

THEME LESSON - 2021

One Kind Word

Can one small choice change the tone of a situation?

Suitable for: Upper primary and secondary, adaptable by age	Time: 45-60 minutes
Theme: Anti-Bullying Week 2021 - One Kind Word	Permanent resource: Yes

Learning aims

Pupils will have opportunities to:

- explore how small interactions can affect relationships
- consider the difference between kindness and simply being polite
- recognise that kindness does not mean ignoring harm or avoiding difficult conversations
- examine how one small supportive action can influence a group
- identify realistic ways to make everyday interactions safer and more respectful

Important note for staff

Use fictional situations rather than asking pupils to disclose personal experiences.

If a safeguarding concern is raised, follow the school's procedures.

1. What counts as kind?

Write:

Is kindness always something big?

Ask pupils for examples of small acts that can matter.

They might suggest:

- saying hello
- noticing someone is alone
- inviting someone to join in
- checking whether someone is okay
- saying thank you
- defending someone
- apologising
- refusing to laugh at someone
- asking before sharing something

Then ask:

Can kindness sometimes involve saying something difficult?

This is important.

Kindness is not the same as avoiding conflict or pretending everything is fine.

Key idea

A kind response can be honest, boundaried and still respectful.

One Kind Word - 2021

2. Change one sentence

Give groups short fictional exchanges.

For example:

“Why are you always so weird?”

Ask them to change just one sentence so the interaction moves in a different direction.

Or:

“Nobody wants you here.”

Change it to something that reduces harm or creates space.

The aim is not to produce perfect dialogue.

Ask:

What changed when the words changed?

3. Kind or unhelpful?

Give pupils examples and ask:

Kind
Not kind
Depends

Examples:

- Telling someone the truth even though they may not like it.
- Laughing at a joke because you do not want to embarrass your friend.
- Telling an adult because you are worried about someone.
- Agreeing with a friend even when you know they are hurting someone.
- Saying “stop” firmly.
- Walking away from an argument.

Discuss how kindness, safety and honesty can sometimes pull in different directions.

One Kind Word - 2021

4. One word in a group

Give this fictional scenario:

A group is making fun of someone. One person says, "Enough."

Ask:

What might happen next?

Then change the word:

"Stop."

"Come on."

"Leave it."

"Are you okay?"

Ask:

Can one short phrase really shift the group?

Sometimes yes. Sometimes not.

Discuss how small interventions can change the tone even if they do not solve the whole situation.

5. Kindness with boundaries

Ask:

Can you be kind to someone whose behaviour has harmed another person?

Explore the difference between:

- excusing behaviour
- humiliating the person
- setting boundaries
- helping someone take responsibility
- offering support for change

Key idea

Kindness does not remove accountability.

One Kind Word - 2021

6. The invisible effect

Ask pupils to think about moments when a small action may have had an effect that was not immediately visible.

For example:

- sitting next to someone
- checking in afterwards
- not forwarding a message
- speaking to an adult
- saying something supportive privately

Ask:

Why might we never know how much that mattered?

This can help pupils understand that positive actions do not always produce dramatic or immediate results.

7. Final reflection

Complete:

“One kind word can matter because...”

“Kindness is more than being nice because...”

Closing message

A small act of kindness may not solve everything, but it can change the next moment, the next choice or the way someone feels they are seen.

Follow-up possibilities

This lesson could lead into:

- **Write to Someone Who Needs Support**
- **Change One Choice**
- a tutor-group kindness challenge
- peer-support work
- creating short messages that combine kindness with boundaries
- exploring apologies and repair