

Caring/Compassion

Grades 6-8

Segment Summary:

Brandi and Marcus act with compassion when they give up their time, space and privacy for the comfort of their live-in great-grandparents. Their caring nature has enabled them to love more and give more, instead of always waiting to receive.

Imagine living in a house with four generations of relatives – great-grandparents, grandparents, aunts and cousins. That’s what life is like for 14-year-old Brandi and her 13-year-old brother Marcus, whose parents are divorced and live miles away. Living with so many generations in one house requires Brandi and Marcus to sacrifice their personal time and space. Recently, Marcus gave up his room so that his great-grandmother Rose could have his bed. He sleeps on the couch now. Both teens sometimes feel frustrated because they don’t have the privacy or space that their friends have, but they realize their grandparents need special care and extra support.

Discussion Questions:

1. What character traits do Brandi and Marcus display?
2. What does it mean to be caring and compassionate?
3. How do Brandi and Marcus display their caring and compassionate natures?
4. What explanation does the grandmother, Georgia, give for deciding to provide a home for the great-grandmothers? Do you think she made the right decision?
5. What difficulties does this living situation present for the family?
6. How would you handle living with so many adults who were all giving you directions?
7. Is it better for older relatives to live with their families or in nursing homes? Explain.
8. Brandi says showing compassion for her grandmothers’ makes her feel special. What do you think she means by this comment?
9. Have you ever lived with or cared for an elderly person? What was that experience like for you?
10. Is it possible to show caring without being compassionate? Explain your answer.
11. What are ways in which you could show compassion at school, in your neighborhood, in your home, etc.?

Vocabulary Words and Definitions:

Caring (adj.)

Definition: thinking about what other people need or would like and trying to help them

Context: Kendrick is such a caring man that he brought dinner to his sick grandmother last night.

Compassion (n.)

Definition: a strong feeling of sympathy for people who are suffering, and a desire to help them

Context: We have a great deal of compassion for the tornado victims, whose possessions were destroyed.

Consideration (n.)

Definition: the quality of thinking about other people's feelings or situations and taking care not to upset them

Context: In an effort to show more consideration for his neighbors, Juan lowered the stereo's volume.

Frustrated (adj.)

Definition: feeling annoyed, upset and impatient because a person cannot control or change a situation or achieve something

Context: Oftentimes, children of a disabled parent feel frustrated because they must assume additional responsibilities around the house.

Self-sacrifice (n.)

Definition: the act of doing without things a person wants, needs or cares about in order to help someone else

Context: He shows self-sacrifice each time he volunteers at the soup kitchen instead of playing football.

Sympathy (n.)

Definition: the feeling of being sorry for someone who is in a bad situation and understanding how he or she feels because of similarities

Context: Mario tutors after school because he feels sympathy for kids with learning problems.

Source: *Longman's Advanced American Dictionary*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000.

Activity

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Internalize the meaning of vocabulary words
- Create a piece of art (song, poetry, picture, photograph, online video etc.) that expresses personal meanings for vocabulary words
- Demonstrate listening and speaking skills during artwork presentations

Materials:

- Pens, pencils
- Paper
- Art supplies
- ***Caring/Compassion Vocabulary Words and Definitions*** handout
- In a remote environment, meeting software will need to have “breakout room” or similar function enabled to allow pairs of students to have discussions. Also, handouts may need to be emailed to students ahead of time or shared in meeting software chat function

Procedure:

This activity provides students with the opportunity to think about what the vocabulary words mean to them, as opposed to memorizing a definition, and allows them to practice self-expression.

1. Have students select at least five of the vocabulary words from the ***Caring/Compassion Vocabulary Words and Definitions*** handout.
2. Allow students to practice self-expression by creating an original composition (song, dance, poetry, dramatic performance, photograph, drawing, online video etc.) that incorporates the five words selected in *Step 1*.

Examples:

- Students could perform a skit in which they personify their five vocabulary words.
- Students could make a photo essay in which each photo captures the meaning of a different vocabulary word.

Encourage students to be creative, and remind them that each art form should address the meaning of at least five of the vocabulary words.

3. Allow students time to complete their projects.

Note: One week should be an adequate time frame in which students can complete the assignment.

4. On the assigned due date, instruct students to present their artwork to the class.