



WEEK 4



15+ MIN



Students work in pairs to explore how they can bring more people into their “inner circle” or family.



Arrange chairs (before or during class) in two side-by-side columns divided by an “aisle” so every student is seated across the aisle from one partner.

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.everymondaysmatters.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.

Educator’s Note: While discussing family in this lesson, please make sure students are aware that family doesn’t have to include only biological family members and can include guardians, chosen family, and other people in the community who support them.

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: **“ACROSS THE AISLE”**

1) SHARE THE NAME OF THIS ACTIVITY WITH STUDENTS: “ACROSS THE AISLE”

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.*

- **Who has ever been to a wedding?**
 - Who was getting married?
 - Did you interact with anyone from the other side of the family?
- **After two people are married, how do both families eventually feel like one family?**
 - How do individuals from each family go from being strangers or acquaintances to feeling like one family?
- **What does it feel like to be a family?**
 - How is interacting with family members different than interacting with friends or people from other families?
- **Other than your actual family, to what other “families” or groups do you belong?**
- **What individuals in your life are part of a different family or group?**
- **How might interacting with someone like they are family help you “BUILD A BRIDGE”?**
- **How might treating someone like they are family help you to “GET UNDERSTANDING”?**
- **If you treat others like they are family, do you think they will realize that they MATTER to you?**
 - Why or why not?

3) SET UP THE “ACROSS THE AISLE” ACTIVITY:

- **Explain:**
 - In a family, some relatives are “blood” relatives while some are relatives by marriage
 - For example, your parent’s sibling is your aunt or uncle by blood, while their spouse is only related to you by marriage
 - Many people also have close friends that they consider family and their children may refer to them as “auntie” or “uncle” even though they are not technically related by blood or marriage
 - At many weddings, the family of each person getting married sits separately on opposite sides of the center “AISLE.” They can feel like strangers or uncomfortable with one another since they don’t yet know each other or what they have in common. At the end of the ceremony, the different families join together with the family “ACROSS THE AISLE” to talk, connect, and bond to become one family
 - Eventually, everyone does feel and act like one family, which is why we view all grandparents, aunts, and uncles as equal members of the family instead of treating “blood” relatives differently than relatives by marriage
- **Ask:**
 - As you think about the people you interact with and do not interact with on a daily basis, who feels like part of your “inner circle” or family and who feels separate or different (in your school community, local community, and global community)?
 - What is an action step you could take to not only “BUILD A BRIDGE” but to also cross that “BRIDGE” to bring a non-family-member into your family?
- **Explain:**
 - Today, you will decide on one tangible action step you can take to bring someone into your “family” by simply viewing them and treating them like family
 - This action step will “REACH ACROSS THE AISLE” to get to know someone and bring them into your “inner circle”

4) START THE “ACROSS THE AISLE” ACTIVITY:

- **If not completed before class, arrange two rows of chairs on either side of an “AISLE” for each student to sit next to one partner across the “AISLE”**
- **If not already seated, instruct students to move to a chair “ACROSS THE AISLE” from a partner**
- **Explain:**
 - You are sitting “ACROSS THE AISLE” from a partner
 - In just a moment, you and your partner will take turns sharing at least one school group, community member, global group, or even a family member that you feel divided from and have not yet felt comfortable connecting and bonding with like family
 - These might be grandparents, parents, homeless people, bus drivers, cashiers, taxi cab drivers, different social cliques, or anyone else that you feel disconnected from
 - You will then work together to decide on one specific action you will each take to reach “ACROSS THE AISLE” to break the ice and find a connection with the individual or group
 - That way, you can start viewing them differently and make them feel like part of your family
- **Make sure students understand the instructions and ask them to begin sharing at least one individual or group that they feel divided from and like they haven’t connected with**
 - Allow 1-2 minutes for students to share
- **Then, ask students to discuss with their partner and decide on one specific action they will each take to reach “ACROSS THE AISLE” to break the ice and find a common connection with their chosen individual or group to start viewing them and making them feel like part of their family**
 - Allow 3-5 minutes for students to discuss
- **Move through the class as students are sharing and listen to what they are saying. Support students and intervene as necessary to make sure their conversations are respectful, inclusive, and kind**
- **When time is up or students are done discussing, ask every student pair to briefly share the action step they will take to reach “ACROSS THE AISLE” to bring one individual or group into their family**
- **As each pair shares with the class, have them shift their chairs towards their partner so that the “AISLE” is eventually closed and all students are joined as one undivided line and one family**

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 sit “ACROSS THE AISLE” from someone different than you?**
- **What did it feel like to think about an individual or group that you are “ACROSS THE AISLE” from in life?**
 - Was it challenging in any way?
- **How will you follow through on your action step to move from “ACROSS THE AISLE” to one “family”?**
- **What might be the impact of moving “ACROSS THE AISLE”?**
 - How might it change things for the better in your relationships and in the world?
- **What was the most unexpected or important lesson you took away from this activity?**
- **How can moving “ACROSS THE AISLE” help you “BUILD BRIDGES”?**
 - How can it help you “GET UNDERSTANDING”?
- **How will moving “ACROSS THE AISLE” show others that they MATTER?**
- **What would the world be like if we moved “ACROSS THE AISLE” and treated others like family more often?**

6) THANK STUDENTS FOR MOVING “ACROSS THE AISLE” AND SHARING THEIR IDEAS AND REFLECTIONS WITH THE CLASS. REMIND STUDENTS TO BE COURAGEOUS AND FIND WAYS TO “BUILD BRIDGES” IN THEIR LIFE, AND TO FIND WAYS TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS THAT MEAN THE WORLD TO THEM AS WELL AS OTHERS THEY DON’T KNOW SO WELL.

- 7) **CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO ACTUALLY USE THEIR “ACROSS THE AISLE” IDEAS OUTSIDE OF CLASS AND REACH OUT TO THOSE THEY HAVE COMMITTED TO REACHING OUT TO. CHECK IN WITH THEM TO SEE HOW THEIR “ACROSS THE AISLE” ACTIONS ARE GOING AND SUPPORT THEM AS NECESSARY AND HELPFUL.**
- 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) **Scavenger Hunt:** Work with students to find as many “different” families or groups as possible in their local, global, and school community, and do one thing to cross the “AISLE” to bring them into their inner circle or family.
- 2) **Personal Challenge:** Challenge students to complete a 21-day challenge to cross one “BRIDGE” or “AISLE” every single day to bring a distant family member, peer, or community member into their inner circle or family.
- 3) **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.



NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT YARDSTICK OF YOUR SUCCESS WILL BE HOW YOU TREAT OTHER PEOPLE - YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND COWORKERS, AND EVEN STRANGERS YOU MEET ALONG THE WAY.

- BARBARA BUSH

