

First Week Day 5: High Five

Purpose

Have a poster of the 4 circle guidelines (from the Closing of the Talking Piece lesson) prepared and posted in the room.

High Five is a tool you can use in the circle daily. Today, I will be introducing how to use it as a personal check-in. You can also have them rate their weekend, see how they feel after a tough discussion, or have them vote on an agreement. High Five is a scale – Closed hand being a 0 and Five fingers up being a 5. Once they learn how to use this tool, it can be used in lots of different ways. The kids can pass the talking piece around and show and explain their number, or it can just be given all at once for an agreement – working out why a student is still a 0 or 1 before making a final decision.

Teacher Work

“It is so important to know what is happening with each of us before we start a circle or before we start our day. Very rarely are we running with a full tank of gas. Having a tough morning with our family, feeling upset about a friend, or even getting a bad night’s sleep all effect our ability to cope with things in school. I know when I feel tired, I get frustrated more quickly and I have a harder time staying positive. On the flip side, if something really fantastic or spectacular is happening, we are probably ready to be good partners, see things from a positive perspective, and feel ready for our day. By checking in on each other, we can be better prepared for how to treat each other that day.

We have a tool to quickly find out how everyone is doing. It’s called “High Five.” A closed hand represents zero – the absolute worst. A zero can be used on your very worst day. You can use any number all the way up to five. This is the absolute best! As I pass around the talking piece today, I want you to show us your number saying “I am a 3 because...” and share with us why that is. Remember, speak from the heart and listen from the heart. You don’t have time to reveal everything about your day, good or bad, but giving us a small amount of information helps us connect with you. Only say what you are comfortable to say.”

Sometimes, students will give a number and not want to give a reason. Often, I will ask if they want to share why, they will say no, and I will let it go. The number is enough of an indication of where they are. It also gives you a reason to check in with the student in private at a later time. If there is some real trauma going on in the student’s life, they are unlikely to share it out to the whole class. Be gentle in these interactions. If the student doesn’t feel safe to share with you, then pushing it will polarize you further.

Today, high five may take a while and be the only thing you get to. I typically start each circle with a high five for the first couple months of school – so the process definitely has to speed up. Stress the guideline “say just enough without feeling rushed.”

Student Heavy Lifting

Students participate by sharing their high five. Again, students may skip themselves with the understanding they will have to share at the end.

Closing

How might I be empathetic to a person who is having a bad day?

How can I be a positive addition to someone’s day?

Is it possible for me to turn someone’s day into a bad day? How do I avoid it?



A Tip on Core Values

Shared vulnerability is an important trust-building component of the circle. You have to be honest and vulnerable in order to expect them to be honest and vulnerable. Breaking down the power dynamic between students and teachers is critical.

This video helps explain the power of vulnerability. Think about the implications of invulnerability in our lives, in our students' lives, and in our schools. It is meant for teacher viewing only – not to be used with the class.

The price of invulnerability: Brené Brown at TEDxKC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoMXF73j0c>



resource courtesy of *Lead Teacher*