



10 Activities to do with your students this week!

1. Introduction game:

*** Great for the beginning of the school year or when a new student joins the class.**

Time allocation: 5 minutes to prepare the group, then approx. 2-5 minutes per student **Ages:** 8+ (depending on reading/writing ability) **Number of people:** Any even number of participants (teachers can participate to create an even number) **What's needed:** A slip of paper and writing utensil for each student.

- Everyone writes something interesting about themselves on a piece of paper (don't write your name), preferably something that not everyone already knows about you and then gives it back to the teacher. The teacher will then randomly hand back out the pieces of paper (if you get your own, tell your teacher and they'll swap them out). Students then go around the room and talk with one another until they've found the person that the interesting fact belongs to. Once everyone has found their match, the students then introduce their partner to the group.

2. Acts of Kindness activity

Time allocation: Can be modified in a number of ways **Ages:** 3+ **Number of people:** This could be done as a class, as a school, an after-school group etc. **What's needed:** Stickers, Poster Board (or something similar) and a marker.

As a part of Social Emotional Learning: Discuss what acts of kindness are and encourage students to look for acts of kindness by others.

- Each time a student sees someone offering an act of kindness (fellow classmates, friends, and adults too!) they will tell their teacher and then put a sticker and their friend's name on the poster. The students can not name themselves, only others.

* This can be an ongoing activity with "milestones" along the way, such as 50 acts of kindness equals a free recess, 100 acts of kindness equals a movie in the classroom etc. or it could be an allocated period of time such as 100 acts of kindness in one month equals a pizza party etc.

3. Collage:

Time allocation: This could be a one-time activity, or it could be used as free time in the classroom frequently that students add to over time **Ages:** 7+ **Number of people:** Individual activity - or could be modified to create a collage as a group. **What's needed:** Magazines, scissors, glue and construction paper.

- As a way to build personal, or group identity, allow students to create a collage either individually or as a group.
- If done as an individual activity, encourage students to find images that they like, or that remind them of themselves or their lives. If done as a group, encourage students to work together to create a collage that represents who they are as a group.
- Students will then cut out these images and put them on a piece of construction paper.

* It is important to find magazines that have content which students can identify with (such as a healthy mix of magazines for each gender, and magazines that have positive body-image messaging etc.) Travel magazines are great for this...try to avoid having too many of the same magazine (and my advice is to avoid fashion or celebrity magazines).

4. Never have I ever...

Time allocation: 2-5 minutes to prepare the group, then 1 minute per turn **Ages:** 8+ **Number of people:** 10-20 **What's Needed:** Physical space for the whole class to stand or sit in a circle

- Everyone sits or stands in a circle. Each player has 10 points to start with (or 5 for a shorter game) and when you don't have any more points, you are out of the game. The last person with points left wins the game.
- Have students keep track of their points on their hands by holding out all ten (or 5) fingers and placing them on the floor or holding them up.
- One person says something that they haven't done. For example: "Never have I ever...been to the ocean." If anyone in the circle has been to the ocean, they lose a point and put one finger down. Then the next person says something they haven't done "Never have I ever..." and so on.
- If you want, and have the time: If only one person has done the thing from the question, they are usually asked to tell the story of how it happened.

*The goal is to stay in the game the longest (to have fingers remaining). A good strategy is to say statements that most people have done, but you haven't.

5. Name game:

***Great for the beginning of the school year or when a new student joins the class**

Time allocation: 2-5 minutes to prepare the group, then 1 minute per turn **Ages:** 5+ **Number of people:** Any **What's Needed:** (Optional) Physical space for the whole class to stand or sit in a circle, students can also remain seated at their own desks.

- This one is simple and can be done in a short amount of time. Tell your students that they have a couple of minutes to think about something they like that starts with the same letter of their first name; this could be a type of food, a place they like to visit, or a character trait. Then students will share their name with the group and the word that they've chosen. For example: My name is Emma, and I like Elephants, or My name is Emma, and I am Empathetic.

6. Circle/action/name game:

***Great for the beginning of the school year or when a new student joins the class**

Time allocation: 2-5 minutes to prepare the group, then 1 minute per turn **Ages:** 7+ **Number of people:** Any **What's Needed:** Physical space for the whole class to stand in a circle. This game takes a bit of time depending on how many people are in the group; the more people in the game, the longer it will take.

