

Activity 3 - I Can Make A Difference

Time required: 30 MINUTES

Learning Objectives:

1. To give students a vision of individually making a difference in others lives. (3)
2. To have students consider moving from a “me” centered value system to an “others” centered value system. (3)

Materials needed: Several short stories you can share of how individuals have made a difference in the lives of others. There are several stories included but be on constant lookout for others to inspire your group. Here are some examples you can share.

Story: Julie Leirich works as a cashier at a Los Angeles supermarket. After noticing that good food was being thrown away, she got permission from the store to collect it and take it to feed the homeless. Word got out and before long customers wanted to volunteer their time. Before long Julie and the others were distributing six tons of food a month! Think of how many little children went to bed each night with stomachs full of food instead of eyes full of tears. Julie is proof that one person willing to think of others can truly make a difference.

Story: 10-year-old Justin Lebo of Saddle Brook, New Jersey, inspired his entire school to think of others instead of just themselves. His heart went out to children in local orphanages. He spent all of his allowance, much of his summer vacation as well as weekends, fixing up old bikes. Within a couple of years Justin gave away more than 50 bikes! It doesn't take a lot of money or power to affect the lives of others if a person puts their heart and mind to it.

Story: Trevor Ferrell from Gladwyne, Pennsylvania was in 6th grade when he saw a news program of homeless people staying warm by huddling over steam vents in the sidewalks. He asked his dad if people really lived like that. His dad said yes and if he wanted to see for himself, he would take him the next day after school.

Almost every night after that, along with his parents and his brother or sisters, Trevor brought soup, sandwiches, coffee and blankets. He came to know many by name and they called him “Little Buddy.” Three months later the mayor of Philadelphia gave him a special recognition for his nightly visits. He then started asking churches and others to help and before long people were bringing piles of clothing and bedding to his front yard. Checks were sent to help in any way possible.

So far, more than 850 volunteers have joined Trevor's concern for the homeless. An old building has been converted into a 50-bed shelter called “Trevor's Place”. When Trevor was 15 he addressed the United Nations and met Mother Teresa and President Bush to talk about other ways to help the homeless. This story, like Rachel Scott's, shows that

when one person is filled with compassion for another, it often becomes multiplied by the compassion it inspires in others. You could be the one to start your own chain reaction by thinking of simple ways to reach out to others, right here in our school.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Say, “Now it’s time to put feet to what we have just learned. Please think of some specific act you could perform to make the world, specifically this school, a better place. Here is a list of suggestions of what other students have done after being inspired by Rachel Scott’s challenge to start a chain reaction of kindness and compassion.”

Give them enough time to read through the list, and fill in the 5 things they are going to do, between now and the next meeting. Handout 2.3

1. Look for a student who is usually seen alone and introduce yourself to them.
2. Smile and make eye contact with people as you pass through the halls.
3. Look around and be aware of people. Are they sad, hurt, depressed, or empty?
4. Ask your teacher who could use tutoring. Make a difference in their life by investing some of your time. You’ll feel great!
5. Think to yourself of one thing good about every person you spend time with in the next week.
6. Pick up paper around the school that you didn’t drop.
7. Write a positive uplifting note to a teacher who could use some encouragement.
8. Verbally or via email compliment other students for good things you notice about them.
9. Have a positive attitude each day no matter how things are going at home.
10. Refuse to talk negative about anyone for an entire day.
11. Hug a family member and friend every day for the next week.
12. Put a 3x5 card on your mirror or create a screen saver on your computer that says “I can make a difference.”
13. Walk away from a conversation that is gossiping.
14. Ask for help on your homework from someone you don’t know well.
15. Tell a student they did well when he or she gives a report or speech in class.
16. If you are having a difficult time in a relationship at home, make an appointment with that person to discuss the issue.
17. Wish at least 10 people every day for a week to ‘have a great day’.
18. Be nice to your little brother and freak out your mom.
19. Ask your teacher how you could be a better student.
20. Ask someone you don’t know well about their interests.
21. Listen twice as much as you talk.
22. Encourage students who ask questions.
23. Don’t wait for others to set a good example. Just do it!
24. Give out kindness no matter what you get in return.
25. If you have a problem with someone go and talk directly with them.
26. Always give others the benefit of the doubt.
27. Treat others the same way you would like them to treat you.

