

Title: Classroom Community Basket

Preliminary Lesson: classmate name games/recognition, large group line time, rolling out a rug

Materials for Lesson: full body photo of each child (cut, back on the same color, attach names on the front, laminate), basket

Goals:

- Direct learn names of classmates/teachers, introduce concept of community
- Indirect order, independence

Nomenclature: community, community basket

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Roll out large rug
2. Bring Community Basket to rug
3. Hold up each photo and say name on front
4. Lay each photo on rug left to right facing children
5. Invite each child to come to the rug and pick up their photo
6. Sing "Community Song"\* as children hold up their pictures
7. Return photos to basket
8. Return basket to shelf

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: photo of self, photos of friends/teachers, being part of a choice
- Control of Error: names on the front of photos, photo identification

Subsequent Lessons:

- "Who are we missing?" (remove the photos of the children from the basket who are absent, lay out the photos of the children who are present, then ask: "Who are we missing?")
- Use the photos to dismiss from line
- Use photos to arrange students in a specific order on the line

\* "Community Song": Look around and you will see, a family, community, We are friends, we are one. (Use sign language/gestures with underlined words.)

Grace and Courtesy Topic #2  
Asking Someone to Play or Join You

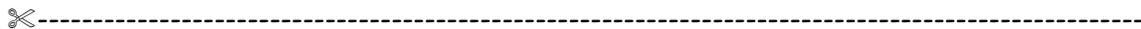


Inviting someone to join you in work or play can be a daunting experience depending upon your comfort level. Introvert, extrovert, social butterfly, loner... we hear these descriptions and often identify immediately with the images they conjure. What if we could help our children to be comfortable and confident if not enthusiastic about inviting another person to work or play. This grace and courtesy topic is designed to do just that. It will help instill a measure of confidence and ease through practice in "asking someone to play or join you."

Having laid the foundation of getting to know each other with naming songs and games as a group, we built a layer of social interaction with the practice of introductions, greetings and shaking hands. We then added the notion of community to the mix (we are part of many communities: classroom, school, neighborhood...). With these skills we can follow the children a step further to inviting.

Using dramatic play, we act out the process of inviting someone to: watch a choice, join in work, or play a game. We ask aloud the simple question, "How do you invite someone to..." Then we ask another teacher or child if they would like to help show everyone how to invite. When we have a willing volunteer, we then give the words to use: *"Would you like to play/join me?"*, *"Yes, please."*, *"No, thank you."*, *"I'd love to play/join you later..."* With these words we make a dramatic lesson by acting out inviting. The children take turns playing the parts. Then we observe the children in the environment for opportunities to encourage practicing their new skill. For some it comes easily, for others reminders and help are necessary. There are plenty of opportunities for everyone to practice this grace and courtesy skill at school.

At home please partner with us by encouraging your child to invite a new friend to play at the park or a sibling to join in a game. Model the skill by inviting your child to join in family activities or observe you inviting friends or family over. Try using some of the phrases and sentences italicized above.



Let us Know

How did this work for you? We would love to hear any insights or suggestions you'd like to share. Use this portion to send comments or email a "grace & courtesy" message to us at:

Title: "We Missed You today." Cards

Preliminary Lesson: classmate name games, classroom community basket, "who are we missing?"

Materials for Lesson: large rug, classroom community basket, tray, pre-cut note cards, pencil, colored pencils

Goals:

- Direct communication, writing name/words, identification of class community members
- Indirect building memory, introduction to concept of "oneness", empathy, concentration

Nomenclature: absent, present, complete, incomplete

Lesson Demonstration:

\*we encourage you to demonstrate this choice daily in large group

1. Roll out large rug
2. Bring Classroom Community Basket to rug
3. Bring "We Missed You Today" note card tray to rug
4. From the Community Basket, lay each photo out left to right on rug
5. Ask, "Who are we missing today?"
6. As children name absent classmates, raise the corresponding photos slightly above the main row of photos.
7. Demonstrate writing a "We Missed You Today" note card to each absent student, include date on the card
8. Have a child put the note card in the corresponding absent student's drawer/folder/take-home bag...

