



LOVING-KINDNESS BUDDY WISHES

"Continue to be who and how you are, to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness."

—Maya Angelou

OVERVIEW

Students send kind wishes to themselves, a peer, and to people in their community.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Daily or weekly
- At the start of a school day, to close a class, during a classroom meeting, or as part of a mentoring-buddy program
- When you or your students are experiencing tension, anger, or anxiety

TIME REQUIRED

- 15-20 minutes

LEVEL

- Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary

MATERIALS

- None

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Practice extending positive wishes and kindness to themselves, a peer, and people in their community.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making a Practice Trauma-Informed](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Take a few deep breaths and consider colleagues, friends, students, and strangers you might send good wishes to before you begin. If you like, you may try this [Loving-Kindness Meditation](#) that includes a script and audio recording.

INSTRUCTIONS

GETTING STARTED

This practice is a great way to make loving-kindness more concrete for elementary students, and can be infused into a variety of settings. It is also a powerful representation of what it means to move from an individual focus to a focus on the community.

- Before you begin, have students get into pairs, such as simple classroom pairs or even multi-grade pairs with older and younger students serving as "buddies."
- Tell students that they will be practicing sending kind wishes to themselves and to others.
- Ask them: *Have you ever sent a kind message to yourself--or to someone else? What kinds of things did you say in your mind?* (Have students share examples.) *How did it make you feel to send those wishes from your heart?* (Ask a few students to respond.)

THE PRACTICE

- **Send a Kind Wish to Yourself.**
 - Close or open your eyes. Find a comfortable position. You may want to try to sit up tall. Take a deep breath in and a deep breath out.
 - Think of one kind wish to send to yourself. It could be sending yourself Peace, Love, Courage, Hope, or the chance to just Be.
 - Breathe the kind wish deep into your heart and slowly breathe out.
- **Share a Kind Wish with Each Other**
 - Now face your partner/buddy. You can sit knee to knee and look into each other’s eyes, or just sit across from each other while you focus on the floor..
 - Take a moment to think of one kind wish to say to each other.
 - Take turns sharing your kind wish with each other. (If students are paired in older/younger buddies, have the older buddy share their kind wish with the younger buddy. Then switch and have the younger buddy share their kind wish with the older buddy.)
 - Take a deep breath in together and a deep breath out.
- **Group Brainstorm—Kind Wish for the Greater Good.**
 - Take a deep breath in and a deep breath out.
 - Take a moment and think of a kind wish to send to a person who could use a bit of love. This could be a grandparent or a teacher or it can be someone in need.
 - Raise your hand to share your kind wish with the group. (You can write these wishes on a whiteboard so the group can see the collective output.)
- **Group Kind Wish Breath into the World.**
 - Take one breath in as a group.
 - Take in all the kind wishes that we shared in the room, and send a big community Kind Wish breath out into the world.

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on this practice. What did they think of this exercise? How did it make them feel? When might they do this practice again? Why?

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

- How did students respond to this practice? Do you notice if they are expressing more positive emotions or are more optimistic as a result?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Researchers have discovered that toddlers as young as 14-months demonstrate a [natural capacity for kindness](#), but this capacity must be nurtured through healthy relationships with adults and peers—the foundation of a positive school climate.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Studies have found that kind students who are [well-liked by their peers](#) are helpful, cooperative, and emotionally well-adjusted. In addition, students who show kindness at a young age achieve [greater academic and social success](#) in the long-run.

This practice, inspired by loving-kindness meditation (which has been found to have a [positive impact](#) on adults' empathy, compassion, and social connection), cultivates young students' innate kindness by asking them to send friendly wishes to the world.

SOURCE

[Mindful Littles Loving-Kindness Buddy Wishes](#). [Mindful Littles](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering mindful compassionate cultures in schools, homes and local communities through meaningful service learning experiences and creative educational programs that teach mindfulness and social-emotional skills, build inner resilience and spark courageous compassionate action.