

Pay It Forward Day



Actual Holiday: April 28

First Celebrated: 2007

Introduction

Pay It Forward is a novel by American author Catherine Ryan Hyde in which a young boy plans to change the world by helping people. Rather than asking for anything in return, he encourages the people he helps to help others. In 2007, Australian Blake Beattie decided to honor the message of the book and create Pay It Forward Day. It's a day to focus on the power of kindness and create a positive ripple effect around the world.

Materials

- *Compliment Cards* activity sheet (page 29)
- art supplies
- scissors
- tape

The Activity

- Tell students that today they will be celebrating Pay It Forward Day.
- Ask them about times in their lives when someone did something kind for them. How did they feel after that? Did it make them want to be kind to the same person in return? Did it make them want to be kinder to others?
- Introduce the idea of paying it forward. Describe to students how kindness can have a ripple effect and keep spreading out to more and more people. Explain how sometimes just being kind without asking for anything in return can be a real gift to other people.
- Have students stand in a circle with you. Tell them that you are all in a compliment circle. Turn to the student on your right and give them a very simple and genuine compliment. Then have that student turn and give a compliment to the person on their right. Continue the activity until it has gone all around the circle and the student to your left has given you a compliment.
- Discuss how it felt to get a compliment. Were students surprised by the compliments that they received? How did it feel to give someone else a compliment? How did it feel to listen to compliments being given around the circle? Even if it made them feel a bit embarrassed, did it make them feel good too?
- Now tell students that they are going to continue to give compliments to others outside of the classroom. Distribute the *Compliment Cards* activity sheet, and have students decorate the different cards, keeping in mind that they will be distributing them to other people. Then have them cut out each card.
- Tell students that you would like them to give two of the cards to people they know. These could be friends, family members, school staff members, neighbors, or anyone else they can think of. You would like them to display the second two cards anonymously so that strangers can see them. If possible, have students display their cards around the school or suggest other possible locations.
- Have students imagine people seeing these cards and sharing the messages with others. Have them try to imagine how many people they could impact with their messages.
- After students have displayed and distributed their cards, ask them to reflect on how it felt. Did this activity inspire them to continue to spread kindness?

Name: _____

Compliment Cards

You are
wonderful!

(Tell someone else this too!)

You are
appreciated!

(Tell someone else this too!)

Every day is
better because
you are in it.

(Tell someone else this too!)

I am
grateful
for you!

(Tell someone else this too!)