



Social Awareness



ABOUT OPEN CIRCLE

Open Circle is an evidence-based social and emotional learning program for Kindergarten through Grade 5. Our grade-differentiated curriculum proactively develops children's social and emotional skills including recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving. It helps schools build a community where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning.

The Story of My Name

By: Open Circle

The Story of My Name

INTRODUCTION

The following activity can be used throughout the school day in a variety of ways, including to build community, to change the energy in a group or to help develop mindfulness practices.

NOTE

- *Depending on the range of academic and physical abilities within the group, adaptations may need to be made so that everyone can participate.*

ACTIVITY

This activity can be done as a whole group, in small groups or with partners.

Ask students to think about and share the story of their name using the following prompts:

- Is there a story behind your name?
- Where does your name come from?
- Are you named after someone? Does your name have meaning?

What do you like about your name?

REFLECTION

To help students make the connection between specific SEL skills and this activity, facilitate a conversation using some of the prompts and questions below after the students have completed the activity:

- Take a moment to pause and check in with yourself. Notice your breathing and any feelings and thoughts you might have.
- How did it feel to participate in this activity? What was happening to cause you to feel that way?
- Who else felt the same way? Differently?
- What were some things you noticed about yourself while doing the activity?
- What were some things you noticed going on in our group during the activity that were helpful?
- What SEL skills did we use during this activity?

- What are some times during the school day when you may also need to use these skills?
- What were some things you noticed going on in our group that might have been challenging?
- What might we do next time to make it better?

Taking just a few moments at the end of an activity to guide students through some reflective thinking and discussion about their experience can increase levels of trust, empathy and an overall sense of community amongst group members. These conversations also reinforce the concept that SEL skills have relevance, use, and purpose outside of SEL instructional time. Helping students make this connection is a critical component in learning and applying SEL skills.

The material on the preceding page(s) is an excerpt from the grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum*. The complete curriculum contains:



- 32 core lessons across five units: Beginning Together, Managing Ourselves, Strengthening Relationships, How to Sort Problems, and Problem Solving;
- 27 supplementary lessons;
- 80 community-building and mindfulness activities and practices;
- 27 skill mini-posters;
- 18 *Home Link* family newsletters;
- Over 250 children’s literature titles that connect to specific SEL topics;
- A myriad of homework and extension activities; and
- End-of-unit student and teacher reflection activities and additional curriculum-wide reflection and assessment tools.

Open Circle is an evidence-based, universal social and emotional learning program for Kindergarten through Grade 5. The grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum* proactively develops children’s social and emotional skills, including recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving. It also helps schools build a community where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning. Open Circle’s unique whole-school approach includes all adults in the school community – teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff and families – learning to model and reinforce prosocial skills throughout the school day and at home.

Teachers implement the *Open Circle Curriculum* during twice-weekly, 15-minute classroom meetings in which students form a circle of chairs, including an empty seat to symbolize that there is always room for another person or opinion. These meetings are also a familiar and safe setting for children to discuss important issues in their classroom, school, community or the broader world. Teachers and counselors also use the *Open Circle Curriculum* with students who require additional, targeted instruction.

The *Open Circle Curriculum* is designed for educators who have participated in Open Circle’s Core Program, an interactive and experiential professional development experience that combines training and coaching sessions to help educators strengthen their knowledge and skills in several areas, including: social and emotional learning (SEL) theory, research and practice; facilitation; group development and community building; problem solving; mindfulness and reflection practice; appreciation for cultural and other differences in students; integrating SEL throughout the school day; and using children’s literature to teach and reinforce SEL.

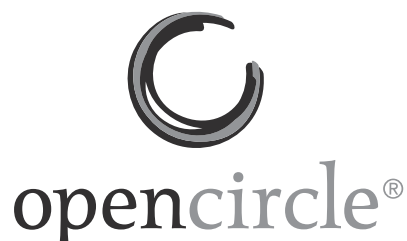
For more information, visit www.open-circle.org or call us at 781-283-3277.

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