

Dear Parents:

This summer we invite you and your family to participate in Nativity's Summer of Kindness Challenge.

Did you know . . .

- Empathy is one of the top character traits that leads to happy and successful children
- Teens are 40% less empathetic than 30 years ago
- Empathy can be learned (and guess who they learn it from most often... their parents, teachers, and adults in their community)
- Children imitate both kind and selfish behaviors modeled by adults. (Ask yourself... "if my child modeled only my behavior, what would that look like?")
- Empathy needs to be practiced regularly. . . which is why we've created "Nativity's Summer of Kindness" challenge for this summer.

The details:

**When:** Summer of 2018 (July and August)

**Who:** You and your family; however, kindness is contagious! Don't be surprised if your neighbors or friends want to participate as well. Send them to our website where the challenge will be posted: <http://www.nativity-lutheran.org/summer-of-kindness/>

**How:** We challenge you to complete at least 30 intentional acts of kindness this summer. We've provided more than 30 so that you can choose what inspires you most and allow some flexibility. If you create your own, please share it with us! There are no specific rules. Get creative! Put your own spin on the suggested tasks. You can do the tasks in the order listed or cut them out and randomly select them from a jar each day. (what a great solution for moments when your child may say "I'm bored")

**Talk about it:** Ask your child "How did that make you feel?" "How do you think the person felt when you..." Help your child realize their blessings of food, bed, hot water, toys, education, etc. They may not realize that not everyone has these!

**Share:** Please share photos, stories, etc. with us! You can post on our Nativity facebook group or email to [Janineingle@gmail.com](mailto:Janineingle@gmail.com) and she will share them. Check out our Summer of Kindness Bulletin Board at church to add post-it notes or pictures of what you've done!

**Celebrate!:** It's okay to feel good about this! Celebrate your kind acts and share with others. Kindness is contagious. By celebrating your acts of kindness you may inspire others to be kind as well. Isn't that what we want?

**Why:** "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." -1 Peter 4:10

**Parenting information about Empathy:**

This link provides some simple and useful tips on how to get started on teaching your child empathy from the book "Unselfie" by Michele Borba: <https://tinyurl.com/teachthemempathy>

HAVE FUN!

# Nativity's Summer of Kindness

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

-John 13: 34

*1. Donate old towels and blankets to New Beginnings Animal Shelter	*2. Send a handmade card to one of our homebound members	3. Invite a friend to church.	*4. Go through your toys and donate to kids who don't have	5. Visit the park or beach. Pick up 5 pieces of trash (or more!) before you play
6. Bring in your neighbors trash cans or recycling bins.	7. Leave a thank you note for the mail carrier.	8. Bake cookies for a friend, family member, neighbor, etc.	9. Compliment five people today	10. Leave coloring book and crayons in a doctor's waiting room
11. List 5 things that you're thankful for. Say a prayer thanking God for these gifts.	12. Buy extra food on your next shopping trip - bring to church and leave in the bin in Narthex	13. Smile and say hello to EVERY person you see today	14. Leave pennies heads up wherever you go today.	15. Pay for ice cream for someone else at the ice cream truck or ice cream stand.
16. Leave uplifting notes with sidewalk chalk (in your neighborhood, at the playground, at church, etc)	17. Write a handwritten letter to someone and snail mail it!! Tell them what they mean to you.	18. Leave a nice note or draw a picture for someone to find in a Hymnal at Church.	*19. Recycle old markers that no longer work so that they don't end up in the trash.	20. When back to school shopping, buy extra supplies and leave in the bin in the Narthex to be donated.
*21. Help the ushers by collecting offering or handing out bulletins	*22. Start a jar to collect change for noisy offering	23. Donate gently used books to your school or local library	24. Send a card to a grandparent or relative	25. Write pastor a letter and leave it in her mailbox at church.
26. Set up a "free. take one" box at the park. (Bubbles, chalk, temporary tattoos, sand toys, gently used toys you don't play with anymore, etc.)	27. Buy a bottle of water for construction men, police officers, lifeguards, garbage collectors, etc. in your neighborhood. especially on a hot day	28. Buy flowers and hand them out to strangers. (At the mall, library, grocery store etc.). Not that bold? Hand them out at church	29. Leave "you're beautiful" or other positive post-it notes on public bathroom mirrors. (if you do this at church you have permission to use glass markers or Expo).	30. Let someone else go first (a stranger in line at the store, let a friend or sibling play with a toy first, etc)
31. As a family Pray for Nativity & the people there	32. Tape quarters to a vending machine.	33. Hold the door for someone going into a store	34. Invite a new friend over to play	35. Make up your own act of kindness!

(\* For starred items... See back for more detailed information)

Additional Information. Please contact [Janineingle@gmail.com](mailto:Janineingle@gmail.com) if you have any questions or need ideas for places to donate to.

1. New Beginnings Animal Shelter: 706-R Cranbury Road. East Brunswick, NJ 08816. (732) 238-1348. <https://newbeginningsanimalrescuenj.org/> On their website they have their hours of operations as well as what donations they are currently in need of. Towels and Paper Towels are always needed and appreciated.
2. Email [Janineingle@gmail.com](mailto:Janineingle@gmail.com) for the mailing address for one or more of our homebound members. OR.... Homebound members are listed in the bulletin each week at worship. Mailing addresses can be found in the church directory. Pick one up in the Narthex. (usually on the Usher's stand).
4. Donate to the Crisis Room. Address: 562 Ryders Lane, East Brunswick (little white house up the street from Nativity). Donations can be dropped off on the front porch at any time. They also have a large white dropbox for donating clothing.
19. Bring in markers that no longer work to Nativity. There is a collection bin in the Narthex that will get mailed to Crayola to be recycled. (any brand of markers are accepted, not just Crayola)
21. Just show up to worship on Sunday at 10am and let Pastor or one of the ushers know that you and/or your child would like to help out!
22. You'll be hearing about "Noisy offering" soon at worship. Physically donating money is a great way for children to learn about giving to others in need. If your kids get an allowance you can encourage them to give a certain amount each week to their "noisy offering" jar. Maybe offer extra coins for doing extra chores around the house. Be creative. Our goal will be for our children to collect coins and donate enough to save up for a cow in the Good Gifts program. (Cows cost \$500). To learn more about Good Gifts go to: <https://community.elca.org/elcagoodgifts>

**PARENTS!** Remember that children model your behavior. Lead by example. Here are some more "Grown-up" acts of kindness you can do!

1. Donate blood! There will be a blood drive at Nativity on July 8th.	2. skip your morning coffee purchase and put that extra money in the offering plate or donate to a charity of your choice	3. bring in the grocery cart for someone	4. Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru	5. Tip big at a restaurant
6. Cut out coupons you're not going to use and then stick them on the appropriate items while you're at the store.	7. Make "blessing bags": Fill small bags with drinks, snacks, socks, personal hygiene items etc. and keep them in your car, to hand out those less fortunate than yourself.	8. Double your recipe at dinner. Send the second dinner to one of our homebound members, a new mom, or an elderly neighbor.	9. Offer to take little children into the nursery during the sermon at worship. (I know a few parents who will never turn down the offer)	10. Read aloud to your children. Fiction books increase our capacity for empathy.