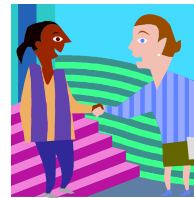


This is the *Polite Words* week of the teacher's lesson guide. There are three days of lessons plus activities.

The Social Graces: POLITE WORDS



Day 1

Introduction to Polite Words

Discussion Points

Polite words are the mannerly person's stock in trade. Polite words will take you farther than smarts, and will certainly get you farther than the smart-aleck. Polite words are better than the finest clothes and the most expensive car. No matter your background or neighborhood, you are the admired young lady of good breeding if you have these words of general exchange in your speaking and writing vocabulary:

Please Thank you May I? I'm sorry Pardon Me

'Please' is the most basic word of civility. Please sugarcoats requests and softens commands. It is oil in the machinery of give-and-take between people. It gets things done. And when it doesn't, we all walk away from one another without stress or rancor.

'Thank you' recognizes a person's kindness or consideration. It says I appreciate your effort at making me breakfast; I appreciate your consideration in holding open the door for me, especially since I am weighed down with books. A thank you will get you a second consideration after you've been rejected.

'May I?' asks permission, because no one is entitled to someone else's time, or genius, or money, or place on the bus.

'I'm sorry' lets the person against whom you have transgressed know that you are aware of your transgression, and you regret it. An "I'm sorry" goes a long way. Most of the time, saying I'm sorry immediately defuses arguments, deflates rage, and inspires reconciliation.

'Pardon me' is a polite way of excusing yourself. At times, using 'excuse me' can be mistaken as sarcastic, but with 'pardon me', it is always clear that the speaker would like to be pardoned, or excused, for accidentally bumping someone, to leave the room, or to ask someone to repeat what they just said.

Two words of caution.

When saying 'My bad', it is understood that you are apologizing or taking the blame for something that you did by mistake. However, it is considered casual slang and should not be used with adults, people in authority, or in serious situations where the act warrants a serious, standard apology.

Saying “I’m sorry, but…” is like not saying I’m sorry at all. In fact, that “but” pours salt in the wound of your error, and places the relationship in further disrepair. “I’m sorry I knocked over your figurine, but you shouldn’t have left it on the desk,” are not forthright words of regret. Simply, “I’m sorry I broke your figurine,” will do. That will encourage the other to say, “Oh that’s okay. Maybe I shouldn’t have left it on the desk.”

Practice using these words every day, with everyone and everywhere they are required. Your life will suddenly burst with smiles and sunshine, and you will see it on people’s faces whenever they see you coming their way.

Activity

Pass out the ‘Polite Words’ work sheet. Then find the polite words to say in the following scenarios:

Marcia is having lunch with her friends. She needs the ketchup for her fries, but the ketchup dish is at the other end of the table and closer to her friend Jane. What should she do?

You are at the deli counter at your neighborhood store. You have been waiting for 15 minutes to be waited on. Finally someone fills your order, but now you are late for piano practice. When the deli clerk hands you the order, what should you say?

Your sister is in the bathroom trying on her new make-up, but you need to get in there quickly. What should you say?

Your sister is at her friend’s and you are about to go to the movies. You spot her navy pullover sweater, the one that you love. It would look perfect with the Khaki slacks you are wearing. What should you do?

You broke your sister’s favorite figurine when you placed your books on the desk. You honestly didn’t see it, and was too late to grab it when it fell to the floor. What should you say to your sister?

Your assignment at the library took longer than you anticipated and now you are late for dinner. When you walk in the dining room, everyone is at the dinner table, waiting for you. What should you say?

You walk into a surprise birthday party and you secretly hate those kinds of parties and feel embarrassed by them. Now you find all of your friends at your house with smiles and presents and singing “Happy Birthday to You!” What should you do?

Now it’s time for you to create a scenario where polite words are needed.

