

Good Qualities in the Mail

A Classroom Activity

Preparation:

The teacher prepares a handout listing each student in the class in a vertical column, with horizontal lines between the names, and enough space for the children to write a quality next to each name. The teacher also prepares an envelope for each student with his or her name printed clearly on the BACK. These envelopes are attached to a bulletin board (or taped to the blackboard), with the names facing forward, and the envelopes OPEN.

Reading and Discussion:

After reading *The Only One Club* with the class, the teacher discusses the difference between positive and negative qualities. As a class, practice brainstorming several positive qualities for well-known storybook or movie characters, i.e. The Three Little Pigs: they are independent, they build nice houses, they run fast, they help each other. Ramona: she is creative, she tries hard, she has very straight hair, she writes her name very nicely. Harry Potter: studies hard for tests, helps his friends, is very brave. Show that positive qualities can be found even for villains, i.e. The Big Bad Wolf: doesn't give up easily, is clever, knows how to disguise his voice. Voldemort: is a talented wizard, doesn't give up easily. Students should learn that you can always find something good to say about another person.

Activity:

Each student receives a copy of the handout and thinks creatively, trying to come up with a special positive quality for every other student in the class. (Only positive qualities are permitted.) They can be physical qualities (has lovely red-head), or related to skills and talents (draws horses very well), or likes and dislikes (the only one who likes cauliflower, the only one who doesn't like pizza), or behaviors (helps me pull off my boots, shares her eraser, calls me on the phone when I'm sick). Students do NOT sign their names anywhere on this page so everything remains anonymous. If they absolutely can't think of a something special about someone, they can leave it blank, but try to avoid this. Teacher can walk around the room while students are writing, and give hints or ideas when someone is stuck.

When they've written a quality next to each name, students cut along the horizontal lines and "mail" the qualities to their recipients by placing them in the appropriate envelopes on the board.

When all of the students have "mailed" the qualities to each recipient, the teacher should check through each envelope to remove any negative comments that may have been included (and discreetly dispose of them). Then the envelopes are sealed and "delivered" to the appropriate child, perhaps by announcing "Special Delivery for Lisa" "Special Delivery for Jason" and having the kids come up to get their envelopes.

The students open their envelopes and read all of the ways their classmates feel they are special and unique.

Optional:

Students can glue all of the qualities they received onto a piece of construction paper, with their name on top. A photo of the child can also be attached. Everyone's "special qualities" lists are posted onto bulletin boards around the room, for everyone to see and read.