



Being kind

Kindness is something families really value. Being kind to others matters to God too, and it also feels good to do good! Here are some ideas about encouraging kindness and some of the things Jesus suggested people can do.

In the Bible, Jesus spoke about being kind. Everyone has basic needs – we all need to eat and drink, we all need clothes to wear and someone to look after us when we are poorly. We also need friendship when we're feeling alone and forgiveness when we've done something wrong.

Sadly, some people don't have even the most basic things, like food, water and clothes. Helping people, whatever their need, is really important to God.

Some of the ways Jesus suggested to be kind were:

- Giving a hungry person some food
- Giving a thirsty person a drink
- Giving someone who has few clothes something to wear
- Being a friend to someone who is alone, even if you don't know them yet
- Caring for someone who is poorly
- Visiting someone who is in prison

Perhaps there's an item in the news or something happening in the family that highlights one of these needs. This could be a good moment to talk to your child about how they would feel if they had that need, and then how they would feel if someone came along and helped them.

Or, after school or nursery, you can ask your child about how their day went. If issues of kindness or unkindness come up, talk to your child about it. Can they be kinder in any way to their friends or teachers? Is there anyone there who needs a friend? Ask your child what their nursery or school teaches about kindness.

Something as simple as watching your children play and explaining what is kind or unkind behaviour when it happens can help children learn the difference.

You might try placing a reward sticker for each kind act in a small notebook, which shows your child how much kindness they can share in just a day, a week, a month and so on.

There are so many practical ways to be kind, in everyday places like where we go to work or school, but also by giving or raising money for causes that bring relief to suffering people. These are just a few examples:

- As a family, there may be relevant charities you'd like to support, practically or with donations. Places like food banks or soup kitchens are

often looking for volunteers or donations, and there's likely to be one local to you.

- Local support groups for the elderly often have visiting schemes for those who are housebound and alone. It's good for both children and the elderly to talk and do things together, even if that's just having a drink and a biscuit one afternoon.
- From litter-picks to coffee mornings, churches often get involved in schemes in the community too, so you might like to find out if there is anything you can help with through your local church.

If you pray with your child at bedtime, it may be a good time to remember kindness. Perhaps share with each other how you were kind to someone that day, or how someone else was kind to you, and thank God for that.

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