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: pictures of friends and self, sending greeting card to a friend, solving "mystery" of who is missing?
- Control of Error: names on the front of photos, photo corresponds to classmates

Subsequent Lessons:

- Other greeting cards (thank you, get well)

Title: School Community Basket

Preliminary Lesson: classroom community basket

Materials for Lesson: full body photo of each adult on staff that interacts with your children (cut, laminate, name on front, back all on one color), basket (choose a different color basket than the classroom community basket)

Goals:

- Direct learn proper names of staff, visual identification of staff, introduce concept of school community
- Indirect order, concentration

Nomenclature: titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms.), surnames/last names

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Roll out large rug
2. Bring School Community Basket to rug
3. Hold up each photo and say name on front
4. Lay each photo on rug left to right facing children
5. One at a time lift photo while naming staff member and position (Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ our janitor, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ our office assistant...)
6. Sing "Community Song"\* as you indicate the children and the staff photos
7. Return photos to basket
8. Return basket to shelf

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: photo of staff
- Control of Error: names on the back of photos, photo identification

Subsequent Lessons:

- Practice introducing yourself to a classroom visitor with staff photos from the School Community Basket and a child's photo from the Classroom Community Basket
- Provide opportunities for introducing parents (i.e. open house)
- Conversation rug

### Grace and Courtesy Topic #3: Giving and Receiving

Children at this age and stage of development can be more focused on themselves than the needs of others. While we encourage the development of this independence we also want to nurture the experience of giving and sharing as they enter the sensitive period of grace and courtesy. We are trying to help the children focus on the person who is giving or receiving and not the object being given. The skills related to this lesson are: empathy, sincerity and awareness of the impact of your actions on others.



In the classroom environment, the children will have the opportunity to: give and receive food, gifts, and cards. They will also learn the language necessary to perform these exchanges courteously. Some of you have asked "What words do you use?" Below are a few phrases the children have been practicing in the classroom:

- "Would you like some/ a \_\_\_\_\_? (food item)
- "Yes, please." or "No, thank you."
- "This (gift) made me think of you."
- "Happy birthday!"/"Congratulations!"/ Surprise!" (special occasions)
- "Thank you so much!"
- "I'm so glad you thought of me."

With these exchanges the children often learn that even if you don't like what you have received, you can always respond in a way that shows your appreciation for the gesture and the person behind it.

The home environment offers many opportunities for practicing giving and receiving. Sharing food with neighbors, getting a drink/snack for another when you are getting one for yourself, writing a thank you card, showing appreciation at the dinner table, thanking each other for completing chores, offering help...

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#### Let us Know

How did this work for you? We would love to hear any related stories you'd like to share. Use this portion to send in your stories or email them to us in a "grace & courtesy" message at:

## Grace and Courtesy Topic #4: Table Manners

Please put your napkin in your lap...keep your elbows off the table...don't chew with your mouth open...don't play with your food. These phrases and many others have been spoken in homes and restaurants since we were children and will continue to be spoken for generations to come! With our fast paced lifestyles we sometimes don't provide ourselves the opportunity to practice table manners. However, we may regret neglecting these skills when we are at a formal dinner (such as Thanksgiving with the grandparents!) Though we may not be able to practice these skills daily, awareness of table manners serves us well throughout our lives.



While one look at Emily Post's chapter on table manners could overwhelm you and make you want to give up before you begin, covering the basics (see suggestions below) can provide you and your family with many pleasant meals together.

- Proper use of the table setting (utensils, napkin...)
- Proper behavior at the table (legs under the table, elbows by your side, passing condiments...)
- Appropriate social interaction (quiet voices, not talking with your mouth full, listening attentively, participating in conversation...)
- Excusing yourself and clearing table

In the classroom, your child/children have practiced the points above as well as setting a table, flower arranging, using place cards, polishing silver, passing food and condiments serving snack and having conversations.

At home, try to work at least one sit-down family meal into your daily schedule. Provide opportunities for your children to be involved in the entire meal process. Involvement also makes them more open to sitting and participating during the meal. If time is tight in the evenings, make breakfast your family meal time (you could even set the table the night before)!



### Let us Know

How did this work for you? Share with us what you heard and observed! Use this portion to send in your observations or email them to us in a "grace & courtesy" message at:

Title: Conversation Rug

Preliminary Lesson: community baskets, name games, inviting someone to join

Materials for Lesson: two necklaces in a basket, special rug (not a choice rug) large enough for two children to sit face to face, small basket with an object (stone, paperweight, feather...), box of conversation starter cards (words or pictures), tray

Goals:

- Direct conversing with another, taking turns, listening
- Indirect independence

Nomenclature: conversation, pause/wait, listen, respond, repeat ("Could you say that again please?")

Lesson Demonstrations:

Demonstration 1: Repeating Game (Mirroring)

1. Lay out special rug
2. Bring basket tray to special rug
3. Put on one necklace and take the other to a second adult
4. Ask second adult, "Do you want to play the repeating game?" Reply, "Yes, please."
5. Give second adult the necklace and together sit at special rug.
6. Initiator takes object and begins to give a brief message while second adult listens quietly, looking at initiator's face
7. Initiator finishes and gives object to second adult who repeats the message saying, "I heard you say...right?" and giving the object back to the initiator.
8. Initiator replies, "Yes." or "No. What I said was... Now it is your turn" and gives the object to the second adult for a turn at being the initiator
9. Return the necklaces to their baskets on the tray. Return the tray to the shelf and the rug to its space

