

ELMER

Create a Celebration!

Elmer Picture Book Series

2019 will mark the 30th anniversary of Elmer, the first book published about the patchwork elephant. Written and illustrated by David McKee and published by Andersen Press UK (distributed in the US by Lerner Publishing), the series features more than 30 picture books and has sold more than 8 million copies in 50 languages worldwide.

Elmer Day

In the very first book about this beloved character, the patchwork elephant tries to hide his vibrant patterns. Elmer's friends reassure him that they love him because of his unique qualities, and not in spite of them. In celebration of Elmer's appearance, the other elephants paint themselves with colors and patterns and hold a parade. **This parade marked the very first Elmer Day.**

Libraries, schools, bookstores, and community groups all over the world celebrate Elmer Day with patchwork crafts, games, and, of course, parades. **Follow international events under the hashtag #ElmerDay.**

The release of David McKee's **Elmer's Special Day** revisits Elmer Day. This time, Elmer realizes that the other jungle animals have been left out of the celebration. Elmer declares, **"everyone means everyone"** when it comes to Elmer Day. The message invites children to consider who they might be including and not including in their own play and friendships.

Create an Elmer Day Celebration

Honoring the themes of kindness, diversity, inclusion, and friendship, explore these event and classroom materials! Visit <http://bit.ly/ElmerDayUS> for free downloads of:

Event Materials

- Event Tips
- Press Release
- Event Poster
- Display Poster
- Event Pennants

Craft Projects

- Coloring Sheets
- Elephant Mask
- Elmer Ears
- Elephant Garland
- Milk Bottle Elmer
- Paper Plate Elmer

Classroom Activities

- Kindness Celebration
- Celebratory Assembly
- Lesson Plans

Games

- Dice Game
- Hide & Seek Game
- Pin the Trunk on Elmer



"everyone means everyone"

—Elmer's Special Day



ELMER

Discover More Stories!

Featured Hardcover

Elmer's Special Day 9780761351542

Perfect for Elmer Day celebrations and classroom conversations about inclusion. Elmer invites all of the animals in the jungle to express their creativity and join the parade with the declaration that, "everyone means everyone."

Elmer and Aunt Zelda 9781512439458

Elmer and the Birthday Quake 9781467711173

Consider these picture books for intergenerational and grandparent events and classroom explorations. In the jungle, Elmer and the elephants always honor their elders.

Elmer and the Race 9781512416244

Is your classroom getting too competitive or worried about outcomes? Explore how any child can "win" the race with this read aloud. Consider creating special awards for every child in your classroom just like Elmer does.

Elmer and the Monster 9781467742009

A silly read aloud for story hour or for any child who might be a little afraid of monsters. The monster? It's just Bloo-Bloo, and he will teach your readers how to ROAR!

Elmer and the Tune 9781512481242

This a fun read aloud for an Elmer-themed birthday party as it ends with a round of the "Happy Birthday" song! Use the crafts and games available at bit.ly/ElmerDayUS to create a birthday party that an elephant (or child) will not forget.

Elmer and the Whales 9781467734530

This picture book offers an opportunity for a treasure hunt through a bookstore or library. Can your readers go on a journey to find the non-fiction whale books just as Elmer journeys down the river to the sea to encounter whales?

