

Opening Hearts

Louise Jackson
United States

Values

- Unconditional Love and Support
- Discernment
- Courage
- Caring
- Hope
- Social Emotional Learning

Reflection Questions

Do you have grandparents who you spend time with? What do you like to do with them?

Do you know children who are adopted or are being raised by their grandparents?

How do you think you would feel about Louise if you were one of the twins?

Lessons Learned

You're never too old (or too young to make a difference in the world.

A foster grandparent is someone who loves kids and wants to help them do their best.

Every family is different -- the most important thing is that they love each other.

A foster grandparent can save a child from disaster.

“Every child deserves to be loved,” she says simply. As a volunteer with the Foster Grandparent program, Louise Jackson is one of 24,000 older Americans who are helping over 80,000 children in schools, hospitals and day care centers across the country. Louise first tried to help the mother of her twin foster children to conquer her drug addiction and raise her own children. But when that failed, and the children were in need of a good home, Louise decided to adopt them. Why did Louise do what she did? “To see my little angels walk across the stage and receive their diplomas,” she says. Her story is an inspiration to anyone who thinks they are too old, too young, or too anything else to make a difference.

Language Arts: SEL & Diversity

Read a book or show a video like *Annie* or *Angels in the Outfield* and have a class discussion about how children who lose one of both of their parents live their lives. Ask students to imagine being in a foster care home. Have them write a paper about it. Have students create a list of ways they could show compassion towards other children.

Social Studies: Diversity

Research foster care programs, kinship care and adoption agencies in your community. What services do they provide for people in emergency situations? How does their program receive its funding? Create a list of ways they can use young volunteers. Invite a speaker from a Social Service Agency, Child Welfare Agency or the Department of Social Services to answer students' questions about children in foster care.

Community Service: Service Learning

Contact the Senior Corps: Corporation for National and Community Service (www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/senior-corps-programs/foster-grandparents) to find the nearest chapter and invite a Foster Grandparent to speak to the class about their experiences. Contact the local Council on Aging and ask for a “classroom grandparent,” reading buddy or volunteer. Invite them to school events and send them a school calendar. Visit a nursing home during the year, at the holidays: sing carols, bring student-made gifts. Help create a Foster Grandparent program with a local nursing home. Plan a special weekend with your grandparents or a special day with an elderly person.