

OBJECTIVE

Students find common ground with students outside their social circle to build more connections and reflect on the year.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Video and Lesson Guide
Circles of Connection Sheet, in student portfolio
Connection Notes: Month 9, 1 for each student
Connection Challenge: Bingo Sheets, 1 per student

RESOURCES

Slide Deck
Optional Teacher Connection Challenges
Communication Templates
Additional Connection Challenges for students

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Building close relationships is vital to personal well-being. Being able to have relationships grow and adjust over time is a skill that helps to build resilience. There is much research that points to positive relationships impacting productivity and profitability in the workplace.

We know that our students will encounter new and varied places as they go through their lives. Equipping them with skills to increase the number of people in their lives and the quality of those relationships is armor for the work ahead. Just like with math, we know practice can improve outcomes. While we specifically ask students to think about their Circles of Connection over time, we have also had them working in Connection Teams—both approaches are necessary and important to model different ways for students to engage with people in their lives.

We also know through our own experience that some relationships are for a month or for a year and not for keeps—it is also a skill to move away from a relationship that is not serving our needs. As students reflect on where they were from the beginning of the year to now—have them consider why some people have changed positions in their circles and why that could be positive. Continue to support students who feel like they want more people in their circles to think specifically about a need they are trying to fulfill. For example: someone to go for a run with, someone to read a book with or just someone that likes the same memes they do.

LESSON GUIDE

Hand out the Connection Notes Sheet and have students get out the Circles & Notes pages from last month.

Begin with taking out the Connection Notes from last lesson and meet with their Connection Team to review the Connection Challenge from the previous lesson. Have them meet in the small groups of 2-4 from last lesson and talk about their reactions to the Kindness Challenge experience. Were they successful? Were they surprised or confused by the reactions? Was there a pattern or theme to how people responded? After a small group discussion, share out as a class and then allow time to reflect by completing the first box, Check In, on the Connection Notes worksheet.

Take the pre-assessment.

This next lesson focuses on thinking about who the students are as complete humans—where they came from and what defines them; to really consider the people that have helped to shape who they are.

Introduce Lyndsey Sprinkle as this month's storyteller. Lyndsey Sprinkle is a recovery addict and ex-convict. From a experiencing a traumatic car accident in high school that led to a lifestyle of addiction, Lyndsey has found hope on the other side of recovery and now has a fulfilling career helping addicts in recovery. Through sharing her experiences, she hopes to show individuals anything is possible if you reach out and connect with those around you.

Show the Video and Discuss

Have students take brief notes in the second box, Video Notes, on the Connection Notes Sheet from Month Nine. Watch the entire video all the way through and have a conversation using these questions or ones that make sense for your students. You can pause before discussion and have students complete the questions on the notes page to give them time to process what they have heard.

- Then, start by asking, “Is there anyone in your life that this video makes you think about? Can you reach out and connect with them right now?”
- Allow time for students to text or call someone they are thinking about in the moment.
- Use the questions below to engage in a rich conversation with your students focusing on student engagement. Lead the conversation with the whole group or have small groups answer each question and then share their answers.
- It is vital that all students feel seen in this process so pay close attention to anyone responding in a way to the videos that is unexpected. Follow up with them after the discussion to ensure the video or conversation was not upsetting to them.

Play again, pausing for conversation with the Connection Teams. After the teams discuss, consider debriefing as a class. As you rewatch, pause at 1:11 and engage with students about Lyndsey's story. She shares about her accident and the consequences that she has been dealing with since she was 15. Lyndsey talks about starting drugs to deal with her pain management.

- Do you think there are other things that might be contributing to her pain that is more than physical? What do you think can lead to getting into hard core drugs?
- If you were to encounter someone that is stealing to feed a drug habit, they will often talk about doing what it takes to show up with their family so they don't know. Lyndsey says it is like being a chameleon. Have you experienced a time when you had to change yourself to fit in with family or friends? What any possible warning signs to make sure it hasn't gone too far?

LESSON GUIDE CONTINUED

Continue to watch and pause again at the end. Lyndsey talks about her dreams and the connections she has made and how she is realizing them now. Earlier she had talked about having no friends.

- How did getting involved and surrounding herself with people help her to stay positive and away from drugs?
- How does isolation work today with being on phones all the time?
- What is something we can do to feel more connected?

Allow time to Connect to Self

Allow time for your students to now connect with themselves and reflect on the conversation and video. Have them spend time thinking about and writing in box three, Connect to Self, on the Connection Notes Sheet for Month Nine.

Hand out the Circles of Connection Reflection Sheet and the letters from the beginning of the year.

Allow students to think about their journey over the year and to record their thoughts about their closest relationships and how they want to continue to grow those bonds in the future. Have students take the final assessment on the Circles of Connection Reflection Sheet.

Introduce this month's Connection Challenge

1. Hand out Connection Challenge sheets. Students can work in their Connection Teams for this activity.
2. Students will search for people who match the descriptors. When they find someone, they will take a photo with that person. If completing the challenge tech-free, students can obtain their signature.
3. Remind students the goal is to reach out to those outside your circle to make more connections.