Other Great Elmer Hardcover

Elmer and Butterfly 9781467763264

Elmer and Grandpa Eldo 9781512405699

Elmer and Rose 9780761354932

Elmer and Snake 9781467720335

Elmer and Super El 9780761389897

Elmer and the Big Bird 9781467703192

Elmer and the Flood 9781467793124

Elmer and the Hippos 9780761364429

Elmer and the Rainbow 9780761374107

Elmer's Christmas 9780761380887

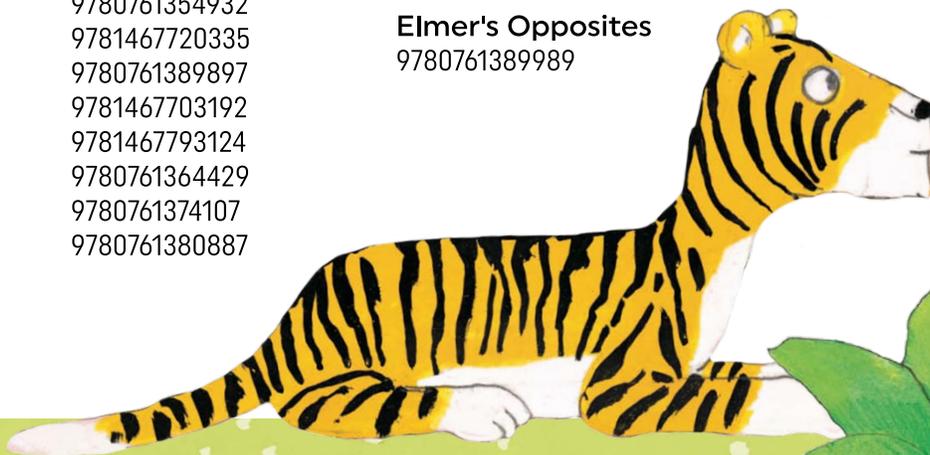
Board Books

Elmer's First Counting Book

9780761389996

Elmer's Opposites

9780761389989



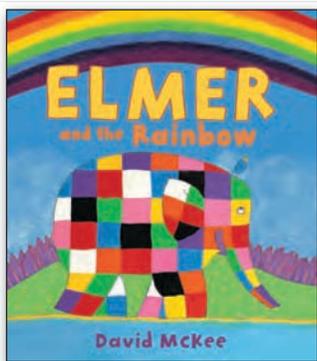
Celebrating Elmer Day throughout the school:

Elmer Day Celebratory Assembly:

- Invite children to come in dressed in rainbow colours for the day.
- Read the story of **Elmer's Special Day** or Elmer's other picture books to the children. Ask them what they like or liked about Elmer, now or when they first encountered him. What does the character of Elmer mean to them?
- Drawing on the work that has been done throughout the week, have a selection of classes across the school share the work they have done around their selected Elmer text. This might be a dramatic performance, a sharing of what they have learnt from the text, a retelling of their text etc.
- Invite children to reflect on what they have learnt about shared values from reading their focus texts. What values does Elmer exemplify that we should all share and promote? Share and discuss words such as love, kindness, tolerance, humanity, friendship, acceptance, understanding, persistence, helpfulness. How can we all help to share and show these values? Use examples gleaned from staff and children beforehand to exemplify this.
- Leave colored squares and writing materials near the shared display for children to add their own thoughts and pledges of how to share these values through their everyday actions.

Making a Communal Display:

- Help the children to build an Elmer 'patchwork promise' display to show important values in action as explored in the assembly. Draw a large outline of Elmer on a display board, and invite children to write their own pledges on colorful patches of paper to add to Elmer's patchwork.
- Gather together Elmer books from around the school, ask children to bring in favorite Elmer stories from home, set up an area for an Elmer display in a prominent area of the school.
- Ask each class to have a discussion about their favorite Elmer books. Add the front covers of some of these to the display with the children's comments about why they liked the book.
- Invite classes to share examples of the work they have done throughout the week as part of the communal display.
- Make a list of local bookshops and events in the area that will be celebrating Elmer Day and share these with parents, caregivers and the local community. More information can be found at: <http://bit.ly/ElmerDayUS>.



Elmer and the Rainbow

A sequence of activities for Early Years Foundation stage

Session 1:

Share the front cover of the text with the children. What do they already know about Elmer? Scribe children's ideas around a copy of the front cover on a working wall or in a Shared Reading Journal. Ask the children to predict from the front cover what the story might be about or what might happen. Look at the double page spread of the endpapers, showing the illustration of the rainbow. Ask the children if they have seen a rainbow before. Do they know how a rainbow is formed? Take notes of the children's ideas and predictions. Read the first double page spread. Think back to what Elmer says, "Thunder and Lightning is exciting." How do the children feel about thunder and lightning? You may wish to use a video, such as: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M4IRbGJxqA> as a stimulus for children's thinking. Could they think of some words and phrases to describe the thunderstorm? What is happening? What does it sound like? How does it make them feel? You could help to organise the children's ideas into a poem that they can then perform. You could also look at another poem, such as 'The Storm' by Sara Coleridge as a stimulus for writing: <http://www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/learning/children/reviews/?id=18> The children could also share their responses to this poem. Ask the children 'What would have to happen for the elephants to see a rainbow?', and discuss their responses.

