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Manatee Appreciation Day

Actual Holiday: Last Wednesday
in March

First Celebrated: Unknown



Introduction

The gentle manatee is a large mammal that lives in shallow waters and spends most of its days eating plants. It has no natural predators but became endangered because of interactions with and behaviors of humans. While its population has grown, the manatee is still in need of protection. Celebrate this day in your classroom by having students learn more about this peaceful mammal.

Materials (for the teacher)

- *Manatee Facts* information sheet (page 21)
- scissors
- tape (optional)

The Activity

- Tell students that today they will be celebrating Manatee Appreciation Day. Ask students if anyone has ever seen a manatee in person, on TV, or on the internet. Discuss what students already know and tell them some more facts about manatees:

- Manatees can be almost 10 feet (3 meters) long and weigh 800 to 1,200 pounds (360 to 550 kg). They are mostly vegetarian (although they might accidentally eat a fish or invertebrate while they are eating plants). They spend most of their days eating and can eat about 100 pounds (45 kg) a day.
- Manatees have two flippers that they use to steer and to help them eat. They also have a flat, paddle-shaped tail that they move up and down to push themselves forward.
- Manatees are mammals and have to breathe air even though they spend their entire lives underwater. They usually surface to breathe every three to five minutes. If they are resting, they can stay underwater for as long as 20 minutes.
- Manatees live in rivers, canals, and coastal areas in shallow waters wherever they can find seagrass or other plants. In the summer months, they migrate to the ocean.
- Manatees cannot survive in cold water. The water they live in has to be over 60°F (15°C).
- Manatees can live in saltwater or freshwater. Their bodies adapt to their environment.
- Manatees aren't like any other ocean creatures. Their closest relatives are the elephant and the hyrax, which is a small, rodent-like animal that lives in Africa and the Middle East.
- Manatees have no natural enemies. They became endangered because of human behavior. Manatees were hunted in the past and although they are protected now, they still have to watch out for fast-moving watercraft in the ocean. They are too slow to get out of the way and can be hit.

- Find out how much students have learned by playing a game in one of two ways:
 - Cut out the "Yes" or "No" signs at the bottom of the *Manatee Facts* activity sheet and tape them to two sides of the classroom. Then read the facts from the activity sheet aloud. Students can pretend to swim very slowly to the side of the room that they think agrees with the statement.
 - Distribute a set of "Yes" or "No" signs to students. Then read the facts from the top of the page aloud. If they agree with a statement, they can hold the "Yes" sign up high like a manatee surfacing from the water. If they do not agree, they can hold the "No" sign in front of them like a manatee resting under the surface.
- After the game, discuss manatees with students. How do they feel about these animals? Should manatees be protected? How would students help if they could?

Manatee Facts

Manatees love cold water and can be found near icebergs. (No)

Manatees eat about 100 pounds (45 kg) of food a day. (Yes)

Manatees never have to breathe. (No)

Manatees move very quickly. (No)

Manatees can stay underwater for 20 minutes when resting. (Yes)

Manatees have three flippers. (No)

Manatees are related to elephants. (Yes)

Manatees live in the ocean in the summer. (Yes)

Manatees have to look out for sharks. (No)

Manatees are in danger of being hit by boats. (Yes)

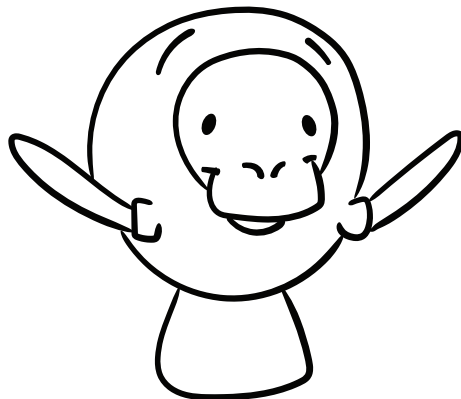
Manatees only live in saltwater. (No)

Manatees use flippers to help them eat. (Yes)

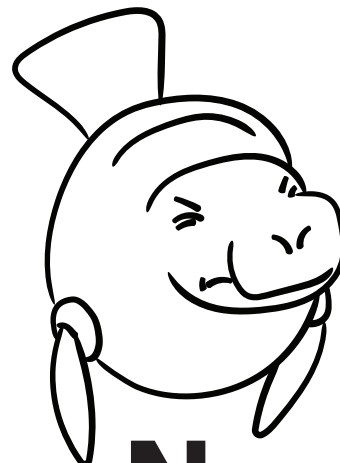
Manatees try to eat a lot of fish. (No)

Manatees are closely related to seals. (No)

Manatees are related to the hyrax, a small land mammal in Africa and the Middle East. (Yes)



Yes



No

World Kindness Day

Actual Holiday: November 13

First Celebrated: 1998



Introduction

World Kindness Day was started by the World Kindness Movement. It's a day to highlight good deeds and focus on the positive power of kindness. Kindness brings us together and helps us connect with one another. Celebrate this day in your classroom by talking about kindness and having students take part in a kindness challenge that will help them learn how good it feels to be kind to others.

Materials

- *My Kindness Challenge* activity sheet (page 71)
- pencils
- art supplies

The Activity

- Tell students that today they will be celebrating World Kindness Day. Begin a discussion about kindness by telling them about a time when someone did something kind for you and how meaningful that was to you.
- Ask students to talk about times when someone was kind to them without expecting anything in return. How did it make them feel? Did that experience make them want to do something kind for that person or for other people?
- Tell students that they are going to take part in a kindness challenge. Have them think about kind things that they could do for people whom they know and people whom they do not know. Write these ideas on the board. The following are some suggestions to add to student ideas:

- | | |
|--|--|
| - Set the table without being asked. | - Leave positive notes in a public space. |
| - Help make meals at home. | - Put change in a vending machine. |
| - Bake cookies for a neighbor. | - Hold a door open for someone. |
| - Help an elderly neighbor. | - Make a thank you sign for a sanitation worker. |
| - Talk to someone sitting alone. | - Pick up litter and put it in the trash. |
| - Invite someone sitting alone to play at recess. | - Put a kindness note in a library book you are returning. |
| - Donate toys. | - Color some kindness rocks. |
| - Donate books you no longer read. | - Send someone a letter or postcard through the mail telling them they are important to you. |
| - Donate food, blankets, or towels to an animal shelter. | - Write positive messages in chalk on the sidewalk. |
| - Smile at five new people. | |

- Have students decide what three of acts of kindness they would like to perform. Distribute the *My Kindness Challenge* activity sheet to students. Have them write about or draw the three acts of kindness they chose.
- Post the drawings on a bulletin board or in another prominent location. Give students a time frame (a couple of weeks or longer) in which you would like them to perform their acts of kindness. When students have completed their acts of kindness, they should write the date that they did them on their activity sheets below each picture or written description. If possible, ask parents or family members to take pictures and email the pictures to you so that you can add them to the display. When students have performed all three of their acts of kindness and reported back to you, add a smiley face or a star to their drawings.
- When a large number of students have reported back that they have performed their acts of kindness, have a class discussion about their experiences. How did they feel when they did their acts of kindness? Did they experience anything unexpected? Would they do it again? Were there any acts of kindness they especially liked performing? If they were kind to specific people, how did those people react? Did other people's reactions make them want to perform more acts of kindness? What did they learn about kindness?

Name: _____

My Kindness Challenge

