



WEEK 4



15+ MIN



Students discover and declare how they will replace personal beliefs that “BUILD” walls with a commitment to “BUILD BRIDGES” as they step from their individual “island” to join a classroom “continent.”



Lined or blank paper; Pencils or pens.

Total Prep Time: 5 mins.



As this is the last Monday of the month, please consider sharing or re-sharing the Monthly Kick-Off activity, and if appropriate, video at www.everymondaymatters.org. Additionally, a three-minute recap of the previous weeks may add extra context to this week and help connect the dots around the monthly theme.

4 C's		SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING		SERVICE LEARNING	
•	Critical thinking	•	Self-awareness	•	Integrated learning
•	Communication	•	Self-management		High quality service
•	Collaboration	•	Social-awareness		Collaboration
•	Creativity	•	Relationship skills	•	Student voice
		•	Responsible decision-making		Civic responsibility
				•	Reflection
					Evaluation

GOALS FOR THE WEEK

- Discover personal beliefs that “BUILD” walls and replace them with new beliefs that embrace empathy, love, connection, and a sense of global community
- Identify how to bring more people into our inner circles to grow our sense of comfort, belonging, and family
- Practice looking for similarities, common ground, and shared goals between seemingly different people
- Understand how “BUILDING BRIDGES” is an important part of this month’s theme, “MONDAY GETS UNDERSTANDING”



STUDENT ACTIVITY: **“DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE”**

1) SHARE THE NAME OF THIS ACTIVITY WITH STUDENTS: “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE”

2) ASK 1-3 QUESTIONS FROM THE LIST BELOW TO WARM STUDENTS UP ON THE ACTIVITY’S FOCUS:

***NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students' ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What does the word “DEPENDENCE” mean?**
 - Answer: Relying on someone else
- **Have you ever heard the “INTERDEPENDENCE” before? What does it mean?**
 - Answer: When two or more people rely on each other
- **Can you rely on other people when you have walls “BUILT” around you?**
- **What are some walls that you have “BUILT” around yourself to keep you from others?**
 - Possible answers: Avoiding conflict, not letting people see insecurities, not being vulnerable about emotions with other people
- **What are some reasons that you wall yourself off from other individuals, either within your own life or within the community?**
 - Are these walls helpful, or do they do more harm than good?
- **What are some ways you can tear down your personal walls?**
- **What would it look like to tear down your walls, so to speak, and “BUILD BRIDGES” with others instead?**
- **How can you be more open, understanding, empathetic, welcoming, and receptive to engaging with people from other cultures, with different backgrounds, or with different belief systems?**
- **What is a “DECLARATION”?**
 - Answer: A formal statement or announcement
- **What is the “Declaration of Independence”?**
- **What might a “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” include?**
- **How might creating a “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” help you to “BUILD BRIDGES”?**
- **How might creating a “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” help you “GET UNDERSTANDING”?**
- **How might creating a “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” connect you to how much YOU MATTER and how much others MATTER, too?**

3) SET UP THE “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” ACTIVITY:

- **Explain:**
 - John Donne famously said: “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent.”
- **Ask:**
 - What does the famous quote, “No man is an island,” mean?
 - What does it look like to live life like you are an island?
 - What does it look like to live life like you are a piece of the whole continent?
- **Explain:**
 - Today, we are going to “DECLARE” that we are not islands, but instead are “INTERCONNECTED” with each other
 - And, we are going to “DECLARE” that it’s better to be “INTERCONNECTED” than to “BUILD” walls around our own selves, our lives, and our communities

4) START THE “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” ACTIVITY:

- **Distribute paper and pencils or pens to each student**
- **Instruct students to each sit or stand on a separate space or “island” in the classroom**