Session 2:

Re-read from the beginning of the book up until "That's awful, we must do something," without reading on to "I'll give it my colors." What do the children think has happened to the colors of the rainbow? What do they think Elmer and the birds could do to help? Scribe children's ideas around a copy of the illustration on a working wall or in a Shared Reading Journal. Read the next sentence, "I'll give it my colors." Do the children think this is a good idea? Why or why not? If you have a toy Elmer in the setting, you could have the children pass this round and they could tell Elmer why they think it is a good idea or not. You could follow this up by writing a letter to Elmer to share some of the children's ideas.

Session 3:

Re-read from the beginning of the book, up until Giraffe asks "What will happen to you, Elmer, if you give it your colors?" Ask the children what they think would happen to Elmer. They could visualise this and translate it into a drawing, which can then be displayed in a class gallery, and the different ideas can be then be shared and discussed. Talk about this huge act of kindness, of how Elmer is considering giving up his colors to the rainbow and thinking of someone else before himself. Ask the children to think of words and phrases to describe Elmer and display these around an illustration of Elmer. To relate this back to their own experiences, allow time for the children to recall a time when someone was kind to them or gave them something special. How did it make them feel?

Session 4:

Re-read the story from the beginning up until "But what about Elmer?" whispered an elephant. What do the children think will happen as Elmer steps out from behind the waterfall? Record predictions around a copy of the illustration on a working wall or in a Shared Reading Journal. Read the next page to reveal whether their predictions were correct. Allow time for the children to re-enact the story in a variety of ways. This could be using small world figures, through role-play with masks, using puppets or props or by making a storybox. Storyboxes create special opportunities to revisit the themes and storylines of a particular story. Typically, they consist of a shoebox containing a range of small toys and inspirational objects. The box itself can be turned into a setting for the story using a variety of collage materials and with the sides cut to fold down. However, the box is at its most effective when something intriguing or unexpected is added. Children can use the box to retell the next episode of a story, or create another story with similar setting or characters. The children could also make their own storymaps to recall the important events in the story and help them in their retellings and re-enactments.

Session 5:

Re-read the whole book. Engage the children in book talk to explore their responses to the story. You might begin by asking the children the four basic questions from Aidan Chambers' 'Tell Me' approach, from **Tell Me: Children Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment** (Thimble Press, 2011). These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:

- Tell me... was there anything you liked about this book?
- Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns... any connections that you noticed...? (With young children, these are likely to be personal connections, although if they know the Elmer books well or any other stories with the theme of sharing and kindness, they may be able to make links with these).

The openness of these questions, unlike the more interrogative 'Why?' question, encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the 'wrong' answer.

Explore the connections that children have drawn. Can they think of a time they've helped someone else, been kind to someone else, shown love to someone else or helped to spread happiness? Think of ways that we could all help to share kindness, happiness, love, and be helpful. Invite each child to make a pledge to help share kindness, happiness, love, and be helpful in school or at home and write these on a colored square. Across the setting, these can then be arranged to make a patchwork rainbow for all to see.

Across the continuous provision, you could also:

- Use color paddles and light to investigate colors.
- Color-mix with paint, learn about how to create shades of intensity using white.
- Learn more about the weather; make wind chimes, rain gauges, reflectors for the sun, create a weather chart to track the weather over the course of the week.
- Learn the 'I Can Sing A Rainbow' song.
- Move with colored streamers and scarves to create a color dance.
- Make colorless rainbows using white chalk.
- Learn about emotions, how to recognise these in others and how to react appropriately if someone is scared or upset.

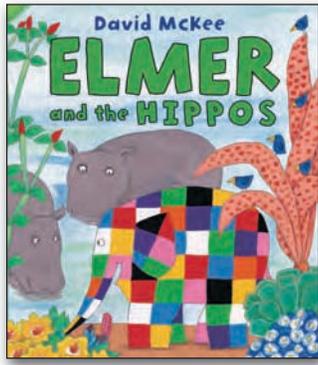


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Elmer and the Hippos A

Sequence of activities for Key Stage 2

Session 1:

Dilemma of limited resources/territorial debate

Prior to the session:

Using large pieces of paper or card stock, note each of the following words on a different piece:

- Water
- Clean Air -
- Electricity -
- Gas
- Medical Facilities

Position these pieces of paper/card stock in different areas of the classroom or hall, ensuring that they are all located on either the left or right hand side of the room.

