



WEEK 3



Students read a poem about inner strength and draw a picture to go along with it.



“PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE” HANDOUT; Pencils; Markers; Colored pencils; Crayons; Clipboards. Total Prep Time: 15 mins.



As this is the third 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 how we can individually and collectively rise from our difficulties and forge paths of courage
- Identify and practice encouraging others in their struggles, while allowing room for their individual journeys
- Learn from the examples of people in history who have overcome challenges and changed the world
- Understand how “GET BACK UP” is an important part of this month’s theme, “MONDAY GETS EMPOWERED”



STUDENT ACTIVITY: **“PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE”**

1) SHARE THE NAME OF THIS ACTIVITY WITH STUDENTS: “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE”

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.*

- **Have you ever noticed a crack in the sidewalk or “CONCRETE” before?**
- **Have you ever seen a plant growing out of a crack in the “CONCRETE” or “PUSHING THROUGH” it?**
- **What did you think when you saw that plant?**
- **How is it possible for flowers or other plants to “PUSH THROUGH” something as strong as “CONCRETE” in order to grow?**
 - What are they reaching toward?
 - What are you reaching toward in your own life that makes “PUSHING THROUGH” worth it?
- **How are we like those little plants?**
 - What are some of your greatest strengths that allow you to “PUSH THROUGH” the hard things in your life?
 - How does recognizing these strengths show you, I MATTER?
- **What kinds of things from our own lives could we compare to the “CONCRETE”?**
- **Why do you think it MATTERS whether we “GET BACK UP” and “PUSH THROUGH”?**
- **Do you have a family member or a friend who has “PUSHED THROUGH” something incredibly difficult?**
 - What kind of strengths did they develop as a result?
- **What are some character traits we can develop from going through challenges and “GETTING BACK UP”?**
 - Possible answers: Patience, empathy for others, perseverance, determination, grit, stubbornness, pride in ourselves, contentment, etc.
- **If you could tell the little strong plant that’s “PUSHING THROUGH THE CONCRETE” one thing, what would it be?**
- **What would you say to someone you know if you noticed them “PUSHING THROUGH” their own personal “CONCRETE” or difficulties?**
- **In what ways does seeing a little plant demonstrate such strength remind you of your own strength?**
- **How does that help you to “GET EMPOWERED” to overcome obstacles?**

3) SET UP THE “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE” ACTIVITY:

- **Explain:**
 - Every single day, we walk on some type of “CONCRETE”
 - In fact, it’s so common that most of the time we don’t even realize we’re on it
 - Sometimes that concrete can develop cracks on its own and a plant will grow through
 - But some plants are so strong that they “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE” on their own
 - In a lot of ways, our lives have a layer of “CONCRETE”
 - We will always have things to work through and overcome
 - But just like these little plants, we have the inner strength to “PUSH THROUGH” each and every time
 - And you’d better believe that you’ll become stronger when you do
- **Ask:**
 - How do we know when we’ve really “PUSHED THROUGH”?

4) START THE “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE” ACTIVITY:

- **Explain:**
 - Today we'll learn more about "PUSHING THROUGH THE CONCRETE" by reading a poem by Tupac
 - It deals with this very thing and tells us about our own strength
 - Then we'll draw pictures of plants that "PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE" to remind us of our own amazing strength
- **Hand each student a “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE” HANDOUT**
- **Let two students volunteer to read the two poems**
 - One student will read the top half and other student will read the bottom half.
- **Have them read slowly and deliberately**
- **Define any new vocabulary words:**
 - “On the contrary” means “just the opposite”
 - “Tenacity” means “ability to keep going” or “determination”
 - “Will” means “choice” or “decision”
- **Give students one minute to think about an instance when they had the tenacity, or ability to keep going, even when they felt covered in concrete**
- **Set out art supplies: Pencils, colored pencils, markers, and crayons**
- **Instruct students that they will have 5 minutes to depict (on the HANDOUT, as an illustration) what they understood from the poem**
- **This could take many forms, such as a self-portrait of them breaking “THROUGH” some “CONCRETE” or other difficulty**
- **It could also be a literal interpretation of the poem, with a rose that “PUSHES THROUGH THE CONCRETE”**
- **Weather permitting, let students go outside to complete their drawings, using their clipboards as backing for their papers**
- **Allow 5 minutes for this portion of the activity, encouraging creativity and self-expression throughout**

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 impressions did you get from the poem we read?**
- **Do you think Tupac (the author of this poem) had an easy life or a difficult one?**
 - What makes you think that?
- **As we were reading the poem, what imagery came to mind?**
- **Did you have any insights into your own strengths today?**
 - What did you discover?
- **How can you notice and appreciate your own efforts to “GET BACK UP” after, or even during, difficulties?**
- **What is one way you can notice when others are struggling to “PUSH THROUGH”?**
 - What are some ways you could help?
- **How could you use today’s activity to be proactive in helping “EMPOWER” others?**
- **What elements from your drawing helped you to see, I MATTER?**
- **How have you gained the courage and commitment to “GET BACK UP” from challenges?**
- **What will you do to encourage someone to “GET BACK UP” and promote YOU MATTER?**

- 6) **THANK STUDENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY AND FOR RECOGNIZING THEIR OWN ABILITY TO “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE” OF EVERYDAY LIFE. REMIND THEM THAT EVEN THOUGH CHALLENGES ARE GUARANTEED, SO IS THEIR INNER STRENGTH.**
- 7) **CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO SHARE THESE POEMS WITH SOMEONE THEY CARE ABOUT, AND TO ACTIVELY NOTICE WHEN THEY AND OTHERS ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO “PUSH THROUGH” SOMETHING DIFFICULT. REMIND THEM THAT WHEN THEY “PUSH THROUGH” A CHALLENGE, THEY STAND OUT LIKE A FLOWER IN “THE CONCRETE” AND HELP OTHERS.**
- 8) **CONTINUE EXPLORING HOW TO HELP OTHERS “GET BACK UP” BY LEADING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING EXTENSION IDEAS.**



EXTENSION IDEAS:

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

- 1) **Hunt for “Flowers”:** Go on a walking field trip with students and take pictures of any plants that have managed to “PUSH THROUGH THE CONCRETE”. Use these photos to make encouraging postcards for others. This can extend into the whole week, with students taking photos off-site or at home.
- 2) **Powerful Words:** Have students circle the parts of the poems that mean the most to them, and discuss why those parts are especially powerful.
- 3) **Be a Poet:** Make extra copies of the poems. Let students construct their own unique poems by cutting out the words or phrases that stand out most to them and using those words or phrases as a basis for their poem.
- 4) **Experience Tenacity:** Watch the following 4:22 minute video about overcoming obstacles, as told by high-school student Steven Claunch: <https://bit.ly/2HphWRB> and talk with students about the “CONCRETE” that Steven “PUSHED THROUGH” and some of the ways he did.

**“LIFE IS TOUGH, MY DARLING,
BUT SO ARE YOU.”**
- STEPHANIE BENNETT HENRY



**Did you hear about the rose
that grew from a crack
in the concrete?**

**Proving Nature's laws wrong
it learned to walk
without having feet.**

**Funny it seems but
by keeping its dreams
it learned to breathe
fresh air.**

**Long live the rose
that grew from concrete
when no one else even cared.**

**You wouldn't ask why
the rose that grew
from the concrete
had damaged petals.**

**On the contrary,
we would all celebrate its tenacity;
we would all love its will
to reach toward the sun.**

**Well, WE are the roses,
THIS is the concrete,
and THESE are my damaged petals.**

~Tupac Shakur, from his poetry book, The Rose that Grew from Concrete