



## CLASSROOM LESSON:

# Raise the Flag for Kindness

### One-Day Art / ELA / Social Studies Lesson

*Grades K-12 | 40-50 Minutes*

## Lesson Overview

Flags communicate identity, belonging, values, and shared purpose without needing many words. In this one-day lesson, students begin with state flags and familiar visual symbols before designing an original Kindness Flag that shows what kindness looks like in their classroom, school, community, or the United States of Kindness.

This revised version is intentionally low-lift and younger-student friendly. Students do not need to research national flags or memorize flag history. Instead, they look closely at state flag images, name what they notice, connect symbols to values, and create their own visual symbol of kindness.

## Ohio SEL Standards Alignment

This lesson supports Ohio's K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards by connecting visual expression, belonging, respect, empathy, and positive school culture.

| Ohio SEL Standard / Topic                                                                             | Student Skill                                                                                                                    | Lesson Connection                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C1: Recognize, identify and empathize with the feelings and perspective of others                     | Students consider how symbols, colors, and images can make others feel welcome, included, supported, or safe.                    | Students discuss how a flag can communicate care, courage, belonging, and kindness.                    |
| C2: Demonstrate consideration for and contribute to the well-being of the school, community and world | Students identify ways kindness contributes to a positive classroom, school, or community.                                       | Students design a flag that represents a kinder shared space.                                          |
| C3: Demonstrate awareness and respect for human dignity, including similarities and differences       | Students notice that communities use different symbols while still sharing values such as care, courage, respect, and belonging. | State flag examples become a bridge into respectful conversation about place, identity, and community. |
| D1: Apply positive verbal and non-verbal communication and social skills                              | Students use visual symbols and brief artist statements to communicate clearly with others.                                      | The flag functions as non-verbal communication; students also practice listening during sharing.       |

|                                                 |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D2: Develop and maintain positive relationships | Students connect kindness symbols to belonging, inclusion, friendship, and healthy relationships. | The final flag represents how students want people to treat one another in their class or school. |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Essential Question

*How can we "flag" kindness without using words?*

## Learning Objectives

- Understand that flags and symbols communicate meaning through color, shape, pattern, image, and words.
- Identify how state flag symbols can represent place, identity, values, care, courage, and belonging.
- Connect symbols to kindness, respect, welcome, inclusion, service, friendship, and school spirit.
- Create an original flag that represents kindness.
- Write or share a brief artist statement explaining design choices.

## Materials

- Projector or printed flag examples
- California and Louisiana state flag images
- Blank paper or flag/pennant template
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, paint, or other classroom art materials
- Optional: sticky notes for quick peer feedback
- Optional: contest submission information for the Fall 2026 Kindland / NFL extension

## Suggested Flag Examples to Display

Core examples for younger students: California and Louisiana state flags, plus a local school mascot, school colors, class banner, or community symbol.

Optional examples for older students or extension discussion: Wyoming state flag, World Cup country flags or team colors, NFL or school pennants, the United Nations flag, International Space Station imagery, or the proposed International Flag of Planet Earth.

Teacher note: For younger students, keep the visual study simple. Students can answer: What do you see? What might it mean? How could that connect to kindness?

## Lesson Procedure

### 1. Opening: What Does a Flag Do? - 5 minutes

Ask students:

- What flags have you seen before?

- Where do you see flags?
- What do flags tell us without words?
- What feelings can a flag create?

*A flag is not just decoration. A flag is a public symbol of what a group says it values. Today we are asking: if kindness had a flag, what would it look like?*

*To "flag" something means to signal it. How do we signal kindness?*

## 2. State Flag Visual Study: Symbols Tell a Story - 10 minutes

Start with state flags rather than national flags. This keeps the lesson concrete and easier for younger students: students can look at animals, colors, stars, words, and simple design choices before creating their own kindness symbols.

| Louisiana State Flag                                                              | California State Flag                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |

Use one or both images. Students do not need to know the full history of each flag to participate. The goal is close looking and meaning-making.

