

A Scout is Kind: Mastering the Art of the Active Good Turn

Lesson Overview

This lesson explores the core Scouting value of kindness. Instead of seeing kindness as just "being nice," learners will discover that kindness is an active choice that requires strength, observation, and intentional action. Designed for 11-year-olds (bridging the gap between Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA), this lesson focuses on practical application in the troop, at home, and in the community.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- **Define** the difference between "being nice" (passive) and "being kind" (active).
- **Identify** three "Kindness Triggers" in everyday Scouting and home scenarios.
- **Demonstrate** empathy by practicing the "Walk in Their Boots" perspective-taking exercise.
- **Execute** a "Secret Scout Service" project to practice kindness without seeking credit.

Materials Needed

- Paper and pen/pencil
- Small "Kindness Tokens" (could be coins, marbles, or even small stones)
- A "Kindness Scenario" printable (or a list of scenarios provided in the lesson)
- Optional: A timer or stopwatch

1. Introduction: The "Trail Trouble" Hook

The Hook: Imagine your patrol is on a 5-mile hike. You are the lead hiker, feeling strong and fast. However, the newest, youngest Scout in your patrol is struggling. He's tripped twice, his pack looks heavy, and he's starting to fall behind. If you keep going at your pace, you'll finish an hour early. If you stop to help, you'll be the last ones back to camp.

Discussion Question: "What is the 'Nice' thing to do? What is the 'Kind' thing to do? Is there a difference?"

The "Tell Them" (Objectives): Today, we aren't just talking about saying 'please' and 'thank you.' We are learning how to use kindness as a tool to build a better patrol, a better home, and a better world. We will learn to spot opportunities for kindness and put them into action immediately.

2. Body: Content and Practice

Part A: The "I Do" - Nice vs. Kind

Instructor Modeling: Explain that "Nice" is a reaction (smiling when someone smiles at you), but "Kind" is an *action*. Kindness often requires effort or sacrifice.

- **Example of Nice:** Seeing someone drop their books and saying, "Oh, I'm sorry that happened."
- **Example of Kind:** Dropping what you are doing, kneeling down, and helping them pick up every single page while telling them, "Don't worry, I've got your back."

Key Concept: A Scout's "Good Turn Daily" is the ultimate example of active kindness.

Part B: The "We Do" - The "Walk in Their Boots" Scenarios

Let's look at common Scouting and life situations. For each one, we will brainstorm what a **Kind** response looks like.

- **Scenario 1:** A fellow Scout is nervous about a swim test and is standing alone by the water.
- **Scenario 2:** You see your parent or guardian carrying three heavy bags of groceries while trying to open the front door.
- **Scenario 3:** During a game, a teammate makes a mistake that loses the point for the whole group.

Practice Activity: For each scenario, ask the learner: "What are they feeling? What is one specific thing you can *do* (not just say) to help?"

Part C: The "You Do" - The Secret Scout Service

The Mission: Kindness is most powerful when you don't do it for a reward or a "thank you." This is called "Anonymous Kindness."

1. **Plan:** The learner must list three "Secret Tasks" they can do today at home or in their community (e.g., cleaning up a mess they didn't make, leaving a positive note for a sibling, or organizing the gear closet).
2. **Execute:** The learner has 30 minutes (or the rest of the day) to complete these tasks without being "caught" doing them.
3. **Token System:** Every time they complete a kind act, they move a "Kindness Token" from their left pocket to their right pocket.

3. Conclusion: Closure and Recap

Summary: Kindness isn't just a feeling; it's a Scout's superpower. It turns a group of individuals into a Patrol. It turns a house into a home. When we choose to be kind, we are choosing to be leaders.

Recap:

- What is the difference between being nice and being kind?
- Why is it sometimes harder to be kind than to just be "nice"?
- How does "A Scout is Kind" help you live out the "Good Turn Daily"?

The Final Challenge: "This week, your challenge is to find one person who seems like they are having a hard time and find one way to make their load lighter. That is the mark of a true Scout."

Assessment: How We Know It Clicked

- **Formative (During the lesson):** Participation in the "Walk in Their Boots" discussion. Can the learner identify the underlying emotion of the person in the scenario?
- **Summative (End of lesson):** The "Secret Scout Service" list. Success is achieved if the learner can identify and execute three specific, action-oriented kind acts that go beyond basic manners.

Success Criteria

The learner has succeeded if they can:

1. Identify a situation where kindness requires "strength" (e.g., standing up for someone or helping when you're tired).
2. Complete three helpful actions without being asked or prompted.
3. Explain how their actions impacted the people around them.

Adaptability & Differentiation

- **For Younger/Struggling Learners:** Focus on "Kindness Spies." Have them "spy" on others and report back when they see someone else being kind. This builds the observation skills needed for empathy.
- **For Advanced Learners:** Discuss "The Ripple Effect." Challenge them to track how one kind act led to another throughout the day. Have them mentor a younger Scout on a specific skill as their act of kindness.
- **Classroom Context:** Perform the "Scenarios" as small group role-plays.
- **Homeschool Context:** Make the "Secret Service" a week-long challenge where family members try to guess who did which kind act at the end of the week.