28. Be thankful for school lunches.
29. Be a peacemaker when your friends are arguing..
30. Encourage friends to make up after a fight.
31. Never exclude anyone because of surface stuff like clothes or looks.
32. Strive more to be courageous not popular.
33. Offer to help with a student who has special needs.
34. Bake some cookies for the office staff.
35. Do at least one helpful thing each day and make sure you don't get caught.
36. Respectfully voice your opinion in class more often.
37. Refuse to yell at anyone.
38. Decide ahead of time to stand up for any student being bullied, laughed at, or ridiculed.
39. Be a shoulder to lean on when someone you know has gotten a bad deal.
40. Develop the habit of saying 'good morning' before your teacher does.
41. Write yourself a letter saying how good you feel for trying to make the world a better place.
42. Send your mom flowers for no reason at all.
43. Ignore rude remarks.
44. Laugh at your friend's jokes. Never stop them and say, "Oh I've heard that one."
45. Take your Grandma or Grandpa to lunch.
46. Give your used clothes to someone who could really use them.
47. Donate some time at an elderly care center.
48. Decide to forgive everyone for old grudges.
49. Let your friend win the next game of chess or tennis.
50. Ask someone what his or her dreams are.
51. Consider a different point of view on something today.
52. Tell a friend how much you appreciate them.
53. Smile and wave at teachers when you see them.
54. Join the Big Brothers or Big Sisters when you turn 18.
55. Let another student cut in front of you in the lunch line.
56. Freak people out just by being in a good mood.
57. When you talk with a friend focus totally on them. Don't look around at others.
58. Ask a friend if you can help them solve a problem.
59. Write an encouraging note to a fellow student whose parents are divorcing.
60. When you explain something, do it very patiently.
61. Let everyone know that they can trust you by not spreading rumors or secrets.
62. Refuse to cheat even if your grade will suffer.
63. Find the best teacher in school and ask questions about why he or she became a teacher.
64. Spend some time trying to understand your parents. Keep trying.
65. Share your lunch with a friend.
66. Say, "I respect you too much to argue" instead of raising your voice.
67. Decide to be an optimist all day today.
68. Never send an angry letter.
69. If you forgive someone, never bring it up in the future.
70. Don't demand of others. Ask softly.

71. Become a center of peace.
72. Be genuine.
73. Lift someone's spirits by telling them you are glad they go to your school.
74. Spend more time each day looking for the beauty in others, rather than your hair.
75. Decide today to be against anything evil or hurting.
76. Lighten up a little. Look at the funny side of things.
77. Find a reason to laugh each day.
78. Be contagious in a positive way.
79. Tell a counselor about someone who is depressed and needs help.
80. Never promise not to tell on a friend who threatens suicide or shooting someone.
If you do make that promise, break it.
81. Take a picture of someone being kind to another.

Procedure:

Have each student circle five statements from the list above that they intend to put into action in their life over the next few days. Have them fill in the five goals they have for themselves between now and the next meeting. They will then give you a copy of the goals they have chosen.

Name _____

Today's date: _____

By our next meeting on _____ I will do my best to accomplish the following goals:

Example: I will be nice to everyone I pass in the halls.

Example: I am going to ask my teacher whom I can help with tutoring.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Have students link up with a partner and share their goals. Give them several minutes to link up and share. Ask the group:

Does anyone have a goal that you think you will need help completing?

For instance: Their goal might be to tutor another student but they don't know who or how to ask. Give suggestions and ask the group for ideas that will work. It's important that every student has his or her 5 specific things they plan to do before the next meeting and that they feel confident that they can accomplish them.

Tell students to be prepared to share at the next meeting on their progress of starting chain reactions by completing their goals. . Bring some small prizes to pass out to all who completed their 5 goals. (stick of gum, candy, send a thank you note, applause, have

them take a bow) Merely having them tell of their effort, hear the applause, and share how they felt will be ample reward.

Close this session by reminding them that everybody matters and that their simple acts and positive attitudes really do make a difference.

OPTIONAL THINGS FOR THE LEADER TO DO BETWEEN THIS SESSION AND THE NEXT:

1. Send a short note of encouragement to your student leaders
2. Whenever possible, ask how their week is going.
3. Lead by example: Smile, have a positive attitude, reach out to another adult in kindness, take these lessons home with you and spread the joy there.
4. Be on the lookout for examples of students or adults who have started chain reactions by putting others first.
5. Think good thoughts about you what you are doing in Rachel's Challenge.