Demonstration 2: Conversation

1. Lay out special rug
2. Bring basket tray to special rug
3. Put on one necklace and take the other to a second adult

4. Ask second adult, "Do you want to play the repeating game?" Reply, "Yes, please."
5. Give second adult the necklace and together sit at special rug.
6. Initiator takes object and begins to give a brief conversation while second adult listens quietly, looking at initiator's face
7. Initiator finishes and gives object to second adult who responds while initiator listens quietly, looking at speaker's face
8. Conversation continues with exchange of turns speaking and passing the object.
9. When the exchange of words is complete, the initiator ends the conversation by saying, "Thanks for having a conversation."
10. Return the necklaces to their baskets on the tray. Return the tray to the shelf and the rug to its space

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: sitting on top of rug, object for taking turns, sitting with a friend, socializing
- Control of Error: necklaces, rug, object, conversation starter cards

Subsequent Lessons:

- Add conversation starter cards to the tray

## Grace and Courtesy Topic #5:

### Thank You Cards

As the winter holidays approach, thoughts turn to giving and sharing with family and friends. Whether that giving takes the form of a material gift, an outpouring of time or sharing your home, a written acknowledgement is always appreciated.



In the classroom, we have been practicing this written form of appreciation. You may have seen some thank you cards come home with your child. We have talked about:

- When is a nice time to give a thank you card
- How to make a list of people you would like to send cards to
- Words or phrases appropriate to express gratitude
- Writing your name or drawing a picture thank you

Let's help the children to continue the use of "please" and "thank you" at home as well as following through with a written thank you when appropriate. There is a special connection between the giver and receiver when a handwritten thank you is exchanged. With the popularity of quick email communication, the extra time and thought it takes to prepare and mail a card is a wonderful way to express your thanks.

There are many thank you cards available in stores and home-made thank yous often convey a meaningful message simply and easily as well. To help your child be independent, you may try some of the following:

- Encourage them to draw a picture or make a piece of art to say "thank you"
- Print a picture of the child holding the gift and let them decorate it
- Listen to your child's message and write it in the card so *their* thoughts are expressed
- Have your child sign their name
- If writing is a battle, encourage success by having them type the message and sign their name



#### Let us Know

How did this work for you? We would love for you to share with us! Please let us know how the children responded to writing their thank you cards, what you heard them say or saw them do. You may use this portion to send in your observations or email them to us in a "grace & courtesy" message at:

Title: Practicing Grace and Courtesy

Preliminary Lesson: all grace and courtesy lessons

Materials for Lesson: full body photo of each child (cut, back on one color, laminate, name on BACK), objects representing grace and courtesy scenarios, tray

Goals:

- Direct practice grace and courtesy scenarios independently
- Indirect concentration, independence, order

Nomenclature: names of classmates, nomenclature from previously demonstrated grace and courtesy lessons

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Roll out a rug
2. Bring the grace and courtesy tray to the rug
3. Choose a grace and courtesy topic (object or card)
4. Choose a photo of person(s) you would like to use to act out the grace and courtesy scenario
5. Proceed to act out the scenario based on it's corresponding lesson
6. Return the pictures and objects/card to the tray
7. Return the tray to the shelf

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: photos of classmates, self and teachers, tiny objects
- Control of Error: symbol/photo on cards

Subsequent Lessons:

- Add new cards and objects to the tray as a new grace and courtesy lesson is presented
- Conflict resolution (practice having a conversation with a "friend" resolving a problem before the actual conversation occurs)

Grace and Courtesy Topic #8  
Reaching Out to Your Community

We create and live in communities of diverse individuals. While our common humanity connects us, sometimes our values and beliefs differ. Learning to respect the individual while maintaining appreciation for our differences is never wasted. One way to help our children to learn the importance of our connection to others is by encouraging them to reach out to their community.



This month we have studied community in song, stories, work choices and discussion. We have reached out to our community, both school and neighborhood, in the following ways:

- Sang a song of appreciation to each classroom at Providence
- Prepared and shared Neighborhood Community Baskets with our immediate neighbors surrounding our school
- Talked about community helpers
- Provided refreshments for our mail carrier
- Visited with a Lexington firefighter in our classroom
- Collected donations for the Hope Center
- Wrote letters and drew pictures for hospitalized veterans

Your children have been enthusiastic about getting to know different aspects of our school neighborhood and the Lexington area. We encourage you to continue to nurture your child/children's efforts by reaching out from home. Your family could:

- Visit a nursing home
- Prepare and send care packages to some community helpers
- Writing a thank you note to someone who serves our community
- Create a community garden

Thank you for supporting our school, neighborhood and city through your out reach. Thank you also for helping your child/children learn the importance of our connection to others.



