

Heart to Heart

Celebrating Valentine's Day with Nursing Home Residents

OBJECTIVES:

- To learn the value of giving to others.
- To learn the importance of being actively involved in the community.
- To understand the process of planning an activity for others.

Note to the Volunteer: Prior to visiting the nursing home, help the children prepare the refreshments and favors. Prepare the children for the visit by: practicing the songs and finger plays ahead of time; letting them know what to expect from your schedule of planned activities; and also what to expect from the nursing home residents.

GROUP SIZE:

6 to 8 children per adult volunteer.

TIME FRAME:

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes.

BACKGROUND:

Help children learn the value of community service by planning a Valentine's Day party for residents of a local nursing home or convalescent center. Perhaps a 4-H member has a grandparent or friend in a nursing home that would welcome young visitors. Sing a few songs, make a valentine together, share a valentine treat, and leave a special valentine gift or favor are all activities that would be appreciated by senior citizens in a nursing home. Check with the center director or activities coordinator to determine what else residents might enjoy.



LIFE SKILL AREAS

Children will learn social skills by working together in planning and setting up the party. Decision making skills will be used by deciding what to include, how to present it, and who will be responsible for each job. Fine motor skills will be developed by decorating cookies and making valentines. Large motor skills will be developed by setting up for the party and participating in the motions to the songs.

HELPS TO THE VOLUNTEER

Try these suggestions:

- Choose one or two of the following activities from each section.
- Try to create appropriate atmosphere by decorating the room with posters and props, using costumes related to the activity, pre-meeting preparation by the 4-H members, thinking about special seating arrangements, and playing background music.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

I. GETTING STARTED

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Making Valentine Favors"

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: milk chocolate candy "kisses," red or pink tissue paper cut into 8" squares, white curling ribbon cut in 18" lengths.

Note to the Volunteer: Do these activities prior to visiting the nursing home.

Talk about doing kind and thoughtful things for others. Ask if the children can think of anything kind and thoughtful that has been done for them lately. What was it? Who did it? Explain that you are going to do something nice for someone - you are going to make party favors for residents of a nursing home. Show them how to take several pieces of candy and place them in the center of two pieces of tissue paper (one piece is too thin). Gather the edges up and tie with lengths of curling ribbon. Have an adult curl the ends of the ribbon. Let the children decorate the little packages with stickers. Carefully tuck them into a box or bag and store them in a cool place until you need them.

Application: Ask children to think of kind and thoughtful things they can do at home for their parents and siblings.

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Decorating Sugar Cookies"

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: several dozen heart-shaped sugar cookies (baked ahead), canned white frosting, red food color, red decorator sugar, mixing bowl, spatula, wax paper, plastic knives, and an airtight container or airtight sealable plastic bags.

Ask the children to wash their hands before beginning. Show the children the icing. Have them help you empty the container into the bowl. Ask if anyone has ever colored icing before. Let them decide how many drops of food coloring to put in. Count out loud as you put the drops in. Before icing the cookies, ask the children to remember to keep their hands clean. Ask how they think they can do this. (Remind them to keep their hands out of their mouth if it is not mentioned.) Tell the children they can ice a cookie for themselves after the rest are done. Give each child a piece of wax paper that measures approximately 18", several cookies, and a plastic knife. Drop several spoonfuls of icing on the corner of their paper and let them ice the cookies. Let them sprinkle red decorator sugar lightly on the iced cookies. Carefully package the cookies and save them for your visit to the nursing home. Let the children prepare for themselves - and for you - a cookie. Enjoy!

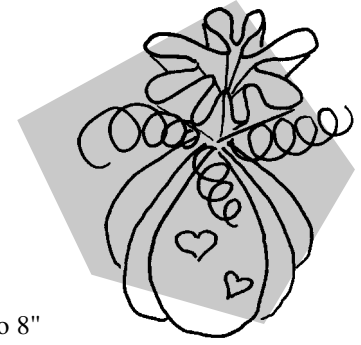
II. DIGGING DEEPER

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "On-Site Party Preparations / Clean-up"

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: table for refreshments with table cloth, cookies, punch, cups, and napkins; table for making valentines with pre-cut construction paper pop-ups, scissors, stickers, markers.

Help the children plan ahead for getting ready and cleaning up after the party is over. Give them the responsibility of making a list of what's needed and making sure it is packed. Let them decide who will do each job necessary to set up the refreshment table and valentine making table. Let them also decide who will help with the clean-up.



☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Making Pop-Up Valentines"

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: red, white, and pink construction paper, scissors, valentine stickers, markers, pop-up valentine pattern. (To save time, an adult can pre-cut and fold the Valentines).

Encourage the children to make valentines with a special senior friend. Pair each child with a resident of the nursing home. Show them how to fold their valentines. Let them decorate it with stickers and markers. Help the children personalize the valentine for their senior friend with a message and their signature. When they are finished, have them present their Valentine to their friend.



Note to the Volunteer: Have the children make several extra valentines to use in the "Cloverbud Art Exhibit" lesson in the subject area of Community / Expressive Arts.

Application: Ask the children to think of someone they could make a special valentine for at home.

III. LOOKING WITHIN

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Sharing Special Valentine Songs"

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: none.

Gather the children into a group to sing a few songs for the residents. Invite everyone to join along if they wish. Here are some suggestions for songs:

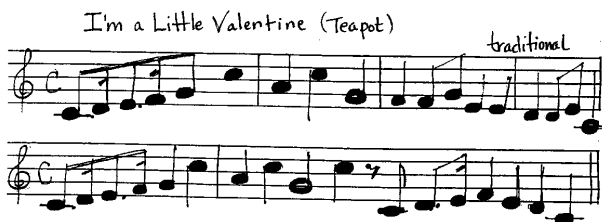
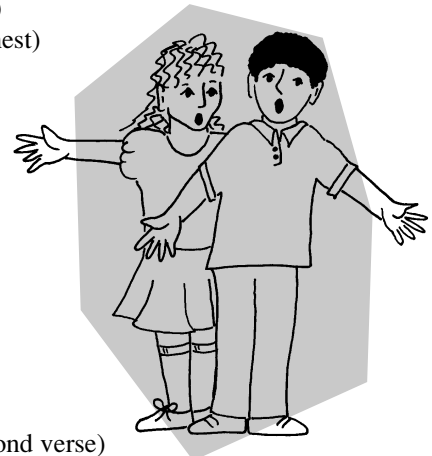
I'm a Little Valentine
 (sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a little Valentine All white and red. I'm covered with hearts From my toes to my head. I'm made with bits of ribbon And lots of glue. And I have a secret message That says, "I love you!"	(cup hands to make a heart) (point to several places on flat palm) (touch toes, then head) (tie a bow) (use fingers to spread glue on opposite palm) (hold finger to lips) (cross arms over chest)
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10 Little Valentine Cookies
 (sung to the tune of "Ten Little Indians")

One little, two little, three little valentines
 Four little, five little, six little valentines.
 Seven little, eight little, nine little valentines
 Ten little valentine cookies.
 Ten little, nine little, eight little valentines
 Seven little, six little, five little valentines.
 Four little, three little, two little valentines
 One little valentine cookie.

(hold up a finger for each number sung, reverse for the second verse)



IV. BRINGING CLOSURE



ACTIVITY: "How Did It Go?"

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: none.

Ask the children to think about the success of the Valentine Party:

- Was it what you expected?
- Did things run smoothly?
- Why or why not?
- Would you make any changes if you did it again?
- Did you learn anything from the experience? What?
- Would you do it again?

