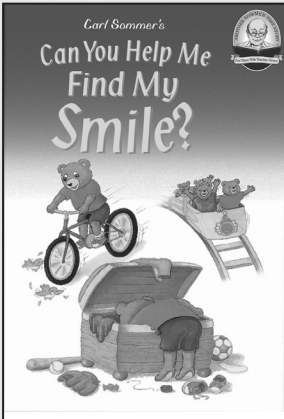


# Character Education Activities

## 1. Can You Help Me Find My Smile?

### Story Description



The bear cub Teddy is a grumpy bear. Even though he had been a happy baby from a loving family, along the way he lost his smile. He doesn't enjoy any of the things that usually make children happy, such as baseball, bike riding, rides at Playland, and swimming. Teddy tries real hard to find his smile, but nothing works, until he asks his grandpa for advice. Grandpa tells him that he can only get his smile back by making others happy.

Teddy can't understand how this will help, but he's willing to try. He goes home and starts doing helpful things for his family and for his friends at school. He quickly discovers that Grandpa was right—happiness comes by helping others.

In this moving story by Carl Sommer, children will learn about caring, citizenship, and about one of the most important principles of living a happy life—helping others.

### Major Objective

To define and present the following virtues so they can be integrated into the life of each student:

- **Caring:** being concerned about the safety and prosperity of another person or thing
- **Happiness:** a feeling of pleasure or joy derived from the possession of something good
- **Citizenship:** having the rights, privileges, duties, and responsibilities of where you live

### Story Time Interaction

Read the story, *Can You Help Me Find My Smile?* and then write these three virtues on a board: caring, happiness, and citizenship.

Discuss the main characters:

Teddy	Grandpa	Bonnie	Teddy as "Smiley Bear"
Susie	Billy	Mom & Dad	

### Activities

**Objectives:** To help reinforce the virtues of caring, happiness, and citizenship. To help students consider how caring about others can affect how they feel about themselves.

## Helping Hands

**Goal:** To encourage students to help others.

**Preparation:** Find several pictures of sets of hands—open, closed, holding another hand, reaching out, giving, etc. Mount them, and then display them at the beginning of the discussion.

**Student Activity:** Ask students to share their thoughts as to what they think the hands are doing. Explain that helping hands can bring much happiness to the person who is helping as well as to the one who is being helped. Discuss and then ask students to list ways that hands can help.

1. *In the classroom*—help erase the board, help a student, pick up trash, etc.
2. *At home*—put out the trash, do the dishes, feed the baby, vacuum the house, etc.
3. *In the community*—help people in hospitals, homeless shelters, senior homes, places of worship, etc.

**Prepare a chart** with each of these headings: In the Classroom, At Home, and In the Community, and have students list ideas below each one. Divide students into small teams. Each team member chooses one of the actions to do within a designated time frame. When the helping-hands tasks are completed, the students are awarded a sticker on the chart and their team receives points.

**Reaction:** Most importantly—instruct students to observe how the person receiving help responded and how the student himself felt after performing the deed. Designate time to share their results with the class and to reward the team with the most points.

## My Town Is Worth It

**Goal:** to help students do crafts that will help others.

**Projects:** Finding others with special needs is often easier than we think. Check with a local Senior Center or Meals on Wheels organization to find shut-ins who would especially enjoy having a bird feeder hanging near a window.

1. Have students make *pinecone bird feeders* to hang from a tree limb. Lightly spread peanut butter on the pinecone and roll it in birdseed. Put twine through the top and hang it from a branch. It's ready for the birds. Plan a field trip to a particular neighborhood or convalescent center. Once the seeds are gone, no cleanup is necessary since pinecones are part of our natural habitat.

2. *Pretzel flower feeders* are also great for birds. Place five large pretzels on a piece of wax paper. Put a drop of glue on each point of contact and let dry. Cover pretzel with seeds and popcorn held on by a drop of glue. Make a twine or ribbon loop to hang.

## Celebrate International Acts of Kindness Day

**Goal:** To encourage students to do acts of kindness.

**Special Event:** September 25th has been designated as International Acts of Kindness Day (IAKD). Encourage students to have individual or group projects that will allow them to

perform at least one act of kindness on that day that would not have otherwise been done (i.e., sending thank-you notes, helping someone in the community, etc.). Celebrate the privilege of being kind to others!

For more information, type in on a web search engine: International Acts of Kindness Day.

## **Thank-You Notes**

**Goal:** To teach children to be thankful and to show appreciation.

**Project:** Making thank-you cards.

Lead the class in discussing the importance of giving thanks for kind deeds done. Let students share things that they are thankful for. Then have students in the class write a thank-you note to someone they would like to thank. Help them to write something specifically in the note that they want to thank the person for doing. Use this also as an art project. If the opportunity is available, let students make several of thank-you notes.

**Reaction:** When the students return to class after giving out their thank-you notes, let them share the reactions they received from those receiving the thank-you notes.

## **Tying It All Together**

The **size** of a kind act is not important—*doing something is important*. Happiness is found when one is outwardly focused. Teddy tried all kinds of activities to entertain himself and make himself happy. None of them worked. Only when he looked beyond himself and opened his eyes to the needs of others did he find true, fulfilling happiness. Looking into someone else's eyes and seeing that you have made a difference is the best reward of all.