



Ursuline
Catholic Primary School



Bucket Filling

**Information
for
Parents & Carers**



Bucket Filling

Dear Parent/Carer,

This year we are enthusiastically introducing a new programme called Bucket Filling. Bucket filling is an easy-to-understand concept: ***Everyone carries an invisible bucket that holds our good thoughts and feelings. When our buckets are full, we feel happy and when our buckets are empty, we feel sad.*** Children quickly understand that they can fill buckets when they do and say things that are kind, considerate, caring, and respectful. They also learn that when they don't make good choices they dip into buckets and remove those good feelings. Even the youngest child understands that actions and words can either fill a bucket or dip into it.

This program is an integral part of the work that we are doing at Ursuline in order to harness what the science of human connection is telling us about the importance of social and emotional competencies, and the impact upon outcomes for children. During this school year we are encouraging, reminding, and recognising everyone's efforts to be bucket fillers at home, at school, and everywhere they go.

We are excited about this new programme and look forward to your support. You may find your child bringing home communication slips thanking them for filling someone's bucket in school. Likewise we would welcome you to utilise the bucket that can be found in the foyer to share things that may have 'filled your bucket' during interactions with school staff.

If you would like to learn more about bucket filling please feel free to ask a member of staff for more information or visit the Bucket Fillers website, www.bucketfillers101.com

Mark McQueen
Head Teacher

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the "bucket"?

The bucket represents your mental and emotional self.

How do you feel when your bucket is full?

When your bucket is full, you feel more confident, secure, calm, patient, and friendly. Your thoughts are positive and you expect positive results. When your bucket is overflowing, you experience an intense happiness that can spread to those around you. Have you ever felt better after someone gave you a friendly smile or happy grin? This is the "ripple effect" of a full bucket.

How do you feel when your bucket is empty?

When your bucket is empty, it contains few, if any, positive thoughts or feelings. When your bucket is empty you can easily become sad, insecure, nervous, angry, depressed, stressed, worried, afraid, or physically ill. When you experience any of these feelings, it's easy to believe that life is too challenging and that nothing you attempt will be successful. An empty bucket can affect your behaviour and cause you to express your emotions in a way that empties the buckets of those around you.

What affects the level of happiness in your bucket?

Negative life events. The careless or even cruel words and behaviour of others can also affect the level of happiness in your bucket. Your own self-talk and thoughts can dramatically reduce or raise the level of happiness in your bucket. It's important to know that you are responsible for what you choose to think and when your thoughts are positive and healthy, your bucket levels will reflect it.

What is Bucket Filling?

Actions or words that show that you care about someone. Saying or doing something kind. Giving someone a heartfelt smile. Using names with respect. Helping without being asked. Giving sincere compliments. Showing respect to others. There are hundreds of wonderful ways to fill buckets. The language of bucket filling has become synonymous with being kind and thoughtful. Your bucket will be filled when, at the close of each day, you reflect on the ways in which you have filled buckets.

What is Bucket Dipping?

Making fun of someone. Saying or doing unkind things. Refusing to help. Failing to show respect or being intentionally disrespectful. This is a partial list of ways in which it's possible to dip into another's bucket. Another is bullying, the behaviour that has become the essence of bucket dipping. It is very important that we learn to understand the motivation for these behaviours. It is also dipping when we unintentionally dip into another's bucket with a thoughtless word or careless action.

What does "Use Your Lid" Mean?

Because your bucket represents your emotional and mental health, it is extremely important that you learn to protect the good thoughts and feelings you've collected. The "lid" represents a mental shield against anything that would dip into your bucket. When you consciously train yourself to stop and think through a situation as soon as you feel the hurt, pain, or anger from a painful, embarrassing, or otherwise unpleasant situation you will be able to prevent your bucket from being dipped. As you practice using your lid, you will build the necessary resilience to work through life's challenges. Both children and adults can be taught to use their lids to protect their buckets. It's true that every situation is different. However patience and practice in using your lid combined with trust in your basic bucket-filling instincts, will help you succeed more often than not.

Where did the idea of "Bucket Filling" start?

In the 1960s, Dr. **Donald O. Clifton** (1924-2003) first created the "Dipper and Bucket" story, which depicted the reservoir as an invisible bucket. **Carol McCloud** was an early childhood educator in the 1990s when she learned of the bucket-filling concept while attending an early childhood conference. As she followed the new research on mental, emotional, and social development that was being uncovered in the orphanages of Romania, she began to understand more clearly the intense need that all children share to have their buckets filled by caring adults.

In 2005, she began to wonder why no one had yet taught this amazing concept to young children and was inspired to write her first book, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids*. Within a month of publication, teachers from schools around the country were calling her to help them create "bucket-filling schools". Since then, thousands of schools around the world have used the bucket-filling ideas and concepts to become "bucket-filling schools" where kindness and respect are taught, practised, and valued by all.

Whilst it was first developed in the USA it is now taught in schools across the UK, at conferences, and shared on blogs and educational websites around the world. Take a minute to Google® "bucket filling" and discover how much discussion there is on the subject. Bucket filling focuses on the positive, it's easily understood, and simple to implement. Every character trait (kindness, respect, responsibility, trust, fairness, and citizenship) becomes more tangible when the action is described as filling a bucket.

Why is the bucket concept helpful?

The bucket concept is simple and profound: Two-year-olds can understand it and yet it so profound that therapists who use it are able to help their clients solve the many challenges they hope to overcome. The concept of a full or empty bucket gives understanding to the motivation behind behaviour, i.e. When our buckets are full, we are much more inclined to fill our buckets and the buckets of others and when our buckets are empty, we tend to find ourselves dipping. Sadly, we live in bucket-dipping world where unkind words are often more common than compliments. Bucket Filling has created a new and simple language that everyone can understand and learn, i.e. *you filled my bucket!* Understanding the motivation behind behaviour and realising that we can choose to be bucket fillers are powerful tools for positive change.