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Elsie International Kindness Day — Celebration & Learning Kit

Free classroom, workplace, and family resources for World Kindness Day · Friday, November 13, 2026

“A century of courage, reimagined as everyday kindness.”

1. About this kit

This free kit gives schools, workplaces, community groups, and families a ready-to-use celebration for **Elsie International Kindness Day** (Friday, November 13, 2026) — part of **World Kindness Week (November 9–15, 2026)**, whose official theme this year is:

> **“Small Acts, BIG Impact!”**

Everything here is free to copy, share, print, and use. There are no logins, no purchases, and no catch. Join the live celebration at **elsielincolnbenedict.com/kindness-day**, and share your celebration with **#ElsieKindnessDay**.

2. Who was Elsie Lincoln Benedict?

Elsie Lincoln Benedict (1885–1970) was an author, suffragist, and the world’s best-known lecturer of the 1920s — advertised at the height of her career as “The Wonder Woman.”

- **Denver years:** worked her way through the University of Denver by scrubbing steps; studied law at CU Boulder; first woman on the intercollegiate debate team; won more than a dozen gold medals.

- **Suffrage (1914–1920):** recruited by Carrie Chapman Catt; second-highest-paid national suffrage organizer; when hecklers poured water on her at a Columbus Circle rally she answered, *“You can’t dampen my enthusiasm in that way.”*
- **The lecture platform (1918–1930s):** drew crowds larger than President Wilson’s (Seattle, 1920); reached more than three million attendees across 55+ countries; founded the Benedict School of Opportunity — “The Traveling University for Men and Women.”
- **Her books:** *How to Analyze People on Sight* (1921), *How to Get Anything You Want* (1923), *Brainology* (1928), and the travel memoir *Our Trip Around the World* (1926).
- **Her message:** understanding each person as they are; every person has value; kindness with a backbone.

Her great-granddaughter **Heather Benedict** preserves her papers and shares her work today through the International Opportunity League — the contemporary program brand for these experiences.

Important: historical personality theories are presented as historical thought, not modern science; and Elsie’s original words are always kept distinct from today’s commentary.

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3. Three ways Elsie practiced kindness

01 · Kindness as open doors

Elsie founded the Benedict School of Opportunity and the International Opportunity League so education would never belong only to a privileged few. Her kindness was built into institutions whose doors never closed.

02 · Kindness as refusal to give up

As a suffrage organizer in the 1910s she met opposition with composure. When someone poured water on her in Columbus Circle, she answered without anger. Refusing to give up on people was her kind of kindness.

03 · Kindness as understanding

Her human-analysis psychology began with one conviction: every person has value, and the deepest courtesy is to understand them as they are, not as you wish them to be.

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4. Verified quotes for your wall, cards, and conversations

Archival — Elsie's own words (dated and sourced):

1. *"The only thing that can break out on your face and improve it, is a smile."* — archival family photograph card, 1920s
2. *"The truest greatness is kindness."* — lecture and publicity materials
3. *"You have the key to the door of Opportunity right in your pocket!"* — International Opportunity League materials, 1932
4. *"You can't dampen my enthusiasm in that way."* — Suffrage open-air meeting, Columbus Circle, New York City, c. 1914
5. *"Think for yourself."* — Brainology and lecture materials, 1928

Contemporary — Heather's invitations (labeled "Heather's commentary", not Elsie's words):

1. *"Friend, if you've been waiting for 'some day,' choose one small step you can take today."* — Heather Benedict
2. *"Small Acts, BIG Impact!"* — World Kindness Week 2026 official theme

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5. 30 small kindness acts (pick one a day)

Attention

1. Learn the name of someone you see every week, and use it.
2. Put your phone face-down for an entire conversation.
3. Notice a quiet contributor in a meeting or classroom and say something true about their work.
4. Let someone else take the closer parking space, seat, or spot in line.
5. Watch the sunset — or sunrise — together and talk about none of your obligations.

Listening

1. Ask a real question and wait through the silence after it.
2. Listen for three whole minutes without offering advice.
3. Call someone you haven't spoken to in months, just to ask how they are.
4. Thank someone who disagreed with you calmly.

5. Hear a child’s entire story without finishing their sentences.

Encouragement

1. Send a short note to someone whose work you admire, with nothing attached.
2. Tell someone one specific thing you appreciate about them.
3. Leave a kind review for a small business that made your day.
4. Congratulate someone on a win they thought nobody noticed.
5. Write yourself a true and gentle note and leave it where you’ll find it tomorrow.

Giving

1. Buy coffee (or a small treat) for the person behind you.
2. Donate five items you no longer need.
3. Bring extra snacks to share at work or school.
4. Leave coins at a laundromat with a kind note.
5. Support a food bank or mutual-aid pantry in your neighborhood.

