



# Mission Viejo Community of Character

## Caring

December

Caring

### Character Qualities

Responsibility  
Respect  
Thankfulness  
Caring  
Perseverance  
Unity  
Integrity  
Service  
Moral Courage  
Citizenship  
Fairness  
Self Control

**“Those who bring  
sunshine into the  
lives of others cannot  
keep it from  
themselves.”**

**James M. Barrie**

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*Caring* is a character trait which can be described with the words compassion, loving, or kindness. A *caring* person is concerned about others and says or does nice things to help them or make them feel special. Empathy, the ability to feel what another person is feeling is an important part of *caring*. When you can imagine “walking in the shoes” of another person, it helps you to be kind and *caring*. Another word which helps us to understand how to be *caring* is “altruism.” The definition of altruism is “feelings and behavior that show a desire to help other people and a lack of selfishness” or “unselfish concern for the welfare of others.” As we strive to be more *caring*, the “Golden Rule” is a good guideline: treat others the way you would like to be treated.

The children’s book, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud provides a wonderful way to help kids to understand what it means to be *caring*. In this book, Ms. McCloud states that in life, everyone carries an invisible bucket each day. The purpose of the bucket is to carry our good thoughts and feelings. We feel happy when our buckets are full and sad when they are empty. The author tells us that we can fill the bucket of another person when we show love, say or do something kind, or even by smiling! When we fill the bucket of another person, we are filling our own bucket as well. The book includes some suggested actions for “bucket filling,” and provides a reminder to children AND adults that “bucket filling makes everyone feel good.”

Another way of showing *caring* is the concept of “paying it forward.” This idea was made popular by a movie of the same name, and involves doing something good for someone in response to a kind act you have received from someone else. The idea is that you don’t repay the person who has helped you, which you may not be able to do at the time, but instead you do something kind for someone else. The idea is not a new one! Benjamin Franklin suggested this practice in a letter he wrote

to Benjamin Webb in 1784, in which he wrote about his intention to help Webb by lending him some money. Franklin did not wish to be repaid directly but instead he instructed Webb, “...when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation, when he shall be able and shall meet with such another opportunity, I hope it may thus go through many hands before it meets with a knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford much in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning and make the most of little.”

This fable by Aesop is a story of kindness paid and repaid. It reveals that *caring* and kind acts can come from the small and weak as well as the big and powerful! And it is a good reminder that when we show kindness to others it often comes back to us!

### *The Lion and the Mouse* An Aesop’s Fable on *Caring*

One day a great lion lay asleep in the sunshine. A little mouse ran across his paw and wakened him. The great lion was just going to eat him when the little mouse cried, “Oh, please, let me go, sir. Someday I may help you!” The lion laughed at the thought that the little mouse could be of any use to him. But he was a good-natured lion, and he set the mouse free. Not long after, the lion was caught in a net. He tugged and pulled with all his might, but the ropes were too strong. Then he roared loudly. The little mouse heard him, and ran to the spot. “Be still, dear Lion, and I will set you free. I will gnaw the ropes.” With his sharp little teeth, the mouse cut the ropes, and the lion came out of the net. You laughed at me once,” said the mouse. “You thought I was too little to do you a good turn. But see, you owe your life to a poor little mouse.”

## Books and Movies of

### Character

#### Fiction Books

*The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein  
(Preschool to 5<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Have You Filled a Bucket Today?*  
by Carol McCloud  
(Preschool to 6<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White  
(3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade)

*The Piano* by William Miller  
(Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

*When I Care About Others* by Cornelia  
Maude Spelman (Preschool to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

*Wonder* by RJ Palacio (3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade)

*The Friendship Doll* by Kirby Larson  
(4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade)

#### Nonfiction Books

*Caring* by Robin Doak  
(Preschool to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

*Nubs: The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine  
& a Miracle* by Major Brian Dennis,  
Kirby Larson, and Mary Nethery  
(Preschool to Adult)

*Learning About Compassion From the  
Life of Florence Nightingale*  
by Kiki Mosher (K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Clara Barton: Founder of the American  
Red Cross* by Augusta Stevenson

#### Movies

*Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*  
*A Christmas Carol*

#### What is Caring?

- Being kind and compassionate.
- Helping others.
- Having empathy—the ability to feel what another person is feeling.
- Being altruistic—having an unselfish concern for the welfare of others.
- Giving your time and talents to others.

## Quotes

“Kind words do not cost much....Yet they accomplish much.”

*Blaise Pascal*

“The best part of a good person’s life is the little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love.” *William Wordsworth*

“I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion, then it will start a chain reaction of the same.” *Rachel Scott*

“I may be compelled to face danger, but never fear it, and while our soldiers stand and fight, I can stand and feed and nurse them.” *Clara Barton*

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin." *Mother Teresa*

“Let me be a little kinder, let me be a little blinder to the faults of those around me, let me praise a little more.” *Edgar Albert Guest*

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.”

*Albert Schweitzer*

#### Practicing Caring

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated.
- Look for ways to be kind and thoughtful to others.
- Show sympathy and compassion for those who are less fortunate.
- Reach out to help and give to others.
- Stand up for others.
- Be a friend!
- Take part in community service.
- Be a good listener.
- Share your skills and knowledge.
- Smile at others!

#### Applying Caring

- Set a goal to perform one or more random acts of kindness every day.
- Think of others as more important than yourself.
- *Tell* loved ones that you love them.
- Encourage and inspire others.
- Respect the property of others.
- Help with chores.
- Visit, call or send a card to a person you know is ill or lonely.
- Look for the good in others and give words of praise.
- Bring out the best in others.
- If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all!

- Take a meal to a family that has been struck by illness or difficulties. If you are a parent, take your children with you so that they can observe your kindness and the example you set.
- Find opportunities to make the holidays brighter for other families or seniors who are alone.
- Organize a fundraiser to provide assistance for a worthy cause or a family struck by tragedy.
- Perform your acts of caring with no expectation of receiving a return.
- “Pay it forward” by repaying a kind act that was done for you by doing something kind for another person.

#### Personal Commitments to Caring:

- I will find ways every day to show *caring* to others and perform acts of kindness.
- I will be a “bucket filler.”
- I will treat others the way I would like to be treated.
- I will reach out with kindness to another who may be unpopular or need a friend.
- I will give to others in need.
- I will try to make a difference in the lives of others!