Louisiana: Students may notice the pelican, chicks, nest, blue background, and motto. Guide students toward ideas such as care, helping, protection, family, and responsibility.

California: Students may notice the bear, star, red stripe, and words. Guide students toward ideas such as strength, courage, place, pride, and identity.

Ask:

- What symbols do you notice first?
- What do the animals make you think of?
- Which flag feels more like care? Which feels more like courage or strength?
- How could a symbol like a pelican, bear, star, stripe, or color be changed to show kindness?
- If our classroom or school had a kindness flag, what symbol would people notice first?

## 3. Our Symbols: Classroom, School, and Community - 5 minutes

Invite students to move from state symbols to their own familiar symbols.

- What symbols represent our school?
- What colors feel like our classroom or community?
- What animal, object, place, or shape could represent kindness here?
- How can strength be kind? How can care be brave?

## 4. Kindness Symbol Brainstorm - 5 minutes

| Kindness Value | Possible Symbols                                       |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Welcome        | Open door, sunrise, path, porch light, waving hand     |
| Friendship     | Linked hands, bridge, circle, woven threads, two birds |

|               |                                                         |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Courage       | Torch, mountain, shield, bear, standing figure          |
| Inclusion     | Mosaic, quilt, many stars, connected rings, many colors |
| Helping       | Hands lifting, ladder, umbrella, pelican, heart         |
| Hope          | Light, seed, flower, bird, horizon                      |
| Unity         | Circle, braid, stars, stripes, rings                    |
| School Spirit | Mascot, school colors, pennant shape, local landmark    |

Ask students to choose one value they want their flag to communicate.

## 5. Student Design Challenge - 15-20 minutes

*Design a flag that shows kindness without needing many words.*

Your flag may represent:

- Your classroom
- Your school
- Your Kindness Club
- Your city or state
- The United States of Kindness
- A team kindness pennant
- The next 250 years of kindness

Design requirements:

- Must use the provided template and be sure to fill in the student's name, grade, age, school name, contact email address, and contact phone number.
- Use 2-4 main colors.
- Use 1-3 clear symbols.
- Make the design bold enough to understand from far away.
- Connect the design to kindness, welcome, courage, respect, friendship, service, unity, or belonging.
- Do not copy an existing flag, school logo, team logo, character, or brand exactly.
- Students must generate flags on their own without AI or outside assistance.
- Submissions should be hand drawn/handmade and either uploaded [HERE](#), emailed to [benk@viafdn.org](mailto:benk@viafdn.org), or mailed to Kindland by mail to: Kindland, 6700 Beta Dr Suite 120, Mayfield, OH 44143

## 6. Artist Statement / Exit Ticket - 5 minutes

Students complete:

- My flag is called: \_\_\_\_\_
- The colors I chose mean: \_\_\_\_\_
- The symbol I used means: \_\_\_\_\_
- My flag shows kindness because: \_\_\_\_\_
- When people see my flag, I hope they feel: \_\_\_\_\_

For younger students, this can be completed orally or with sentence stems.

## 7. Quick Share / Closing - 3-5 minutes

Invite 2-4 students to share their flag and one sentence from their artist statement.

*Flags show what people stand for. A Kindness Flag shows what we choose to stand for together.*

Final question: What is one kind action you can take today that would help our class live up to your flag?

## Optional Contest Extension

### Kindland x NFL: Raise the Flag for Kindness Art Contest

Students may revise and submit their flag design for the official Fall 2026 contest extension.

Contest prompt: Design a flag that shows how kindness can bring people together across classrooms, schools, states, teams, and communities.

Rollout timeline:

- Announcement / Launch: Early September 2026
- Classroom Lesson Window: September-October 2026
- **Submission Deadline: October 20, 2026**
- Review / Judging Window: Late October-November 2026
- Winner Recognition: To be announced following judging and partner review

Awards and recognition:

- A winning student's design will be chosen in each of the following grade categories: K-3; 4-8; 9-12
- The Top 3 winning students in each grade category will each receive a \$250 award.
- Each winning student will have their flag printed and delivered.
- Grand Prize: One grand prize winner will be selected from all grade categories. The Grand Prize winner's school will receive a \$2,500 award, a printed flag, and additional recognition opportunities.
- Selected designs may be considered for Kindland / NFL-connected feature, display, digital sharing, or stadium-related recognition, depending on final partner approvals.