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Let us Know

We'd love to read your comments. Send a note or email related to this topic to us at:

Title: Passing Food or Condiments ("Family Style")

Preliminary Lesson: inviting, passing & receiving napkin in preparation for snack at large group, conversation rug (taking turns)

Materials for Lesson: rug marked with dots indicating seating and item placement, basket, three play food items or condiment containers

Goals:

- Direct passing from left to right, table manners, expressing need
- Indirect independence, coordination, order, concentration

Nomenclature: pass, please, thank you, you are welcome

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Get rug
2. Bring basket of food/condiment items to rug
3. Invite one or two participants to join you at the rug
4. Teacher selects one item from the basket and places it directly in front of them encouraging the participants to do the same one at a time.
5. Teacher asks one participant to pass their item to her/him, saying, "\_\_\_\_(name) please pass the \_\_\_\_ (item) to me."
6. Intended participant gently passes the item to the left until it reaches the intended recipient.
7. Recipient says, "Thank you." Reply, "You are welcome."
8. Each participant takes a turn asking someone to pass their item, saying "\_\_\_\_(name) please pass the \_\_\_\_ (item) to me."
9. Gently pass the item to the left until it reaches the intended recipient.
10. Recipient says, "Thank you." Reply, "You are welcome."
11. Repeat until all items have been exchanged.

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: food/condiment items, special rug, passing to friends
- Control of Error: one item for each participant, rug is marked for placement of participant and items

Subsequent Lessons:

Place cards, other table manners & meal etiquette

Title: Picking Up After Your Pet Outdoors

Preliminary Lesson: cleaning our street, grasping objects with bag

Materials for Lesson: tray, square of Astroturf or green mat, box, fake "poop", plastic bag, picture of "Please pick up after your pet" sign, tiny garbage can

Goals:

- Direct motor skill, grasping, cleaning, care of pet's environment
- Indirect coordination, concentration, independence, respect for others

Nomenclature: feces, "poop"

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Roll out rug
2. Set up workspace with green mat and tray
3. Remove "poop" and place it on the green mat
4. Open plastic bag and insert hand
5. With hand in bag pick up the "poop"
6. While continuing to grasp the "poop" use free hand to pull the bag off of grasping hand
7. Place bag in tiny garbage can
8. Wash hands
9. Return items to beginning set-up
10. Return tray to shelf
11. Roll up rug

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: "poopy" words, fake poop, sign
- Control of Error: bag, child's skills

Subsequent Lessons:

- Pet Care
- Scat Identification
- Read ??????? by ??? (scat identification book)

- Read The Story of the Little Mole Who Went in Search of Whodunit by Werner Holzwarth & Wolf Erlbruch ☺ Read book before presenting to the children! ☺
- Read Everybody Poops by Taro Gomi

## Title: Restaurant Etiquette

Preliminary Lesson: table manners, snack, passing food or condiment, body function etiquette, tonging

Materials for Lesson: basket, two necklaces, two types of tiny crackers in containers, tong, menu, laminated order card, washable marker, napkin, plate, place mat

### Goals:

- Direct making a choice, respectfully ordering food, respectful public behavior
- Indirect order, independence

Nomenclature: menu, order, server, guest

### Lesson Demonstration:

1. Server brings the basket to a table.
2. Server sets place mat, napkin and menu on table and place basket in upper left corner.
3. Server removes two necklaces from basket and puts on one necklace.
4. Server takes second necklace to another teacher (guest) and says, "Would you please join me for the restaurant choice?" Guest replies, "Yes, thank you."
5. Give the necklace to guest and show them to the table, pulling out their chair.
6. Server picks up menu and gives it to the guest saying, "You can choose what you would like to eat. We have these two types of crackers."
7. Server picks up the order card and marker waiting patiently.
8. Guest reads menu aloud and makes one choice saying, "May I have the \_\_\_\_\_ cracker please?" Server checks choice on order card and responds, "Yes you may. I'll bring it right over. May I have the menu?"
9. Server takes menu and replaces it in the basket.
10. Server takes order card to counter. At the counter server tongs chosen cracker onto plate and carries it back to guest.
11. Guest says, "Thank you." and enjoys the snack while server patiently waits.

12. Guest wipes mouth and sets napkin on plate, removes their necklace and sets it beside the plate.
13. Server says, "Thank you for coming. I hope you enjoyed the snack."
14. Guests stands and tucks in their chair moving to their next choice.
15. Server takes plate to wash, and dry. Server returns the plate to its place next to the crackers.
16. Server wipes off marker from order card and takes it to the table.
17. At the table server replaces all the items (including both necklaces) in the basket.
18. Server returns basket to the shelf.

#### Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: two person choice, being served, serving, inviting, snack
- Control of Error: menu, order card

#### Subsequent Lessons:

- Increase the number of food items on the menu
- Add a beverage to the menu

Grace and Courtesy Topic #6:  
Common Courtesies

Common courtesies are small acts which have a large impact. Common courtesies show respect to others, promote health and hygiene and encourage kindness to others.



This month we will review some common courtesies which we have been practicing all year such as using a tissue to blow your nose, washing your hands to prevent the spread of germs, saying excuse me... We will also add to our list of common courtesies by introducing some new lessons. These lessons include some seemingly silly but absolutely necessary grace and courtesy topics such as: what to do when you pass gas in public.

We have also opened discussion about noticing differences in people and when it is polite to inquire about those differences. For example, you are out shopping with your child and they notice a person with a different skin tone from their own, an obese person, a homeless person, a person in a wheelchair...their curiosity is peaked and they loudly ask you a question about their observations or stare obviously at the individual. The person they are curious about may or may not be offended, but you tell them quickly to be quiet. This scenario is not uncommon but it often catches you by surprise. With a small amount of effort on your part, an open discussion with your child about saving their questions for a time when you are alone to spare the feelings of others can occur. This helps your child build empathy for others and allows for a safe, loving and appropriate time for answering your child's questions while respecting the feelings of others.



Some suggestions for continuing discussions on this grace and courtesy topic at home follow:

- Plan ahead, with practice and open discussion you can let your child know when to ask about our physical differences.
- Give assurance that they are safe. While we may appear different we are all human.
- It is okay to be curious and there is a time and a place to ask and answer questions. Let them know when (i.e. when you are in the car, at home...)
- Try sharing these stories from your local library:



Let Us Know:

What do you think? Please share your comments OR email a "Grace and Courtesy" message to us at:

Title: Giving and Receiving a Gift

Preliminary Lesson: giving and receiving group snack, giving and receiving with food choices

Materials for Lesson: small work rug, gift bag or pre-decorated gift box, interesting object (the gift)

Goals:

- Direct giving a gift, use of appropriate language of giving and appreciation
- Indirect independence, awareness of intention, developing thoughtfulness

Nomenclature: thank you, congratulations, thoughtfulness...I like it, it's awesome

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Roll out the rug
2. Place the gift on top of the rug
3. Pick up the gift and take it to a teacher
4. Say, "This is for you!"
5. Recipient says, "Thank you"
6. Recipient opens gift
7. Recipient says, "How thoughtful"
8. Giver says, "Your welcome"

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest imagining or guessing what is in the box, acting out the scenario
- Control of Error teacher, type of wrapping (gift bag or pre-decorated gift box)

Subsequent Lessons:

- Receiving and unwanted gift
- Re-gifting (Just a joke!)

Title: Classroom Thank You Cards



Preliminary Lesson: please & thank you, giving & receiving snack, giving & receiving a gift, group discussion of instances to write thank you cards including sharing an actual thank you card

Materials for Lesson: tray, blank and pre-printed thank you cards, writing pencil, laminated sample thank you card, sampling of appreciative phrases

Goals:

- Direct express gratitude concretely, name writing, handwriting, letter format
- Indirect concentration, independence, order

Nomenclature: Thank you, sincerely, note, card, gratitude, signature, deliver

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Bring thank you card tray to a table
2. Say, "I want to write a thank you card to \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_."
3. Select a card and write your note (can demonstrate referring to list of sample phrases)
4. Sign the card
5. Deliver to drawer/folder/take home bag of recipient

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: card, delivering card to recipient
- Control of Error: pre-printed cards, sample of appreciative phrases, laminated example thank you card

Subsequent Lessons:

- Other greeting cards & correspondence
- Addressing an envelope

Grace and Courtesy Topic #7  
Compliments

A kind word to another or a positive thought to yourself can make a world of difference in someone's day. Paying a compliment is not only a social courtesy it is a gesture of friendship and appreciation.



An important aspect of giving and receiving a compliment is the ability to compliment not only a person's external appearance but to acknowledge their inner strengths. This is an important part of Montessori education. It is a tool we use to make children aware of their worth, their abilities - Not because someone else says it but because they themselves believe it. In the Montessori environment, the teacher's

encourage the development of the children's inner voice necessary to urge them forward in their exploration, education and socialization. You may not hear a Montessori teacher vocalizing praise for the children.



The phrase "great job" may not be spoken by the teacher. You are more likely to hear a child shout "I did it!" after completing a choice. This self-confidence increases their esteem and self-love. When this occurs it is much easier to extend this courtesy outward to another person by giving them a genuine compliment.

Gracefully accepting a compliment is another important social skill that affirms the intention of the giver. Simple phrases we have practiced throughout the year such as: "Thank you very much" or "That means a lot to me" help the children respond to a compliment while reflecting the same level of appreciation back to the giver.

