

Cheat sheet for teachers and coaches.

Kids learn how people treat each other from how you treat the one who can do the least for you.

Not every hardship is a test, and nothing here is graded.



Notice who nobody picks.

Teams, partners, lunch tables. Quietly arrange it so no one is left standing there. and make it the routine for everyone, not a rescue.

SAY "I'll pair you up today,"



Praise the effort and the kindness, by name.

or "You made room for him, and I saw it." Be specific so they know what to do again.

SAY "You stayed with that problem when it got hard,"



Treat a mistake as normal, in front of everyone.

When a student gets it wrong, thank them for trying and fix the problem, not the person. Do the same with your own mistakes.

SAY "Good attempt. Let's see where it went sideways."



Keep the small rules fair.

Same grace period, same turn, same tone for the star and the kid who struggles. Kids track fairness closely, and they learn it from you.



Take the private word.

For most corrections, speak quietly, at their level, away from the group.

SAY "Can I talk with you for a second? I want to understand what happened."



Apologize when you are wrong.

Short, plain, no excuses. Repair teaches more than perfection.

SAY "I blamed you before I checked. That wasn't fair, and I'm sorry."



Let them help each other.

Give the kid who gets it a chance to explain, and the kid who doesn't a chance to ask a peer. Teach them to disagree well.

SAY "Tell me what you heard them say before you answer."

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS WEEK

Find the kid nobody picks, learn one true thing about them, and say it to them privately.

Stay curious about the hard kid. Ask "What's going on?" before "What's wrong with you?" But curiosity does not replace the rules: follow your school or league's safeguarding policy, never keep a child's disclosure secret, and report suspected abuse or neglect as the law in your state or country requires. If you are a mandated reporter, you report on reasonable suspicion, not proof. Do not investigate it yourself.

This is practical, not religious. I think what you show with your choices is what counts. Share it freely.



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A free message about how we treat each other. Nothing to buy, nothing to join. One person's hypothesis, not advice. Woodcut images were made with AI tools; the words are Keith Adler's. Share freely.