

OBJECTIVE

Students identify the people in their closest circle of trust and connect with them intentionally.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Video and Lesson Guide
Circles of Connection Sheet, in student portfolio
Connection Notes: Month 7, 1 for each student
Connection Challenge: 3x5 My People Notecards

RESOURCES

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

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Gratitude is a practice shown to have many benefits. We use it during this lesson to help move thoughts into actions. By physically engaging with gratitude, we hope to build a muscle memory for students to know what it takes to reflect, write and share a gratitude, and then see the result from the process. This can be done to improve strained relationships or to grow existing relationships.

With loneliness, we know that there is a tipping point from which people can ask for help or connection and one where they become even more isolated. Gratitude helps to quiet the thoughts in the brain that lead to these more isolated places. Getting outside of yourself to consider what others bring into your life is a simple tool that helps one feel less lonely.

Other research has shown that we regularly think about our lives through a negative filter. Gratitude is a powerful intervention that can change a negative filter to a positive filter. Dr. Martin Seligman writes, "We think too much about what goes wrong and not enough about what goes right in our lives." He continues to say, "gratitude makes your life happier and more satisfying. When we feel gratitude, we benefit from the pleasant memory of a positive event in our life. Also, when we express gratitude to others, we strengthen our relationship with them."

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 role model 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 the people in your closest circles and reaching out to them to show gratitude and appreciation for what they bring into your life.

Introduce Ethan Wall as this month's storyteller. Ethan is a pianist and high school basketball player currently pursuing a college degree in music. Growing up in a small town, he learned not to judge a book by its cover and connect with people that were outside of his normal friendship circles.

Show the Video and Discuss

Have students take brief notes in the second box, Video Notes, on the Connection Notes Sheet from Month Seven. 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 1:01 and engage with students about Ethan's story.

- What expectations do you feel in your life and have you exceeded them or do they make you feel stressed?
- Pause at 3:40, and talk about how at the beginning of the video, Ethan talks about how no one checked in on him but at this point, he talks about understanding that they didn't reach out because they assumed he knew they cared. Can you think about someone in your life either close to you or a casual friend and what would deepening that friendship mean to you or to them?

Pause at 5:00, Ethan encourages us to think about finding our value in who we are versus what we do.

- Can you think about how what you do informs who you are?
- Can you name some things that are of value that you get from the things you do? For example, if you love sports, is it because you value the competition or pushing yourself to get your best or if you love theater, is it because you love to escape into other stories or because you love making people laugh.

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 Seven.

Introduce this month's Connection Challenge

1. Pass out 3x5 My People cards - three to each student.
2. Students brainstorm 3 people in their closest circle of trust (Example: family member, coach, etc.).
3. Students then write a brief message on each of their cards thanking their people and then deliver the cards to them.

Allow time to Connect to Circle

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

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

WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM

