

THE NOCTURNALS KINDNESS GAME FOR USE WITH BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The following game is designed to support literacy skills and social and emotional learning (SEL) for K–Grade 2 students. Ideal for incorporating into bullying-prevention programs, the game concludes with a student-led exercise in identifying kind words and behaviors to promote a culture of kindness in schools and libraries.



GAME INSTRUCTIONS

TIME: 30 MINUTES

- 15 minutes: Read-aloud of *The Peculiar Possum*, by Tracey Hecht
- 10 minutes: The Nocturnals Kindness Brigade Game
 - 2 minutes: Setup
 - 8 minutes: Playing
- 5 minutes: Discussion of what kindness means to children, with the leader writing answers on the board

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *The Peculiar Possum*, by Tracey Hecht
- Printable Nocturnals Kindness Brigade Game Action Sheet
- A board on which to write the concepts of kindness and unkindness during the discussion

READ THE BOOK ALOUD & PLAY THE GAME

- After reading the book, talk briefly about how the characters in *The Peculiar Possum* demonstrate both kind and unkind words and actions. Sometimes they act like friends; other times, they act like bullies. Then tell the children they will be playing the Nocturnals Kindness Brigade Game.
- Next, ask the children to spread out so that they have enough room to swing their arms without bumping other children.
- The game leader will read off the words on the Nocturnals Kindness Brigade Game Action Sheet, share the example, and then ask kids to act out the actions. The actions are designed to be completed in the order that they appear on the worksheet.

GAME DISCUSSION & WRAP-UP

- Write the following concepts on the board and leave room to add notes during the discussion:

-Hurtful Concepts

1. Unkind Words
2. Disrespectful Words
3. Name-calling Words
4. Hurtful Words

- Kindness Concepts

1. Respect
2. Caring
3. Sharing
4. Standing Up for Yourself
5. Listening and Learning
6. Appreciation

- Briefly introduce guidelines for a kind, respectful discussion: one speaker at a time, with active listening, not just waiting silently for a turn to speak.
- Ask children how they felt about the characters' actions and messages. How did students feel while they were in different body positions? Did they feel off-balance after hearing unkind messages? Did they feel stronger and happier after hearing supportive, kind messages? Next, ask students if they thought of similar moments, both kind and unkind, from their own experiences.
- Review the Nocturnals Kindness Concepts on the board and ask students if they agree with all of the concepts. Can they give examples? What's missing? How do they act in kind ways in their own lives? Do they recognize kindness in others? Write down students' answers as they contribute them, using students' own words. Don't worry about repetition; the goal is to include all students and record their own words and ideas.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

1. In a separate exercise, create your own Kindness Code for your classroom or library based on students' ideas of what kindness looks like. You can use the downloadable Nocturnals Kindness Code Certificate Template to create a customized printout of your students' Kindness Code for children to take home.
2. After reading aloud other titles in *The Nocturnals Grow & Read* series (*The Moonlight Meeting*, *The Slithery Shakedown*), ask students to discuss examples of kindness from the stories.

The Nocturnals Kindness Game was created by *The Nocturnals* author Tracey Hecht in collaboration with children's literature specialist Gillian Engberg. It was reviewed by Joyce M. Grossbard, LCSW, who has over 35 years of experience providing child and adult psychotherapy

STANDARDS & COMPETENCIES

By playing this game with students, educators will be addressing the following standards and competencies:

Common Core English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1-2.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1.A- 2.1.A; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1.B-2.1.B; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.2-2.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.3-2.3

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies: Self-awareness (identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence, self-efficacy); self-management (impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting); social awareness (perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, respect for others); relationship skills (communication, social engagement, relationship-building, teamwork); responsible decision-making (identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting, ethical responsibility)

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#kindnessbrigade

The Nocturnals Kindness Game Actions

INSTRUCTIONS: The game leader will read the concept words, share the example, and then ask kids to act out the actions.



WORD	EXAMPLE	ACTION
Respect	When Penny the possum says, “I’m pleased to meet you,” she uses polite words to show that she is happy to make new friends. Being polite and showing respect is one way to be kind.	Friends: Reach your right arm up high and keep it there!
Sharing	Dawn the Fox likes to be fair to everyone. She says, “These pomelos belong to everyone.” Sharing is a way to be kind and fair to everyone.	Friends: Raise your left arm up high. Stretch both those arms up and feel tall!
Caring	Tobin notices that Penny the Possum is scared, and he tries to make her feel better with kind actions: he stands by her, and he reaches for her paw. Seeing when others are feeling bad or scared and helping them feel better is part of kindness.	Friends: Let those arms down, wiggle around, and do a little dance!
Unkind Words	Bismark uses his voice to say unkind words to Penny the Possum: “I am not pleased to meet you. Not pleased at all.” Unkind words can make people feel wobbly.	Friends: Uh oh! Raise your right leg and try to balance on your left leg.
Disrespectful Words	Bismark uses an unkind voice to point out how Penny is different than him: “Penny smells different!” Words that aren’t respectful and make us feel bad about ourselves can make us feel less strong.	Friends: Oh no, this is hard. Continue to balance on your left leg, and clasp your hands behind your back!

WORD	EXAMPLE	ACTION
Name-calling Words	Bismark says to Penny, “You are not pleasant. You are peculiar!” Saying that someone is weird or peculiar is bullying and unkind.	Friends: Can you continue to balance on your left leg, keep your hands clasped behind your back, AND close your eyes?
Standing Up for Yourself	Penny the Possum says, “I’m not peculiar. I am simply a possum. And I am proud!” Standing up for yourself and others while still being respectful can be part of kindness.	Friends: Stand up tall again with eyes open and both feet on the ground!
Hurtful Words	Bismark says, “The way Penny hablos is downright bizarro!” It’s really hard to feel strong and steady when someone uses words that are mean-spirited and hurtful instead of kind.	Friends: Drop your chin down to your chest and slump your shoulders.
Listening and Learning	Bismark listens to Penny and Dawn, and he learns that that he has said unkind things. He says to Penny, “You are right. I owe you an apology.” Thinking about how our words sound to others and saying we’re sorry when we make mistakes is part of kindness.	Friends: Give yourselves a big hug and smile!
Appreciation	Dawn the Fox says, “None of us are exactly alike. But that doesn’t make us peculiar. That makes us unique.” Celebrating people’s unique qualities is a way to be kind.	Friends: Stand tall with your hands crossed over your chest. Take a deep breath and see if you can feel your heart beating.





THE NOCTURNALS

THE KINDNESS CODE FOR



(Fill in school name or classroom name)

We pledge to try to be our best with the
Nocturnal Brigade by doing the following:



Student Signature