- **Explain:**

- I am about to read aloud the template for your “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE”
- As I read aloud the following two statements, you will each copy my words and fill in the blanks to create your own personal “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE”
- **Read the first statement for students to write on their paper and fill in the blanks: “I choose to no longer be an island by shedding my walls of _____.”**
- Allow students 2-3 minutes to list fears, judgments, and other reasons they keep themselves on an island closed off from others
- Possible examples include fear of judgment and rejection; fear of change and the unknown; self-protection; preservation of beliefs, way of life, and ego; personal bias and prejudice
- **Then, read the second statement for students to write on their paper and fill in the blanks: “From this day forward, I choose to be interdependent by _____.”**
- Allow students 2-3 minutes to briefly describe how they will replace their island ways with “INTERDEPENDENT” habits
- Possible examples include honestly sharing emotions instead of hiding them; asking for help instead of trying to do everything themselves and feeling overwhelmed; making it a top priority in life to understand others’ perspectives instead of trying to be right; looking for win-win solutions or compromise instead of trying to win; respecting, validating, and showing empathy instead of teasing, criticizing, or pointing out flaws
- **Circulate while students are working to ensure they are on task and to support as helpful and necessary**
- **When time is up or students are done, have each student take turns reading aloud their “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” as they step off their “island” and into the center “continent” or class circle, joined together with all of their peers**
- **Hang the “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” documents in the classroom or encourage students to take them home with them and post somewhere they can see so they can get inspired to “BUILD BRIDGES” as often as possible**

5) AFTER THE ACTIVITY, ASK 1-3 OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS REFLECT ON WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED AND HOW THEY CAN TAKE THIS FORWARD:

**NOTE: Choose questions appropriate to your students’ ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What was it like to create your “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” today?**
- **Was anything challenging about coming up with your “DECLARATIONS”?**
- **Did you learn anything new about yourself or others while coming up with your “DECLARATIONS”?**
- **What was the most unexpected or important lesson you took away from this activity?**
- **Did this activity change your perspective on how to “GET UNDERSTANDING”?**
- How so?
- **How did you commit to “BUILDING BRIDGES” through creating your “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE”?**
- **How will you follow through on your “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE”?**
- **How will you keep “BUILDING BRIDGES” going forward?**
- **Why is it important to use “BRIDGES” to “GET UNDERSTANDING”?**
- **What would your life be like if you follow through on your “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” and your commitment to “BUILD BRIDGES”?**

6) THANK STUDENTS FOR SHARING THEIR “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” IDEAS AND REFLECTIONS WITH THE CLASS. REMIND THEM THAT RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF A GOOD LIFE, AND COMMITTING TO “INTERDEPENDENCE” AND “BUILDING BRIDGES” WILL HELP THEM PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS THROUGH EMPATHY AND “UNDERSTANDING.”

- 7) **CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO USE THEIR “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” IDEAS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF CLASS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. CHECK IN TO SEE HOW THEY ARE “BUILDING BRIDGES” WITH OTHERS WHO ARE BOTH DIFFERENT AND SIMILAR TO THEM.**
- 8) **CONTINUE EXPLORING HOW TO “BUILD BRIDGES” BY LEADING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING EXTENSION ACTIVITIES.**



EXTENSION IDEAS:

DO ONE OR MORE OF THESE EXTENSION IDEAS TO BRING THE LESSON FROM 15 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES OR MORE.

- 1) **Join the Island:** Use chalk, markers, or tape to create an island on the floor that is slightly too small for everyone to fit inside of comfortably. Then, challenge students to work with each other to find a way for everyone to fit inside the island. Encourage them to use their communication skills, team skills, and problem-solving skills to make room for everyone, regardless of their identities, backgrounds, ability levels, and belief systems.
- 2) **Cross the Bridge:** Use rope, chalk, markers, paper, or tape to create a stone “BRIDGE” that goes from a remote island to a center island with some obstacles in the way. Have students walk across the “BRIDGE” with the help of their peers to travel from the remote island to center island. Students can shout out likely obstacles or setbacks that they may have to overcome to commit to their “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” as they step across each classroom obstacle.
- 3) **Class Declaration:** Have students work together to make a class “DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE” to commit to shared values and behaviors to shed negativity, exclusion, and isolation, and to foster community, empathy, respect, validation, and belonging.
- 4) **Construct a Bridge:** Have students work in small groups to “BUILD” a “BRIDGE” with popsicle sticks, tape, pencils, or other household or classroom items labeled with their “BRIDGE BUILDING” ideas from the original activity. As an optional second part of this activity, students can label objects as obstacles to maintaining “BRIDGES” (disrespect, ego, violence, etc.) that they place on their constructed “BRIDGE” to see and discuss how much it can literally and figuratively withstand before collapsing.

**“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND, ENTIRE OF ITSELF;
EVERY MAN IS A PIECE OF THE CONTINENT.”**

- JOHN DONNE