In the classroom, the children have participated in a "compliment circle". Throughout the year, each child in the classroom community is the child of focus in the circle and is paid a compliment by each child and teacher. You may try this at home at the dinner table. Take turns saying something complimentary about yourself and each member of the family. Hearing out loud what you feel inside can brighten the evening meal!



Let us Know

Please send comments or email related to this topic to us at:

Title: Community Thank You Cards

Preliminary Lesson: please & thank you, giving & receiving snack, giving & receiving a gift, group discussion of instances to write thank you cards including sharing an actual thank you card, classroom thank you cards, Addressing an envelope

Materials for Lesson: tray, blank and pre-printed thank you cards, writing pencil, laminated sample thank you card & envelope, sampling of appreciative phrases, stickers (representing stamps)

Goals:

- Direct express gratitude concretely, name writing, handwriting, letter format
- Indirect concentration, independence, order

Nomenclature: Thank you, sincerely, note, card, gratitude, signature, deliver

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Bring thank you card tray to a table
2. Say, "I want to write a thank you card to \_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_."
3. Select a card and write your note (can demonstrate referring to list of sample phrases)
4. Sign the card
5. Place in envelope
6. Address envelope
7. Deliver to "mail box"

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: card, delivering card to recipient
- Control of Error: pre-printed cards, sample of appreciative phrases, laminated example thank you card & addressed envelope

Subsequent Lessons:

- Other greeting cards & correspondence

Grace and Courtesy Topic #9  
Care of the Community



What makes a good community member? Do you have to be active in your neighborhood association? Do you have to volunteer to organize community activities? Do you have to sacrifice time and money? The answer to these questions is simpler than you might think. Our methods for caring for our community are as unique as every individual. Some of us are energized by contributing in the above ways. Some of us are exhausted by even thinking about that! Some of us are more comfortable with less high profile contributions. Any effort, large or small can create positive impacts on your community.

The children have learned that effective caretakers help maintain the place where they live in many ways. The common elements in caring for the community are respecting others and the earth. This care can be demonstrated with simple acts like carrying a bag to collect trash on a walk in the neighborhood; using recycling containers; keeping sidewalks clear of toys or debris. These things we do on a regular basis are noticed by our children, instilling in them the characteristics and behaviors of a person who cares for their community.

This month in the classroom we are focusing on being stewards of the community by:

- Composting left over food items
- Learning to sort recyclable materials
- Cleaning our neighborhood sidewalks (sweeping & collecting trash)
- Practicing cleaning up after a pet
- Discussing how to be a person who cares for the community
- Celebrating Earth Day with related materials and a classroom open house



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Let us Know

We have appreciated your wonderful anecdotes. Please continue to share them with a note or email related to this topic to us at:

Title: Body Functions Etiquette: Passing Gas

Preliminary Lessons: nose blowing, spitting, coughing/sneezing

Materials: whoopie cushion and/or can of sparkling water

Goals:

- Direct appropriate response to the accidental release of gas, understanding that all bodies release gas, sensitivity to the feelings of others
- Indirect independence, order

Nomenclature: excuse me

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Explain to the children that, "Everyone needs to pass/release gas from their body and whenever possible it is most polite to move away from the group before you do it (i.e. to the restroom). However, sometimes removing yourself before the gas comes out is not possible. The following demonstration shows what you do when that happens."
2. Use the whoopie cushion to simulate passing gas or give a long burp (we have found sparkling water produces adequate gas for a burp).
3. Then say, "Excuse me." and wait for giggling to subside.
4. Say, "When I hear that sound I want to giggle too. But then I remember when it really happens to me sometimes I feel embarrassed because it was an accident. There was an unpleasant smell and a funny noise and some people looked at me and even laughed." (pause)
5. Say, "Here is something you can do instead of giggling or laughing. Next time when someone passes gas and they say, "Excuse me." you can reply, "That's okay, you are excused." This will make the person who passed gas feel better, not embarrassed."

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: Whoopie cushion, sound of gas release
- Control of Error: teacher

Subsequent Lessons:

Read Taro Gomi's The Gas We Pass & Everybody Poops,

Grace and Courtesy Topic #10  
Continuing Grace and Courtesy

In the words of one of our favorite songs by Bev Bos, Tom Hunter, & Michael Lehman, "The time that we have been together has gone to fast..." We have journeyed through many grace and courtesy topics throughout the year. We are so thankful for your support, comments and suggestions. The children are all graceful and courteous people. They have enthusiastically participated in the classroom activities and from your comments we know that they enjoyed bringing their activities home to share with their families.



As we end the current school year and begin our vacation time, we continue building grace and courtesy. While your family travels, visits friends and relatives or participates in summer activities there will be many opportunities to continue to refine grace and courtesy. In the classroom we have found that with a bit of forethought, planning and preparation a challenging situation can be made easier. With this in mind we have been discussing and practicing using what we have learned and building on what we have learned to maintain and refine our courtesy.

We encourage you to reflect on this year's grace and courtesy topics to prepare for your summer. Please consider the following list of suggestions assist you and the children to make your vacation experience pleasant:

- Plan ahead. Let your child/children know your expectations for their behavior in different social situations (dining in a restaurant, attending a block party, visiting a friend or family member, shopping at a store...)
- Be reasonable in your expectations (keep in mind your child's stage of development and plan for necessary outlets: prepare an "emergency" bag of activities for restaurants or car trips, have some physical activity before or after your event, prepare and plan for breaks)
- ☺ Have a sense of humor even when best laid plans fail!

Title: Compliments

Preliminary Lesson:

Materials for Lesson:

Goals:

- Direct
- Indirect

Nomenclature:

Lesson Demonstration:

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest:
- Control of Error:

Subsequent Lessons:

-

Title: Compliment Circle

Preliminary Lesson: compliments

Materials for Lesson: heart shaped pillow, heart shaped object that would fit in a child's hand, basket to hold the heart shaped object, paper and pencil (for adult to record the spoken compliments), picture of child of focus from the community basket

Goals:

- Direct voicing positive messages to another
- Indirect concentration, increase self-esteem, strengthen community and appreciation of others, concept of left and right

Nomenclature: positive, message, compliment, appreciate

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Place the heart shaped pillow on your right
2. Place the picture of the child of focus on the pillow
3. Invite the child of focus to sit on the pillow and place the heart shaped object and basket in front of the child
4. Pick up the heart shaped object in your hands and say: "I would like to start our 'compliment circle' for \_\_\_\_\_ by saying..."(give a compliment to the child of focus) *At this time another adult will use the paper and pencil to record the compliments as they are spoken*
5. Pass the heart shaped object to the child on your left for an opportunity to continue giving a compliment and/or pass the heart to the person on their left
6. When the last child has said their compliment encourage them to pass the heart to the child of focus who then places the heart in the basket
7. Collect the pillow and basket and return to storage space

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: heart shaped pillow, heart shaped object, being the center of attention
- Control of Error: teacher, photo of the child, pillow and object

Subsequent Lessons:

- Repeat lesson with inner compliments (thoughts in your head only)
- Compliment circle

## Title: Appreciating Community Helpers



Preliminary Lesson: compliments, thank you notes, community helper identification (matching)

Materials for Lesson: bottle of water, apple, small paper bag, thank you postcard, photo of community helper

### Goals:

- Direct thanking the mail carrier (or other community helper)
- Indirect awareness of human being connected to a public service

Nomenclature: community helper, mail carrier (or other community helper title), appreciation, gesture

### Lesson Demonstration:

1. At group lesson table arrange bottle of water, bucket, ice, photo of mail carrier from community helper matching, thank you card and pencil
2. Tell the children, "Sometimes showing appreciation can be done with a very simple act. A smile, a wave, a word or even a thoughtful offering."
3. Tell the children, "Today we are going to do something nice for our mail carrier to show our appreciation."
4. Pick up the water bottle and say, "As we work in our classroom we take care of our bodies by giving them rest, food, or water. In the mail carrier's vehicle there is no water fountain for a drink when

they get thirsty. With a thoughtful offering, we can show our appreciation for their hard work delivering our daily mail."

5. Place the apple and water into the small paper bag.
6. Sign the thank you postcard and place it on the outside of the bag.
7. Ask a child to deliver the thoughtful offering to the school office/mail collection area for the mail carrier

#### Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: photo of helper, preparing a "surprise gift"
- Control of Error: teacher

#### Subsequent Lessons:

- In large group, "brainstorm" with the children making a list of ways to show appreciation to the community helpers at school and home

Title: Cleaning Our Street

Preliminary Lesson: tray & floor sweeping, recycle sorting, cleaning our earth

Materials for Lesson: broom, dust pan, garden gloves, extendable gripper, white garbage bag , brown recycle bag

Goals:

- Direct strengthening fine motor, picking up trash/recycle, sorting
- Indirect coordination, order, independence, concentration, community & environmental awareness

Nomenclature: neighborhood, responsibility, consideration, respect, garbage, recycle, common space

Lesson Demonstration:

1. At small group lesson define common space, responsibility and consideration
2. Tell the children, "As good neighbors, we can show consideration and be responsible community members when we help keep our common spaces clean. Today we are going into our neighborhood to clean our common spaces. We will be staying on the sidewalks."
3. Ask for volunteers to be responsible for the: garbage bag, recycle bag, extendable gripper, broom & dust pan. Explain what each item is for as they are distributed
4. Distribute gloves for each volunteer and ask them to put them on their hands.
5. Explain, "The gloves are for your protection and keeping your hands clean as you pick up trash. Stop and ask an adult for help if you see the following kinds of trash: broken glass, sharp objects, needles, dead animals... Stop and ask an adult for help if you see trash in the street. Remember that we are staying together on the sidewalks. "
6. Distribute the items in #3 to the corresponding volunteers.
7. Go out to the neighborhood sidewalk to collect trash and sweep.