Day 2 Giving Compliments

Discussion Points

A compliment is a group of words requiring special generosity. It is an expression of admiration or congratulation of a person's inner or outer qualities. It is attributed to some special quality or thing about a person.

Refer to 'Giving Compliments' worksheet.

Here are examples of genuine compliments:

- A. Kelly, you have great taste in clothes.
- B. Congratulations on making the cheerleader's squad! I knew you would with your hard work.
- C. You are such a reliable friend. I can always depend on you.
- D. You have nice hair.
- E. You are so thoughtful.
- F. Your bedroom decorations are great!

Notice that the above compliments are of two types. Can you classify them?

Activity

Place the above compliments in the appropriate sections:

Praise of inner qualities:

Praise of outer qualities:

List your own compliments for outer qualities.

List your own compliments for inner qualities:

Which are the better to give? _____
Why? _____

Your Tone of Voice Speaks Volumes

Sometimes when we give compliments, we don't mean them. They are unauthentic, or sarcastic compliments. Words meant to be spoken as a compliment, but said in a negative tone is not a compliment at all, but an insult, and passing out insults is never gracious.

Activity

Refer to the work sheet 'Your Tone of Voice Speaks for You' with this activity.

When you give someone a compliment, it is important that the person believes that it is an authentic compliment. Sometimes, when we want to hurt someone's feelings we give a sarcastic compliment. And that is never gracious. Study the compliment below. Is it authentic or sarcastic?

Taylor: Gee, Delores, I really like your new hair-do.
Delores: Thank you.
Taylor: Where did you get it done?
Delores: At the new salon in the Mall.
Taylor: Do me a favor and give me the name of that hair stylist.

The tone of Taylor's voice will let Delores know if her compliment is authentic or sarcastic. If it is sarcastic, Taylor will probably snicker, or laugh when delivering the compliment.

Now let's play it out.

Ask two students of etiquette to act out the above skit. First make it an authentic compliment. Then repeat the skit and make the tone of voice sarcastic.

Activity

Saying Thank You

Discussion Points

Make It Simple and Sincere

Saying thank you is simple, but a lot of people make those polite words hard to say. Some people feel as if they have to add to it, or that they have to show false modesty by denying a person's compliment:

Example: "Gloria, what a darling sweater!"

"Oh this old thing? It's nothing really."

Why do people feel the need to down play someone's sincere compliment? The most appropriate and polite response would simply be, "Thank you." And that's it. Just a simple and sincere "thank you" to a sincere compliment will do.

Activity

Decide which responses of "thank you" are appropriate or inappropriate.

"Margaret, congratulations on your new job promotion!" appropriate _____

"Well I earned it! Those people worked me to death!" inappropriate _____

"Grace, you did a good job on your project." appropriate _____

"Thank you." inappropriate _____

"Mom, your apple pie is delicious." appropriate _____

"I'm glad you like it. Thank you." inappropriate _____

"What a lovely dress." appropriate _____

"Oh this old thing? It's so old." inappropriate _____

Activity

Now practice your polite words. When should you use these words?

Please Thank you May I? I'm sorry Pardon Me

Why is it important to say 'Please'?

Why is it important to say 'Thank You'?

Why is it important to say 'May I'?

Why is it important to say 'I'm Sorry'?

Why is it important to say "Pardon Me"?

Day 3

How to Speak to an Older Generation

This appropriate speech is not only used with people of an older generation, but also with people in positions of authority. An older generation is anyone at least twenty years older than you, or someone your parent's age. People in positions of authority are your etiquette teacher, a policeman, a crossing guard, the manager at a restaurant or the librarian at your local library.

You also use this appropriate speech in public. This is sometimes called public behavior.

Round Robin club members to discuss a time when they referred to an older person inappropriately. How were they received by the person? Did they apologize or not?

Use the 'Speaking with Respect' worksheet.

Also use the "How to Talk to the Elderly" worksheet with this lesson.