom Routines to Build Empathy

Build on the holiday-season momentum and enhance your classroom culture with activities that inspire students to be Everyday Heroes. What's an Everyday Hero? A child who makes a difference in their school community and in the lives of children in need, of course!

Objective

Students will build skills in empathy, speaking, listening, and writing by taking on different perspectives and standing up for other children.

Materials

Chart paper; markers; Everyday Heroes classroom poster; copies of Everyday Hero activity sheet (cut in half before reproducing); videos, stories of children helped, and more at RedNoseDayinSchool.org

Time

Flexible; 30 minutes on a weekly basis recommended

Share

Share how your class is using these routines @RedNoseDayUSA with the hashtag #RedNoseDayinSchool.

Instructions

1. Define empathy as understanding and sharing how someone else is feeling. It may help kids to think about empathy as a superpower that allows them to feel someone else's feelings as if they were their own. Ask kids to share times when they felt or witnessed empathy.
2. As a class, brainstorm a list of words, qualities, and actions that describe an Everyday Hero (e.g., kind, helpful, stands up for others, etc.). Capture these words on a poster to refer to and update throughout the year.
3. Explain that the class is going to work together on a yearlong project of becoming more empathetic and kind, building up to Red Nose Day on May 23, 2019, when people come together across America to raise money to end child poverty.
4. Explain that child poverty involves problems and solutions. Empathy and understanding can help lead to solutions. Together we can help more children be safe, healthy, and educated.
5. For inspiration, share the videos at RedNoseDayinSchool.org featuring real "kid heroes" who've turned empathy into action.
6. Point out that treating others kindly, and recognizing people for it, helps that behavior to spread. Introduce one of the classroom routines below. After it is fully integrated into classroom life, add another routine until all are used regularly.



Everyday Hero of the Week

Introduce the Red Nose Day Everyday Heroes featured on the classroom poster—Red, Scarlet, Rojo, Ruby, and Rusty—who use their powers to help end child poverty and keep children safe, healthy, and educated. Explain that students can be Everyday Heroes too.

Option A Every Friday, announce a student who epitomizes the Everyday Hero qualities. Students can submit nominations (see next page).

Option B Every Monday, assign a different student as Everyday Hero of the Week. This student acts as a leader in being extra aware of others' behavior and looking for opportunities to be empathetic and kind to one's peers.

Award the student a certificate (see next page), and feature their name on the celebratory classroom poster (separate free download).

Story Swaps

- In pairs, have students practice active listening as they interview each other about their families, favorite memories, or meaningful moments. Then have students trade places to tell their partner's story from their perspective. Students can engage in this perspective-taking activity weekly or monthly with rotating partners.
- Share a challenge that a child living in poverty may face—lack of food, medical care, safety, or education—and have students describe what life would be like if they were living in a similar situation. Then ask students to write reflections that show their empathy.

Spotlight on Superpowers

Time for students to get their capes on! Give students 2–5 minutes to complete a timed writing sprint in response to one or more prompts that highlight interpersonal skills, such as:

1. The Everyday Hero superpowers that I already have are...
2. The Everyday Hero superpowers that I'm working toward are...
3. Using my Everyday Hero superpowers helps my class and school community by...

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Nominate an Everyday Hero!



I nominate _____
(first and last name)


This person deserves to be Everyday Hero of the Week because _____

The qualities of an Everyday Hero this person displayed include _____

Nominated by (optional): _____







Presented to

For showing empathy and kindness to other children

Teacher's signature _____ Date _____