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: going outdoors, garden gloves and other materials, feeling of satisfaction
- Control of Error: teacher, different color bags for sorting trash/recycling, child's knowledge/practice in sorting trash/recycling

Subsequent Lessons:

- Picking up after your pet
- Group discussions of neighborhood responsibility
- Earth Day activities

Title: How to Write an Invitation / Parts of an Invitation

Preliminary Lesson: we missed you today cards, thank you cards, handwriting, addressing an envelope, calendar, writing the date, clock, writing time, writing your own address

Materials for Lesson: tray, writing pencil, blank cards, stamp pad, party stamp, wet sponge, laminated samples of various types of invitations

Goals:

- Direct handwriting, grasping, learning the parts of an invitation
- Indirect coordination, concentration, independence

Nomenclature: invitation, for, date, time, place, RSVP (From the French RSVP, *répondez s'il vous plaît*, meaning "reply please" or "please respond"), respond, reply, a.m., p.m.

Lesson Demonstration:

1. Bring the invitation tray to a table
2. select a blank card
3. Open the stamp pad
4. Firmly press the party stamp onto the stamp pad
5. Firmly press the party stamp on the blank card
6. Wait a few seconds for the ink to dry
7. Read the stamped words aloud (for, date, time, and place) and as you write the responses say them aloud.
8. Read, "RSVP, that means *répondez s'il vous plaît* in French or *please respond* in English."
9. Explain reasons for RSVP (to know how to prepare for your party: food, drink, chairs, favors...)
10. Place completed invitation in your work drawer/bag/folder
11. Return items to tray and tray to shelf

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest: stamp, parties, inviting
- Control of Error: example cards

Subsequent Lessons:

- Writing invitations to parents for school events

Grace and Courtesy Topic #1:  
Introductions, Greetings and Shaking Hands

As part of our classroom curriculum we practice many instances of grace and courtesy. This helps to make our classroom environment respectful, safe, and peaceful. We find that practicing social graces helps to ease social anxiety. This prepares the children for interacting in social situations in the classroom and in life.



This month as children are settling into their new environment we will be practicing introductions, greetings and shaking hands. When your child arrives we focus our full attention on them. We extend our right hand for a gentle shake and greet each child by name. This individual attention promotes a sense of sincerity and respect for each person in the classroom. By modeling courteous greetings we reinforce formal grace and courtesy lessons that are demonstrated in a group setting. In the group the children have first learned each other's names and faces. Language and phrases of introduction have been supplied in word and song. (Ask your child to teach you the "Good Day Everybody" song!) After providing the language we act out introducing each other in large group. We encourage the children to practice this new skill throughout the day.

We invite you to partner with us in guiding the children as they practice these skills. Some opportunities for practicing introductions, greetings and shaking hands may arise at social gatherings (i.e. worship services, parties, play dates, office visits...). Prior to these, please include all of the family in relaxed practice of introductions and greetings possibly using some or all of the following phrases:

- "Hi! I'm \_\_\_\_\_. What's your name?" (informal)
- "Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_." (formal)
- "May I introduce you to \_\_\_\_\_." (formal)
- "Good morning/afternoon/evening. How are you?"

Responses:

- "Nice to meet you."
- "I'm fine, thank you."



Let Us Know:

How did this work for you? We would love to hear any anecdotes or suggestions that you want to share. Use this portion to send your comments OR email a "Grace and Courtesy" message to us at:

Title:

Preliminary Lesson:

Materials for Lesson:

Goals:

- Direct
- Indirect

Nomenclature:

Lesson Demonstration:

Montessori Elements:

- Points of Interest
- Control of Error

Subsequent Lessons:

## Letters Home:

August 2011 - Introductions, Greetings and Shaking Hands

September 2011 - Introduction Review and Asking Someone to Play or Join

October 2011 - Giving and Receiving

November 2011 - Table Manners (setting a table, passing food around the table, use of place cards for a dinner party)

December 2011 - Thank You Cards

January 2012 - Common Courtesies (using a tissue for nose blowing, saying "Bless you" when someone sneezes, hand washing, holding a door open for, saying "Excuse me"...) )

February 2012 - Giving and Receiving Compliments

March 2012 - Reaching Out to the Community (saying "I'm glad you're my neighbor" to people in the school neighborhood)

April 2012 - Care of the Community (picking up trash, sweeping sidewalks...)

May 2012 - Continuing Grace and Courtesy