



Hello my fellow UU and long time, no see! How are you doing? This year has been quite a challenge for all of us and I am so proud to know that you have handled it so well! I mean, I'm sure there have been moments when you wish everything would just go back to normal, but WOW! You are doing an incredible job at finding new ways to have fun and you probably even made some wonderful memories in the process. We had to get pretty creative here and I'm sure you have had to do the same. Since we can't meet in person, it's taken a long time to figure out how to do RE this year, but I think I may have a plan.

So... do you like getting mail? If you are reading this, then I am guessing that you do!! Here's the idea - I would like for you to keep an eye out every month for a little something from me. I will send you a letter with an idea to think about or discuss with your family as well as a couple other "fun" things to do. To start us off this month, we will think about generosity and kindness. These are both qualities that I am sure you have heard of and are probably really good at, but it never hurts to have a refresher or get a different perspective. Not only do these qualities prove quite handy during the holiday season, but they can be used at any time to help you grow into the person you would like to be.

Each month, I will also include a postcard. To start with, I would love it if you could send the first one back to me as a way to say hello! Maybe draw a picture, add a little note or if you wanted to be super extra, you could tell me about a time you were kind to someone or someone was kind to you. I can't wait to hear from you - I've got a couple Zoom ideas in the works that I hope will be a fun way for us to get to be "together" again!

# KINDNESS

Read these questions to someone in your family and see what they have to say!

1. Why would kindness have helped early humans survive?
2. What do you do when you struggle to be kind?
3. Why do you think is it important to be kind to yourself?
4. In what ways are you kind to yourself?
5. What is the difference between being kind and being nice?
6. When have I shown you kindness?

For me, my biggest struggle right now is when Tella, Emme and Lulu (the terrible toddler) are unkind towards each other or me. I try my best to take a break (or take a really deep breath) and think about what is going on in their life that may make them unable to be kind in that moment and then I talk to them about why they are having such a hard time. This year has been especially hard for all of us and we all need a little extra kindness from those we love.

Did you know a hug releases a chemical in our body called oxytocin which can reduce stress and slow down your heart rate? This not only helps you and the other person calm down, but also reminds the person how much you love them.

**BE KIND TO YOURSELF.** You are #1 in YOUR life. If you don't take care of YOU, it's hard to be the type of person you would like to be. Healthy habits such as getting enough sleep, eating well and getting outside for fresh air and exercise can give you the strength to get through any challenges you might face that day or in the future.



# GENEROSITY

Did you know you can be generous in lots of ways – not just with money? Three ways to do this are by using your **TIME, TREASURE** and **TALENT**. Have you helped prepare lunches for the Upper Room or read to a shelter dog? That's **TIME** you've spent being generous. Have you ever donated old toys or clothes to someone who may not have as much as you? Then you've been generous with your **TREASURES**. And if you have helped a friend or sibling by reading to them or taught them something new, then you have been generously donating your **TALENT**. Remember: Being generous helps us find value in ourselves. We can **ALWAYS** find joy in what we already have and find fulfillment, meaning and value in helping others.

## THREE WAYS TO BE GENEROUS

**Act in Service.** Think about (and as an added bonus actually find out) what people in Erie need and then think of something you could do that would serve this particular need. For instance, schools and other organizations always need extra hands. Sometimes, it's painting a mural, cleaning up trash, or reading to younger children. Where would you help out? The benefit of practicing this kind of local generosity is that you have a chance to witness the effects of your giving. And remember, when you are generous towards someone (even if it's a sibling), be sure to take time to think about how your act of generosity made you feel. It is a great way to make you want to be generous over and over and over and over...(you see where I'm going with this???) again.

**Smile.** Have you ever smiled at a fussy baby at the grocery store? Hopefully they gave you a smile right back and you probably made their mom smile as well! Here's an idea - when we make it back to school in person, try and find someone you don't know and offer them a smile at least once a day for a month. If you are able, keep a journal to remember how it makes you feel each day.

**Practice Self-Love.** Being generous with ourselves can be a lifelong challenge. To help with this, I encourage you to practice self-love. For a fun little experiment, look at yourself in the mirror. Look deeply and say five nice things to yourself. For me, I like to tell myself that I think my hair is great (while in actuality it's always been something I didn't really like). While you do this, be sure to think about how it feels to be generous toward yourself. It might seem silly, but do this often! Our brains are amazing and LOVE the power of suggestion. Say something to yourself enough times (whether it's good or bad) and you start to believe it. BTW - I am actually starting to like my hair now.

Make sure other family members practice this as well!