



August 2006


Character Council Educator Quality of the Month Benevolence

**Benevolence:
Giving to others' basic needs
without having as my motive
personal reward.**

I will:

- see the needs of others as quickly as I see my own
- give freely without expecting anything in return
- not hoard things for myself
- not profit from the misfortune of others
- give more as I get more

Benevolence is a word that is seldom heard but it is a basic building block of character. This month's activities are a very concrete way of explaining Benevolence using the book and the movie "Pay It Forward". These activities are just a few ideas. Visit the websites for the Pay It Forward Foundation or the Giving Game for some more ideas and even grant money for larger projects.

- ☺ The Kindness Monkey – Have you ever seen those stuffed monkeys with the long skinny arms and legs that have Velcro on the hands? This activity makes use of a toy like this.  Students who are caught being good are awarded with having the monkey for the day or some pre-determined period of time. They can hang it from their chair or their back, etc. At the end of the period, the student must award the monkey to someone else. To do this, they will quietly nominate several classmates and give the example of what they saw. You will then choose the one who gets the monkey next. By having them choose several students, you can make sure that all students get a chance to have the monkey and not just the popular ones.
- ☺ The Warm Fuzzy Game. There are several versions of the Warm Fuzzy story on the Internet that you can use to start this game. The easiest items you can use for a Warm Fuzzy are the yarn pom-poms that you can buy at any craft or fabric store. The size that is about the size of a large marble or larger is better. Adding eyes to them gives them more 'personality'. Everyone starts out by getting a Warm Fuzzy. One theory about Warm Fuzzies is that they will 'die' if you keep them so they must be given away. You can start the activity by just having the students give them to each other over the course of several days or several weeks. After they are in the habit of giving them away, then attach more meaning to them. Give them to someone who does something nice or someone who is having a bad day and needs some cheering up. Let this practice continue for several days or weeks. Once they are in the habit of recognizing good deeds and the needs of the others you can remove the physical object and every day just poll the class for examples of others' good deeds or someone who might need a cheer. For more information on Warm Fuzzies, research Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis Theory.
- ☺ The Excel-O-Gram – this is an easy way for students to recognize good behavior in other students. There needs to be some type of a form that students fill out and give to the teacher (or a counselor if it is a school-wide program) that identifies a good deed that someone has done. This kudos is then passed onto the student in the form of a certificate with the details of the deed. It can be the actual initial form or typed into a formal certificate. The name of the –gram can be related to a school mascot or change monthly with a character theme. It is important that the –gram be processed through an adult so that any inappropriate nominations can be filtered.

To subscribe to this newsletter send an email with a subscribe message to
Jill Tomey, Director of Education, jtomey@charactercincinnati.org

© Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky Mary Andres Russell, Executive Director
513.467.0170 mrussell@charactercincinnati.org