Create a boundary between the two sides of the room, using chairs, a bench or masking tape.

As the children enter the room, assign each of them the letter A or B alternately. Once every child has been allocated a letter, invite the A's to go to one side of the room and the B's to the other side of the room.

Explain to the children that you are going to share a series of dilemmas with them to discuss in their groups and formulate proposed resolutions to discuss and debate with the opposing group. Encourage them to note their positions and main arguments in preparation for the whole class discussions.

Dilemma One

- A.** A member of your group is unwell and needs medication, but you reside on the side of the territory that does not have access to medical facilities.
- B.** A large number of your group require medication in your territory. It is very expensive to produce. An individual from group A is also in need of this medication, what will you do?

Dilemma Two

- A.** You do not have access to clean water and no longer have the money to buy water for your territory. How might you convince group B to assist?
- B.** The pumps that draw water from the ground are beginning to rust and will need replacing, this will require a large investment of time, money and work. Group A have no access to water. Do you think you have a responsibility to help?

Dilemma Three

- A.** You are unable to heat and light your homes but you do not have access to electricity poles or gas lines. Is it fair to reserve access to these facilities to group B's territory?
- B.** Individuals living in territory A have no electricity. Should you invest money on extending electricity poles into their territory or should that money be spent on making those who live and work in your territory safer at night by increasing street lights?

Session 2:

Recount and reflect on the dilemmas explored in the previous session. Discuss which arguments and proposals resonated most with the group and why. Draw on this to help you consider with the group what components help to formulate a strong argument. Agree upon, and note for later reference, these key components.

Read the opening of **Elmer and the Hippos**, stopping at: "But that means a lot of work." Invite the children to discuss the options/solutions available and the possible oppositions. Note their responses.

Read on to: "I need your help." Share the following page featuring the illustration of Elmer and Wilbur facing the other elephants without disclosing the written text. Invite the children to discuss and respond to the illustration.

Using thought bubbles, invite the children to note what they think some of the elephants might be thinking. Arrange the bubbles on an enlarged copy of the illustration.

Read the first part of the text accompanying this illustration and stop at: "If we help it will soon be done." Select two children to take on the role of Elmer and Wilbur, with the rest of the class taking on the role of the community of elephants. Invite them to discuss in role and explore why they might choose to help the hippos.

Once the discussion in role is complete, hold a secret ballot to determine what proportion of the class think the elephants should help the hippos.

Session 3:

Invite the children to watch a selection of famous historical speeches. Provide them with the opportunity to respond to each speech and discuss what aspects appealed to them and why.

Drawing on transcripts of the speeches viewed, encourage the children in groups to text mark and identify aspects that made the speeches powerful and effective. These may be features like repetition, alliteration, stating information in sets of three, effective use of pronouns to appeal directly to the listener, or the use of emotive language.

Based on their group discussion and notes, ask the children to contribute what, in their view, made the speeches effective. Agree as a collective on the common threads of their reflections to formulate an agreement on what components make a good speech.

Session 4:

In pairs, invite the children to write their own speeches to galvanise the elephant community to act and resolve the matter in the way they see fit, based on the discussions from the previous session. Allow time for drafting and refining their speeches.

Session 5:

Watch the selection of historical speeches again and this time focus the attention on body language, posture, facial expression and how the delivery impacts on the listener.

Give the children time to refine their speeches and rehearse their delivery.

Provide each pair with the opportunity to deliver their speech.

Once all of the speeches have been delivered, conduct another secret ballot to determine what proportion of the class think the elephants should help the hippos. Discuss if there is a variation in numbers compared to the first vote and why this might be.

Share the rest of the book. Engage the children in book talk to explore their responses to the story. You might begin by asking the children the four basic questions from Aidan Chambers' 'Tell Me' approach from **Tell Me: Children, Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment** (Thimble Press, 2011). These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:

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ELMER

Join the Parade!

A Teachers' Guide for Creating Classroom Kindness with Elmer

In each of his winning picture-book stories about Elmer the elephant, author and illustrator David McKee explores important themes that can encourage children to build a culture of kindness at their school or library. The following discussion questions and activities, all based on popular Elmer titles, are designed to help early-elementary students create a unique Kindness Pledge. This agreement supports students as they identify and practice kindness in the classroom—and beyond. Creating a safe, welcoming learning environment for all children can have a transformative effect on students' academic performance as well as their social and emotional development, and it is an essential component in any anti-bullying program.

We'd love to hear how you and your students have built a culture of kindness together! In this guide, we offer suggestions for participating in Elmer's Kindness Parade, a celebration of how kids practice kindness every day. You can contribute to the parade by posting your students' Elmer projects and Kindness Pledge online, using the hashtag #ElmerDay. Look for more teaching resources at <http://bit.ly/ElmerDayUS>.

**"Everyone means everyone."
—Elmer's Special Day**

More Resources: <http://bit.ly/ElmerDayUS>



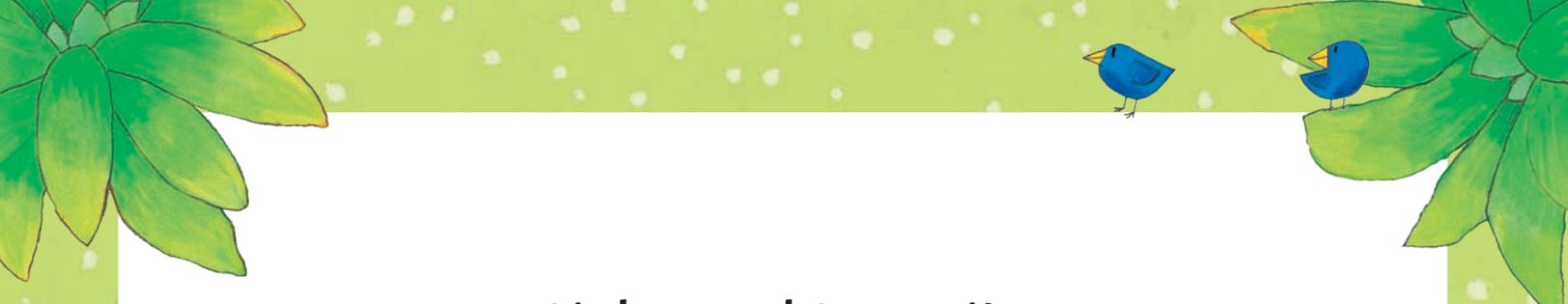
Creating a Culture of Kindness with Elmer

While the following activities are based on specific books—**Elmer and the Hippos**, **Elmer and the Rainbow**, and **Elmer's Special Day**—they can easily be adapted to many Elmer adventures. **Elmer and Butterfly** and **Elmer and Rose** are also excellent titles to start discussion with students about inclusion and kindness.



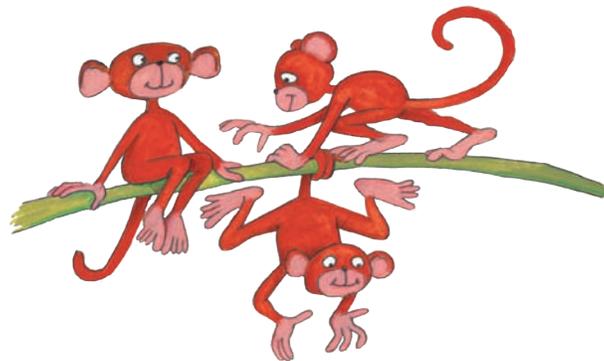
Upstanders and Bystanders

David McKee's picture book **Elmer and the Hippos** offers a wonderful opportunity to discuss positive action and the choice to be an upstander rather than a bystander. In the story, a group of elephants doesn't want to share their watering hole with newly arrived hippos. Rather than complain with the other elephants, or ignore them, Elmer talks with the hippos, listens attentively, and finds a solution that ends with an inclusive celebration among all the animals. After introducing the concepts of upstander and bystander, ask students to discuss how the animals in the story demonstrate both kind and unkind behaviors. Help students identify the central problems or conflicts, how the characters acted, and the effects of their actions. Empathy and cooperation might be additional concepts to discuss. Then, from the examples of kindness that the students have identified in the story, ask students to select ways that they might practice being kind in their own classroom.



