



Content developed by

from Nemours

Learning Goals

- Helping is nice for the person getting help, but it's even better for the helper!
- Helping can boost self-esteem, happiness, and even grades!
- Helping is contagious. When we act in helpful ways, the people around us will, too.
- Use empathy to know how someone wants to be helped.

Print Out Before Class

Bring copies for everyone:

- *Ways I Can Help Others* handout
- *Things to Know* handout
- *Tips From Michael Phelps* handout

OTHER MATERIALS

- Markers, pencils, or pens — enough for everyone

Lesson 8: Help Others and Let Them Help You

TEACHER NOTE

Helping is good for us. It has even more benefit for the helper than for the person being helped.

We'll talk about empathy and explain how to help in a way that takes the other person's perspective into account. We'll position helping as a positive norm and reinforce the ways kids already help. We'll talk about reasons kids might hesitate to ask for help and encourage them to ask for help whenever they need it.

QUICK TIPS

- *Helping builds self-esteem, positive emotions, empathy, and social connection.*
- *Helping is also contagious — it quickly becomes a norm and builds stronger relationships in groups, families, or classrooms.*
- *All of these benefits increase resilience, which provides a buffer when kids face stress or hardship.*

START THE DISCUSSION

1. Why do people help?

Instructor: All italicized text is intended as notes to teachers. All other text may be read out loud to your class.

Can someone help me give out the [markers/pens/pencils], please? And who can help me by passing around this handout? Thanks!

Work together with kids to distribute pens and the Ways I Can Help Others handout.

It's nice when someone lends a hand. Many times, it just happens naturally. You ask somebody to help, like I just did. Or someone notices you could use a hand and they offer to help.



Take It Home!

We'll encourage kids to look for opportunities to help, and to ask for help. They'll take home three handouts. One is a summary of the lesson. The other, done in class, has their own ideas for ways they can help during the week ahead. Kids will also take home the *Tips From Michael Phelps* handout as a recap of what they learned.

Resources

KidsHealth:

- About Getting and Giving Help
- Asking for Help: Getting Past Obstacles
- Be a Volunteer

(Lesson 8: [Help Others and Let Them Help You](#), continued)

Little acts of helping like this happen every day. They make our lives nicer, friendlier, and easier.

It's part of human nature to help. Our brains are designed to notice what others feel or need. We all have an instinct to show we care.

Have you heard the expression "walking in someone else's shoes"?

Who can say what that means?

Let someone answer

- know what it's like for them
- see what they're going through
- understand them
- see their side
- see how they feel

That ability to understand how another person might be feeling is called empathy.

Helping often starts because of empathy. We see what someone needs and we want to help. It doesn't stop there, though.

The more we help, the more our empathy grows stronger. Why is it good to build up empathy? Because empathy is a skill that helps us get along well with others.

You might think you're doing a good deed for someone else when you help them. And you are. But guess what? You're actually helping yourself too!



(Lesson 8: [Help Others and Let Them Help You](#), continued)

2. Helping is good for you.

Helping boosts your empathy, but it's good for you in other ways. People who help others:

- are happier and more upbeat
- cope better with stress
- feel calmer
- feel capable and strong
- are more grateful for good things
- build better friendships and feel closer to people

What does all this mean to you? Well, for one thing you might get better grades! Yes, really. It's possible that all the positive feelings you get from helping others might unlock your own ability to do well.

Most of all, helping is contagious. It spreads to others. When you are kind and giving, others are too. They want to help you back or help other people.

Better grades, better friendships, feeling good about yourself — it all sounds great, right? So, why don't you tell me about some of the ways you already help others, or things kids your age can do for other people?

Let kids answer. If they need prompts, here are some ideas:

- do a favor for a friend
- volunteer to help the teacher in class
- show someone how to do something
- say something kind to a friend who's feeling down
- help a younger brother or sister with homework
- collect money for a good cause
- do chores at home
- include someone or stand up for someone
- volunteer for a community clean-up



(Lesson 8: [Help Others and Let Them Help You](#), continued)

And here's something to think about when you help:

3. Use your empathy to understand what kind of help the other person might want from you.

Sometimes what the **other** person might want is different from what **we** might want to do to help them.