## Quick Assessment

Students demonstrate understanding by:

- Participating in flag/symbol discussion.
- Identifying at least one way a visual symbol communicates meaning.
- Creating a flag connected to kindness.
- Explaining color and symbol choices in an artist statement.

## Optional Display

*Flags of Kindness: Out of Many, Kindness*

Display student flags with artist statements. Add stars, stickers, or small pennants as students complete acts of kindness throughout the year.





# UNITED STATES OF KINDNESS:



## ART CONTEST:

*Raise a Flag for Kindness*

Presented by Kindland and the NFL Foundation

As part of the United States of Kindness, your students can submit flag designs for the "Raise a Flag for Kindness" Art Contest presented by Kindland and the NFL Foundation.

### CONTEST PROMPT:

Design a flag that shows how kindness can bring people together across classrooms, schools, states, teams, nations, and the planet.

### ★ GRAND PRIZE ★



One flag design will be chosen as the grand prize winner from submissions across all categories. The Grand Prize winner's school will receive a **\$2,500** prize.

### ★ STUDENT PRIZES ★

One (1) student in each of the following categories will win **\$250** and a flag with their winning design.



K-3



4-8



9-12



### USE THE PROVIDED SIZE TEMPLATE

Students should **USE THE PROVIDED SIZE TEMPLATE** for your design and fill in all contact information.



### LESSON OPTION

Students do not need to have been presented the classroom lesson to submit a contest entry. You can distribute the contest flyer as a separate in-school activity or an at-home activity; however, the lesson is a great way to introduce the flag concept, and it is an added layer that will ensure your students understand the important meaning behind a flag before they begin their design.



### DEADLINE

Students should submit their designs by **October 20th**.



### BONUS:

Selected designs may be considered for Kindland- and NFL-connected features, displays, digital sharing, or stadium-related recognition depending on partner approvals that are subject to change and not guaranteed.

### DESIGN REQUIREMENTS:

- ★ Must use the provided template and be sure to fill in the student's name, grade, age, school name, contact email address, and contact phone number.
- ★ Use 2-4 main colors
- ★ Use 1-3 clear symbols
- ★ Make the design bold enough to understand from far away
- ★ Connect the design to kindness, welcome, courage, respect, friendship, service, unity, or belonging.
- ★ Do not copy an existing flag or logo exactly
- ★ Students must generate flags on their own without AI or outside assistance.
- ★ Submissions should be hand drawn/handmade and either uploaded **HERE**, emailed to [benk@viadfn.org](mailto:benk@viadfn.org), or mailed to Kindland by mail to: Kindland, 6700 Beta Dr Suite 120, Mayfield, OH 44143

# Art Contest: Flag Submission Form

Please complete this form and draw your flag entry in the below box.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Deadline: October 20<sup>th</sup>**

- Must use the provided template and be sure to fill in the student's name, grade, age, school name, contact email address, and contact phone number. to be eligible to win.
- Use 2-4 main colors.
- Use 1-3 clear symbols.
- Make the design bold enough to understand from far away.
- Connect the design to kindness, welcome, courage, respect, friendship, service, unity, or belonging.
- Do not copy an existing flag, school logo, team logo, character, or brand exactly.
- Students must generate flags on their own without AI or outside assistance.
- **Submissions should be hand drawn/handmade and then photographed or scanned to be uploaded using the included QR code.** emailed to [benk@viafdn.org](mailto:benk@viafdn.org), or a copy mailed to Kindland by mail to: Kindland, 6700 Beta Dr Suite 120, Mayfield, OH 44143

After you complete your design on this sheet, scan or take a photo of this sheet, and submit your entry using this QR code:

