

**OBJECTIVE**

Students will identify one or more role models they look up to and can aspire to learn from their example.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

Video and Lesson Guide  
Circles of Connection Sheet, in student portfolio  
Connection Notes: Month 6, 1 for each student  
Connection Challenge: Role Model Sheet, 1 per student

**RESOURCES**

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

**BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

We all become the people we are meant to be, either through dedicated work or happenstance. We experience events inside and outside of close relationships. When we look to others, we can build up or tear down. By framing this process with students, we can help them to take a more aspirational look at their lives.

Role models, whether we know them or not, can help us to make decisions about things that matter to us. Cultivating relationships helps to build happier and healthier lives. According to psychiatrist Robert Waldinger, “When we watch people we admire, their lives tell us a certain story about what it’s like to live a certain kind of life.” When we use role models that are resilient, optimistic, aspirational, our lives become that as well.

Role models serve many roles in our lives—they let us see people like us in jobs or roles we want to have, they allow us to see our values in action, and they allow us to see what might happen if we take a certain path. Role models can have both positive and negative impacts. We want to encourage students to think purposefully about the role models in their lives and how the values that they hold dear come to life through those people. While younger students might have role models that are famous and rich and they value those things, it is important to note that values may change over time and having an experience to think about who you look up to is important.

Research shows us that when students are able to see the success of someone similar to themselves, it also allows them to see themselves as successful in the future. A future mindset allows happiness to get in. Happiness is an antidote to loneliness. Use your time this month to talk about values, how people demonstrate those values, and how role models might be worth connecting with now and in the future.

## 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 shoe 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 role models in their life, how identifying traits in someone they look up to can help point them in the direction of who they want to become, and simultaneously building stronger connections with the people in their life.

Introduce Mariah as this month's storyteller. Mariah Paz identified as a mean girl in school. Since then, she has learned to see people for who they really are and build relationships with them. She has experienced some difficult times in her life, but finding connection with others has helped her through those hard times. She finds connection in the activities in her life—wrestling, her aunt's coffee shop, and volunteering in the community.

### Show the Video and Discuss

Have students take brief notes in the second box, Video Notes, on the Connection Notes Sheet from Month Six. 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.

At 1:35, pause and ask:

- Have you had an experience with kind people getting walked on? Do you think being mean is a way to control a situation? Why or why not?
- Do you see any patterns between what Mariah is saying about her emotions and her experiences?
- When I listen to Mariah, I hear a lot of anger and a lot of sadness, how do those emotions come up for you? Do you think it is harder when adults are mean than when your peers are?

At 2:44, pause and take a deep breath with the students. Some students in your class will have had experience with suicide, others have not. Research shows that it is absolutely okay to talk about it and in fact, talking openly can help. Allow space for students to talk with you or a counselor later if needed as well.

## LESSON GUIDE CONTINUED

At the end of the video, continue the conversation using these prompts:

- What emotions come up for you when you hear Mariah's story?
- What parts of her story can you relate to? What parts are harder for you?
- How do you think Mariah and her family feel about her sharing her story now?
- Mariah talks about no one reaching out to her when she was lonely but losing Nate helped her to see that it is important to reach out as well. What types of things can we put in place to help remind ourselves to reach out to people? What is the hardest part of asking for help?
- Forgiving others means letting go of the hurt they caused in your life; healthy relationships involve forgiveness. Do you think that Mariah needs to make amends with anyone or forgive anyone in her life? What types of things would be helpful to hear from someone if you are in the process of trying to forgive them?

### 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 Six.

### Introduce this month's Connection Challenge

1. Have students brainstorm who their role models might be, choose one and write 3 characteristics on why they are their role model. Hopefully this is someone the student knows and can interact with but if they are having a hard time with that—they can consider a person in the public arena.
2. Have students complete this role model worksheet adding a picture to it if they have one. Students could also create a visual representation of the characteristics as an alternative.
3. Share the result with the role model in some way- write a note, send a dm, post a picture, even if it is someone they do not know.

Share with students the information about how knowing and working with all the parts of your story help to make you more resilient in the future.

### Allow time to Connect to Circle

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

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

[WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM](http://WWW.SCHOOLS.ONLY7SECONDS.COM)



# CONNECTION NOTES: MONTHS 2-8

## Check In



List your connection team members:

Check in as a group with these questions:

- Did you complete last month's challenge?
- How did it make you feel?
- What relationship are you working on building?
- Who can you reach out to for help if you need it?

## 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

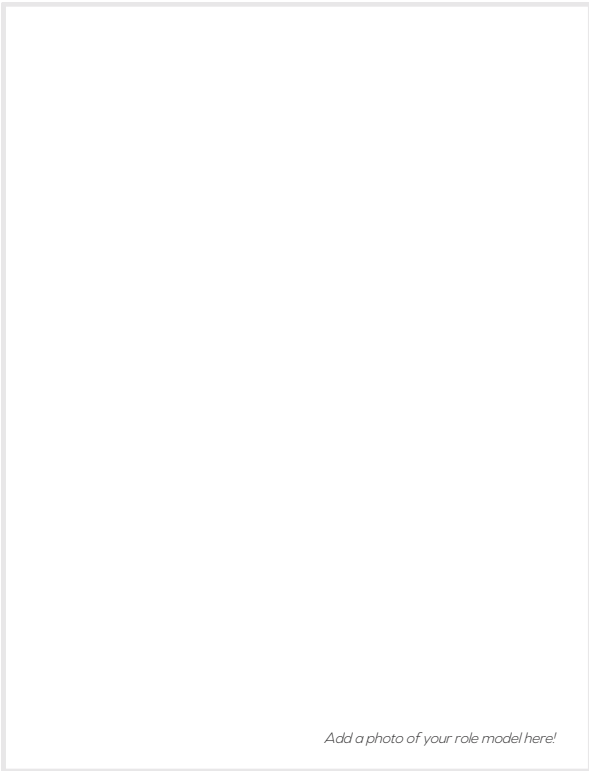


By doing this month's Connection Challenge you have an opportunity to check in with someone in your circle, use this space to plan that check in.

- 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?

## **ROLE MODEL CONNECTION CHALLENGE**

1. Brainstorm who your role models might be, choose one and write 3 characteristics on why they are your role model. We hope this is someone you know and can interact with, but if you are having a hard time with that—consider someone in the public arena.
2. Complete this role model worksheet by listing the characteristics and traits you admire in your role model, you can also add a photo.
3. Share the result with your role model in some way—write a note, send a dm, post a picture, even if it is someone you don't know.



*Add a photo of your role model here!*

### **BRAINSTORM HERE**

Who are your role models?

### **CHOOSE A ROLE MODEL**

What are the characteristics and traits you admire in them?