Kindness and Community

In David McKee's **Elmer and the Rainbow**, Elmer and his animal neighbors strengthen their sense of community and work together to accomplish a goal. After reading the book aloud, discuss with students how Elmer and his friends all participate in a shared project, which begins with Elmer's act of generosity: he wants to give his colors to a fading rainbow. Next, have students return to the story and find, in both words and pictures, examples of how each individual makes a contribution. In addition, you could discuss Elmer's following statement: "Some things you can give and give and not lose any. Some things like happiness and love or my colors." Ask students to give examples of how they can each contribute to the shared goal of creating a positive classroom culture with small acts of kindness. Finally, collect students' examples on a wall chart, word web, or similar graphic organizer.



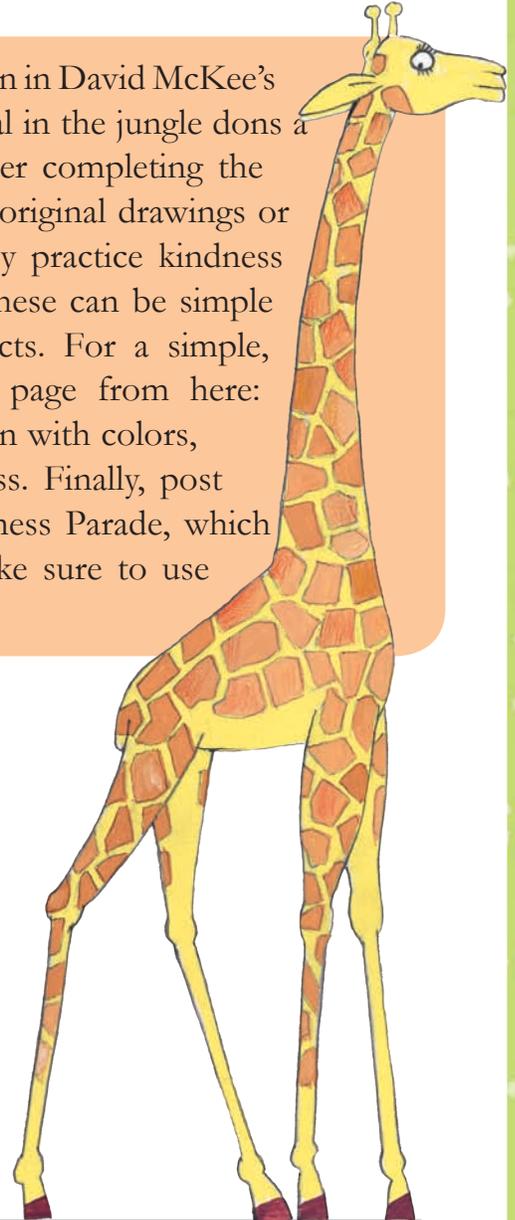
Creating a Kindness Pledge

Display students' ideas of kind behavior that were generated in the previous exercises. Using these words and concepts as a starting point, have the students choose the behaviors that they feel will best create a culture of kindness in their classroom. This can be a very simple list, with items such as "help each other," "use kind words and body language," "share with everyone," or "be a good listener." Encourage phrases that emphasize positive behaviors (what to do), rather than negative phrases (behaviors to avoid). The final version, which will be agreed upon by the students, will be the classroom's Kindness Pledge.



Elmer's Kindness Parade

Elmer and his friends share in an all-inclusive celebration in David McKee's **Elmer's Special Day**. On this special day, each animal in the jungle dons a costume and joins the party; no one is left out. After completing the classroom Kindness Pledge, invite students to create original drawings or other visual projects that demonstrate ways that they practice kindness in the classroom or in their community every day. These can be simple scenes or elephant-themed, three-dimensional projects. For a simple, ready-made activity, download the Elmer coloring page from here: <http://bit.ly/ElmerDayUS>, and ask students to fill it in with colors, words, or their own drawings that represent kindness. Finally, post students' projects online as part of the Elmer Kindness Parade, which collects students' work from all over the world! Make sure to use the hashtag #ElmerDay when posting online.



Common Core Connections:

Through the activities in this guide, teachers can implement the following Common Core State Standards for kindergarten through second grade: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R.L.K.1-2.1, R.L.K.2-2.2, R.L.K.3-2.3, R.L.K.4-2.4, R.L.K.7-2.7, and R.L.K.9-2.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.S.L.K.1-2.1, S.L.K.2-2.2, S.L.K.3-2.3, S.L.K.4-2.4, S.L.K.5-2.5., and S.L.K.6-2.6.