Gratitude

1. Write one sincere thank-you note by hand.
2. Name three ordinary things that made you glad today, and say so out loud.
3. Thank someone whose service work usually goes unseen.
4. Tell a teacher or mentor they mattered — years later still counts.
5. Forgive a small thing you’ve been carrying.

Courage

1. Speak up, gently, when someone is being talked over.
2. Apologize cleanly when you’re wrong — no “but.”
3. Invite the person sitting alone to join the table.
4. Stand up for someone when doing so is uncomfortable.
5. Choose curiosity over judgment the next time you feel annoyed.

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6. Elsie’s Kindness Lessons — a quick print quiz

1. When a heckler poured water on Elsie at a suffrage rally in Columbus Circle, what did she say?
    - A. “I’ll see you in court.”
    - B. “You can’t dampen my enthusiasm in that way.”
    - C. “That’s quite enough for today.”
2. How did Elsie pay her way through the University of Denver?
    - A. A family inheritance
    - B. Scrubbing steps
    - C. A debate scholarship
3. What was the Benedict School of Opportunity also called?
    - A. The Traveling University for Men and Women
    - B. The League of Bright Minds
    - C. The Denver Lyceum
4. What is Heather’s proposed brand line for today’s League?
    - A. “Think big, act now.”
    - B. “Learn together. Take your next step.”
    - C. “The key is in your pocket.”

Answers: 1-B, 2-B, 3-A, 4-B.

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7. Kindness card templates (print, write, give)

Template 1 — For a friend or classmate

> Dear _____,
>
> One thing I genuinely appreciate about you is _____.
>
> *“The only thing that can break out on your face and improve it, is a smile.” — Elsie Lincoln Benedict*
>
> From, _____ · #ElsieKindnessDay

Template 2 — For a colleague or teammate

> Dear _____,
>
> Thank you for _____. Your kindness made a real difference today.
>
> *“You have the key to the door of Opportunity right in your pocket!” — Elsie Lincoln Benedict*
>
> From, _____ · #ElsieKindnessDay

Template 3 — For a family member

> Dear _____,
>
> *“You can’t dampen my enthusiasm in that way.” — Elsie Lincoln Benedict, 1914*
>
> Never forget: _____.
>
> From, _____ · #ElsieKindnessDay

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8. Discussion guide: three ten-minute conversations

Conversation 1 — Open doors (belonging)

“Her kindness was built into institutions whose doors never closed.”

1. Who opened a door for you in life — an opportunity you wouldn’t otherwise have had?
2. Whose door can *you* help open this week?
3. What is one small, practical change your group could make to be more welcoming?

Conversation 2 — Backbone (courage)

“When someone poured water on her in Columbus Circle, she answered: ‘You can’t dampen my enthusiasm in that way.‘”

1. When have you needed courage to stay kind?
2. What difference did it make that someone stood up for you once?
3. Who in your community keeps going even when things are hard — and how could you encourage them?

Conversation 3 — Understanding (curiosity)

"Every person has value, and the deepest courtesy is to understand them as they are."

1. Who is someone you don't yet understand well?
2. What would it take to be curious about them this week?
3. What one small step can your group commit to together before World Kindness Day is over?

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9. Classroom and workplace activity ideas

- **Kindness count:** set a team/class goal of 100 acts during World Kindness Week (Nov 9–15).
- **Daily morning act:** draw one of the 30 acts each day at morning meeting or standup.
- **Card station:** print the templates, leave them at reception or homeroom, and watch them circulate.
- **Kindness pledges:** each person writes one sentence on a pledge wall: *"My promise: I will…"*
- **Elsie story hour:** read section 2 out loud and ask the three conversation questions.
- **Assembly moment:** for schools — use the 60-second Elsie story in section 2 as an assembly opener; activity packs are also free at **schoolofkindness.org**.

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10. Join the live celebration

World Kindness Day: Celebrating Elsie Lincoln Benedict's Legacy Friday, November 13, 2026 · 9:00–11:00 AM PST (5:00–7:00 PM UTC)

- Live 2-hour online session with **Heather Benedict**, Elsie's great-granddaughter
- Program brand: **International Opportunity League**
- Official Eventbrite celebration ticket: **$47** — get your ticket on Eventbrite
- Refunds up to 1 day before the event
- Can't afford a ticket? Community access is available at elsielincolnbenedict.com/kindness-day
- The kit, 30 acts, cards, and quiz remain **free for everyone, always**
- Share with **#ElsieKindnessDay**

- Official World Kindness Week theme: **“Small Acts, BIG Impact!”**
- Related free resources: **schoolofkindness.org** · **randomactsofkindness.org**

> *“Friend, if you’ve been waiting for ‘some day,’ choose one small step you can take today.” —* Heather Benedict

Learn together. Take your next step.

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