Let's use an example.

Let's say you know a friend who is working on a poster for her science project. She asks her older sister, who's a pretty good artist, for help. The sister says, "Here, I'll help you — give me the markers." She takes over and makes the poster. In the end your friend is glad the project is finished, and it looks good. But she can't really feel proud of the poster. Can you see what happened?

Let them answer.

- It wasn't her work so she couldn't feel proud of it.
- She wanted to learn how to make a poster.
- She wanted her sister to show her, not do it for her.
- The sister meant well, but it wasn't the best way to help.

Has that ever happened to you — when someone helped you in a way that you didn't really like or find useful? When someone did it for you instead of showed you how? Maybe **they** felt good — but how did it make **you** feel?

It can make you feel small or like you can't be good at something. Do you think this is one reason why some people don't ask for help?

Helping is supposed to make the **other** person feel cared for, relieved, less stressed, or good about themselves. It's not supposed to make them feel like they can't do something.

When we use our empathy to understand the other person, it gives us clues for how to help.

Sometimes the other person might just want you to do something for them — like your mom wants you to wash the dishes for her, not show her how!

But if you're helping your little brother with his math homework, he might want you to show him in a way that lets him learn and try for himself.





(Lesson 8: [Help Others and Let Them Help You](#), continued)

Try to notice what's the best way to help that person in that situation.

Many times, your empathy helps you know what another person needs without even asking. For example, you notice that a classmate is sad and needs your kindness. You know without asking that your parent will be less stressed if you pitch in to do an extra chore at home. You see your teacher carrying two boxes of books and you offer to carry one.

But what if you're not sure what another person wants or needs? Ask them! It can sound like this: "Hey, can I help you with that?" or "What can I do to help you?"

4. How to ask for help.

What about when **you** need help? Are you as good at asking for help as you are at giving it?

It's good practice to ask for help whenever you need or want it. What kind of help can you ask for? Any kind! You can ask someone to:

- help you with schoolwork
- help you study for a test
- give advice about a problem
- coach you to get better at something
- show you how to do something
- help you feel better if you're upset
- answer questions about things you want to understand

Do you ever stop yourself from asking for help because you're not sure if it will make you feel good or bad?

What are some reasons you might stop yourself from asking for help?

Let them answer.

- You think you shouldn't need help.
- You don't want to bother someone.
- Getting help will make you feel bad about yourself.
- The person you ask will say no.



(Lesson 8: [Help Others and Let Them Help You](#), continued)

Try not to let these worries stop you from asking for help.

Remember that:

- Everyone deserves help, including you!
- The right kind of help makes you feel good about yourself.
- When you let others help you, you can be better at helping others.

There's always someone who will be happy to help you. Remember, when someone helps you, it's good for them too!

5. Let's try it.

Now let's look at the handout. Fill in the blanks to write down ways you already help others. Write down ways that others have helped you.

Think of three ways you could help someone this coming week. Who can you help? How? Write it down.

Give kids time to do the activity.

Would anyone like to share one thing you wrote down?

Ask for volunteers to share: a way they help already, a way they will help someone this week, a way that someone has helped them, and how they felt.

6. What have we learned?

- It's good to give help — and it's good to ask for help.
- One act of helping leads to more kindness and helping. When you help others, they act more helpful too.
- Helping others lets you feel happier, more capable, and closer to other people.
- Think about how others might want to be helped.
- If you hesitate to ask for help, or if you don't like the way someone is helping you, think of the reasons why.



7. Take the next step.

Pass out the Things to Know and Tips from Michael Phelps handouts.

Remember those three ways to help others that you wrote on the handout today? Make time to do them this week and notice how you feel.

Find a time this week to show your family the handouts and talk about what you learned. Share the *Tips From Michael Phelps* handout. These are good rules to live by because they help boost happiness for everyone.

