

Hey Little Ant — Compassion

EXPLANATION:

Hey, Little Ant is a story between a boy and an ant. Phillip and Hannah Hoose's story is about a boy and his many reasons why he should squish an ant, and an ant who makes a persuasive plea for his survival. Should the boy squish the ant or show compassion?

YEAR LEVELS: Years 1–3

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group and small group activities

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 mins

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Learning Continuum of Personal and Social Capability

Social awareness

This element involves students recognising others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others.

Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- appreciate diverse perspectives
- contribute to civil society
- understand relationships.

SCOPE OF TASK:

Compassion involves feeling emotions such as kindness, empathy, respect and sympathy. It is the desire to help people and includes action. Actions taken help or support another person.

1. Activate student's prior knowledge about ants. Ask students what they know about ants and what they normally do when they see one. Questions could include:
 - What do ants do?
 - What is the purpose of ants?
 - Should you kill ants or other insects?
2. Show the students the book, 'Hey Little Ant' by Phillip and Hannah Hoose. Ask them what they think it might be about?
3. Read the book or click on the link to hear the story narrated:



4. The book finishes with the narrator asking the questions. Should the ant get squished? Should the ant go free? It's up to the kid not up to me. We'll leave that kid with the raised up shoe. What do you think that kid should do? Ask the students how the story should end?
5. Unpack the story with the students raising questions such as:
 - What are some of the reasons the boy gives for squishing the ant?
 - Do you think they are good reasons?
 - What are the reasons the ant gives for not being squished?
 - Do you think they are good reasons?
 - Can you think of any other reasons for squishing the ant?
 - For not squishing the ant?
 - Why are they good reasons?
6. Break the students into small groups and present the task:

- The group chooses a stance — to squish the ant or not.
 - Five reasons must be written to justify the group’s choice.
7. After they have written their five reasons for or against squishing the ant, the students regroup to share what they have written. Allow time for students to ask each other questions about their reasons and respectfully agree or disagree. Some questions that can be posed to initiate discussion could include:
 - Does the boy like the ant? Why or why not?
 - Who thinks ants should be killed?
 - What do you feel for the ant?
 - How do you feel when insects are hurt?
 - How do you feel when animals are hurt?
 8. Introduce vocabulary words (age appropriate) connected to compassion: respect, consideration, care and add to a word wall.
 9. Make connections between how we treat animals and our friends:
 - Do we show compassion to our friends? When?
 - Is there a difference between how we treat animals and people?
 - When should we show compassion/respect/care for others?
 - How do we feel when we show respect and care for others?
 - How do others feel when they receive compassion?
 10. Complete the activity by deciding why compassion is important for the class — these statements can be written on a poster for the classroom wall for future reference.

• **RESOURCES:**

- •Chart paper
 - •Pens
 - •Word wall
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- •Hoose, H & Hoose, PM 1998, Hey Little Ant, Tricycle Press.
 - •Online video: The Kindness Curriculum- Hey Little Ant, Read by Alyssa Healy sourced from: <https://youtu.be/pYXVoPoWWWQ>

