



The Caring Tree (AGES 9-12)

Time

Approx 45 minutes

Objective

This activity invites children to recognise and celebrate some of the caring people in their lives. The 'work of caring' while often unpaid, is some of the most important work we get to do for one another in the world.

Materials and preparation

- Flip chart paper
- Tape
- Blank pieces of paper
- Photocopy and cut out one leaf per participant.

Draw the outline of a tree on a big sheet of newsprint. Participants will tape their leaves on this tree.

Introducing the activity

Start with brainstorm. Pose the following questions to the group and compile a list of answers on the flip chart:

- What does it mean to care for someone?
- How do you know when someone cares about you?
- What kinds of things do people do to show you they care?

Prompts, if needed:

- Does anyone ever make your lunch?
- Give you a ride somewhere?
- Offer you good advice?
- Help out with homework?



The Caring Tree (CONTINUED)

Ask everyone to draw a large circle on a piece of paper and then to divide the circle into four 'pieces of a pie' and write a different title in each quadrant. (Show a slide with the words to help with spelling.)

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbours
- People at school

Ask everyone to consider the first quadrant, "Family" and do two things:

- **Write down the name of one family member who cares for you in some way. This can be a child or an adult.**

Offer a few examples:

- A mum who teaches you sport
- A dad who listens
- A grandma or grandpa who cooks meals
- A brother or sister who helps with homework.

- **Next to that person's name, write down the little or big ways this person shows that he or she cares.**

- Repeat steps (1) and (2) for the remaining three quadrants: Friends, Neighbours, and People at school.
- Hand out a paper leaf to each participant. Ask everyone to choose one person from their circle to 'introduce' to group. Write his or her name in big bold letters in the centre of a leaf.
- Have a caring tree ceremony. Each child stands up, introduces their caring person to the group, and tapes the leaf to the caring tree.

Discussion questions

- Think of a person you care a lot about. What sorts of things do you say or do to show this person that you care?

Sample conclusions

- Lots of adults work hard and go to work. Lots of kids study hard and earn marks at school. There's also the important 'work of caring' that is rewarding.
 - Caring is one of the most important kinds of work each of us gets to do every day in every area of our lives. Of course, we can do things without care, but that takes out all the fun and meaning of life.
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