Allow time to Connect to Circle

Have the students complete the last box, Connect to Circle, on the Connection Notes Sheet for Month Nine.

TO ACCESS THE VIDEO, SLIDES, LESSON
MATERIALS, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM



CONNECTION NOTES, MONTHS 9

Check In



List your connection team members:

Check in as a group with these questions:

- How many challenges did you complete?
- What relationships are stronger now than at the beginning of the year?
- What relationships are you still working on?

Review your letter from the beginning of the year and reflect.

Video Notes



Build your empathy as you watch and discuss:

- What do you think the story teller is feeling and how others in their life might react.
- If it was you, what help might you need?
- What would you want from your circle?
- How might you get that help?
- What can you take from this story that will help you build connections?

Engage in group/class discussion.

Connect to Self



There are many ways to check in with yourself, consider these types of questions to get you started:

- What emotions are you feeling?
- Are you feeling lonely in any part of your life?
- Is there something you need to talk to someone about that is sticking with you?
- Have you had a chance to exercise, reflect, and breathe today?
- How does your body feel?
- What thoughts are with you all the time?
- What brings you joy today?
- What are you worried about?

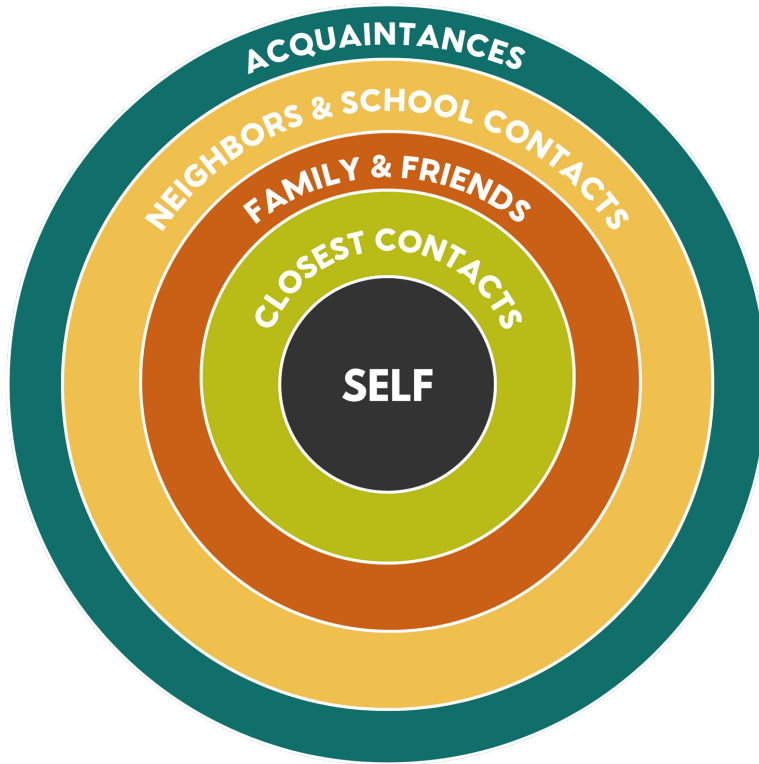
Connect to Circle



By doing this month's Connection Challenge you have an opportunity to check in with someone in your circle, use this space to plan that check in.

- How are you going to complete this month's connection challenge?
- Which relationship in your circle will you be working on?
- Who in your circle needs a check in?
- What do you need from someone in your circle?
- How did checking in help you feel?

CIRCLES OF CONNECTION REFLECTION



	Rate the relationships you have in this circle.	List next steps you will take with these relationships.
Closest Contacts		
Family & Friends		
Neighbors & School Contacts		
Acquaintances		

CONNECTION BINGO

Here's your chance to expand your connection circle! Search for people who fit the following descriptors. When you find someone who fits a connection to you, take a photo with that person! If you are completing the challenge tech-free, have them sign that bingo square on each other's sheet.

You cannot have a signature with a person more than once.

Your goal is to get at least one bingo. (5 in a row, column, or diagonal.)

Remember to reach out to those outside your circle of influence to make more connections.

like the same music artist	is in the same birth order as you (oldest, middle, youngest, only)	listens to the same youtuber or podcaster	shares a favorite sports team (or dislikes sports too)	wants to work in the same career or field
enjoys the same hobby	has the same favorite movie	went to the same elementary school	agrees with you on pizza toppings	been on vacation at the same place (or also hasn't traveled out of state)
has the same future goal	has the same type of pet (or no pet if you don't have a pet!)	FREE	shares your birthday month	had the same favorite tv show or movie as a kid
has the same favorite camp/school memory	shares the same cultural or ancestral history	agrees with you on an unpopular opinion	can quote the same tv show	shares the same celebrity crush
dislikes the same food	can do the same dance move	chooses the same icecream flavor	can speak or is learning the same language	played the same sport or extracurricular activity