- Everyone stands in a circle side by side and as they say their name, they act out a movement with their body (eg: jazz hands, jump, squat etc.). The next person to go introduces the person before them while mimicking that person's movement and then introduces themselves with their own movement. This continues until every person has had a chance to introduce themselves in this way (after introducing everyone before them). After everyone has had a turn to introduce themselves, the whole group goes through the circle together - saying the name of each person while doing that person's movement. If you have a student who wants a challenge (and the time), they can then try to introduce each of their fellow classmates while doing each person's gesture from the beginning.

7. The wind blows for... (or "I like my neighbor who...")

Time allocation: 2 minutes to prepare the group, then approx. 2-5 minutes per student **Ages:** 5+ **Number of people:** Any **What's needed:** Physical space that allows for a circle of chairs (one per player, minus one -like musical chairs)

- Everyone is seated except for one person stands in the middle of the circle of chairs and says "The wind blows for anyone who.../I like my neighbor who..." Example: is wearing red or has been to the ocean etc.
- Everyone who is wearing red or has been to the ocean (in this example) has to move (run) to another chair. This will start another round with a new person in the middle (whoever is left without a chair)

* You can play this for as few or as many rounds as you like. Kids always love this game and often want to keep playing, I'd suggest playing until everyone has had 1 chance to be in the middle.

8. Talking circle spider web

Time allocation: 2-5 minutes to prepare the group, then approx. 2-5 minutes per student **Ages:** 8+ **Number of people:** Any **What's needed:** Physical space that allows for everyone to sit in a circle (with or without chairs, but nothing in the middle of the circle), a ball of yarn (big enough for it to crisscross through the circle as many times as there are participants) and a prompt.

- Everyone begins seated in a circle, the first person (most likely the teacher) begins the game with by selecting a student to roll the yarn to. The person who receives it — holds on to a corner of it (*important!)— before passing it on to whoever they choose. Before rolling it to the next person, the student will respond to the prompt (this could be to say something nice about the person you're rolling the yarn to, or a daily check-in etc.). After everyone has had a turn, there will be a web (if everyone remembered to hold on to their piece of yarn!).

*The game can end here, or for a team-building activity, the web can be dismantled by the group communicating with one another about how to untangle it and return the ball of yarn back to it's original form. There could be a variety of ways this is done - pose the challenge to the group and see what students come up with!

9. A collage of feelings

Time allocation: This could be a one-time activity, or it could be used as free time in the classroom frequently that students add to over time **Ages:** Pre-K - 4th grade (to modify this for younger students, it can be a group activity, or with help from older students or volunteers) **Number of people:** Individual activity - or could be modified to create a collage as a group. **What's needed:** Magazines, scissors, glue and construction paper or poster board (crayons/markers are optional).

As a part of Social Emotional Learning: Discuss feelings: what different feelings might look like, sound like, feel like etc.

- Individually or as a group, look through magazines for pictures of people looking surprised, happy, sad, angry, disappointed etc.
- Create one large collage for each feeling, or divide a large poster board into sections that represent a feeling.

* As an additional activity to this, students can decorate the collages with crayons or markers in colors they believe represent each feeling.

10. What I wish my teacher knew: (could also be adapted as a school-wide activity "what I wish my principle knew).

Time allocation: Can be modified as needed **Ages:** 8+ **Number of people:** 1 class **What's needed:** A shoe box (or something similar), stickers, markers/crayons/colored pencils, white or colored plain or construction paper, any other decorations to decorate the box.

The purpose of this activity is to create, and introduce the "what I wish my teacher knew" box as a class. This can be done in various fun and creative ways: each student should have a part in creating or decorating the box. This box can be used whenever a student has something that they wish their teacher knew but would rather keep it private. They can write on a postcard, or small piece of paper - what it is that they wish their teacher knew, and put it in the box with their name on it (this could be anonymous if necessary, but I'd recommend that the expectation is that it is not anonymous). Depending on the time available, level of students' ability etc. the teacher could divide the class in any number of ways:

- Students could create the box in class, or the teacher could create the box ahead of time and the students can then decorate it in class.
- One group of students could be in charge of creating the box (cutting the slit in the lid, covering it by gluing blank paper to all sides and lid etc.) and another group of students could be in charge of decorating it (drawing on the blank paper, adding stickers etc.).
- Each student could be given a small piece of paper that they can decorate or write their name on and then glue it to the box.

The importance of everyone's involvement in the creation of the box is so that each student knows what the box is and what it's for. It can become an important communication tool for the classroom and can be used in conjunction with talking circles.

*See our "[How to run a successful talking circle](#)" post for more info.