

# RESPECT!



# 24/7

Together, we can create a school where everyone feels safe, included, and valued. Let's choose kindness, speak up, and lift each other up – every minute, every day.

## 2026-2027 HANDBOOK



SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION



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This handbook is your guide to building a school community  
where everyone is respected, valued, and connected.

**Let's make respect pasrt of everything we do – 24/7!**

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# WELCOME!



For more than a decade, the San Mateo County Office of Education has partnered with school districts through “Respect! 24/7” to promote safe, welcoming, and inclusive schools. The initiative began after a San Mateo County Grand Jury report called on districts to strengthen and align their anti-bullying policies. Since then, Respect! 24/7 has expanded beyond bullying prevention to support positive school climate, belonging, digital citizenship, restorative practices, youth voice, LGBTQ+ inclusion, suicide prevention, and student mental health.

Each year, Respect! 24/7 has brought educators together through a countywide conference to share promising practices and strengthen school communities. While that conference has been a valuable opportunity, we recognize that it is increasingly difficult for many school staff to step away from their campuses to participate. This year, we are rebooting Respect! 24/7 by bringing the learning directly to schools through **Respect! 24/7 Upstander Month**.

Rather than asking schools to attend a single event, we are providing a flexible, school-based campaign that can reach every student, every classroom, and every family throughout October. Schools are encouraged to adapt these resources to meet their local needs. Use the materials exactly as written, select only the pieces that fit your school, or use them as inspiration to create your own activities and messaging. The goal is simple: to promote a shared countywide message that every student deserves to feel safe, welcomed, valued, and included.

## WHAT’S INCLUDED:



Daily morning announcements



Weekly classroom community circles



Classroom trivia and discussion prompts



Weekly school challenges



Suggested read-alouds and novels



Family messaging ideas

# WEEKLY THEMES

Each week builds on the previous one, helping students understand that positive school culture is created through everyday choices.

## Week 1

### **We All Belong:**

Creating welcoming and inclusive school communities.

## Week 2

### **Choose Kindness:**

Practicing empathy and compassion through everyday actions.

## Week 3

### **Be an Upstander:**

Developing the courage to support others and speak up respectfully.

## Week 4

### **Respect Every Day:**

Bringing belonging, kindness, and upstander actions together to create a positive school culture that lasts all year.

Thank you for partnering with us to continue to build schools where every student feels connected, respected, and empowered to make a difference. Together, we can ensure that Respect! 24/7 is more than a campaign; it is a culture that continues every day of the year.



# Daily Announcements





Building relationships.  
Creating belonging.



MON \_/\_/\_

Good Morning, everyone! Welcome to Respect 24/7 Upstander Month! This week our theme is "We all belong". Every student deserves to be welcomed and included at school. Sometimes, the smallest actions, like saying hello, inviting someone to play, or sharing a smile, can help someone feel like they belong.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



TUES \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Did you know that every person in our school has unique talents, experiences, and ideas? When we include others, we make our classrooms stronger and kinder. Today, take some time to learn one new thing about a classmate. Tomorrow is International Walk to School Day! Invite someone to walk to school with you and make a new friend!

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



WED \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Have you ever noticed someone standing alone or sitting by themselves? Today, look for someone to invite to join your game, group, or conversation. Sometimes one invitation can make someone's day.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



THUR \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Our differences make our school special. We may look different, learn differently, celebrate different traditions, or enjoy different hobbies, but everyone deserves kindness and respect.

Today, celebrate what makes each person unique.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



FRI \_/\_/\_

This week we've been learning about belonging and how everyone deserves to feel welcomed and included. Whether you invited someone to play, introduced yourself to another student, or shared a smile, every act of kindness helped make our school a place where everyone belongs.

In just a few moments, your teacher will share this week's Respect 24/7 Classroom Challenge. Talk with your classmates, think about the choices you would make, and remember that there isn't always an easy answer, but there is always an opportunity to help someone belong.



TRIVIA

This portion should be shared with classroom teachers to lead.

**Trivia TK-2:**

What helps someone feel like they belong?

- A. Inviting them to join your game
- B. Ignoring them when they're alone

**Answer:** A! Inviting someone to join you helps everyone feel welcome and included

**Trivia 3 - 5:**

Which action helps someone feel like they belong?

- A. Ignoring them
- B. Inviting them to join your group
- C. Walking away

**Answer:** B! Everyone deserves to feel included.

**CHALLENGE**

Introduce yourself to someone in your class/school that you don't know. You can also invite someone to share the walk to school with you on October 7th - International Walk to School Day!





Building relationships.  
Creating belonging.



MON \_/\_/\_

Good Morning. This week's theme is "Choose Kindness". Kindness isn't something we do once in a while; it's a voice we make every day. A kind word, a helping hand, or a smile can change someone's day.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



TUES \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Did you know kindness spreads? When someone is kind to you, you're more likely to be kind to someone else. Today, let's make kindness contagious! Tomorrow is "Walk to School Wednesday! Invite a new friend to walk to school with you!"

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



WED \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Think about all the people who help our school every day: teachers, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, office staff, and volunteers.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



THUR \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Sometimes kindness means including someone new, apologizing when we've made a mistake, or helping someone who's having a hard day. Kindness takes courage. Today, be brave enough to be kind.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



FRI \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! This week we've been learning that kindness is a choice we make every day. Whether you held the door for someone, thanked a staff member, or helped make our school more welcoming. Kindness doesn't have to be something big. Small acts of kindness can brighten someone's day and inspire others to do the same.

In just a few moments, your teacher will share this week's Respect 24/7 Classroom Trivia. Take time to think about the choices you would make and how even one kind action can make a difference.



TRIVIA

This portion should be shared with classroom teachers to lead.

**Trivia TK-2:****Which choice shows kindness?**

- A. Helping someone who dropped their books
- B. Walking by without helping

**Answer:** A! Small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

**Trivia 3 - 5:****Which of these is kindness?**

- A. Helping someone pick up dropped books
- B. Saying thank you
- C. Inviting someone to play
- D. All of the above

**Answer:** D! All of the above! Kindness comes in many forms

**CHALLENGE**

Try to complete one unexpected act of kindness each day this week.





Building relationships.  
Creating belonging.



MON \_/\_/\_

Good Morning. This week's theme is "Be an Upstander". An upstander is someone who helps others, speaks up respectfully, or tells a trusted adult when someone is being hurt or left out.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



TUES \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! You don't have to be a superhero to help someone.

Sometimes simply asking, "Are you okay?" or inviting someone to sit with you is enough to make a difference.

Tomorrow is Walk to School  
Wednesday.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



WED \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Doing the right thing isn't always easy, but it is always important. Being an upstander means choosing courage over silence.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



THUR \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Strong Schools aren't built by one person. They are built by students and adults who care about one another.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



FRI \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! This week we've learned that every student has the power to make a positive difference. Being an upstander means choosing to help create a school where everyone feels safe, respected, and included.



TRIVIA

This portion should be shared with classroom teachers to lead.

**Trivia TK-2:**

What does an upstander do?

- A. Helps someone or tells a trusted adult when someone is being hurt
- B. Watches without helping

**Answer:** A: Upstanders help make school a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

**Trivia 3-5**

What does an upstander do?

- A. Watches bullying without helping
- B. Helps others and gets help when needed
- C. Ignores bullying

**Answer:** B! Upstanders make schools safer for everyone

**CHALLENGE**

Help make our school stronger by helping someone else.





Building relationships.

Creating belonging.



MON \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! This week's theme is "Respect Every Day." Respect means treating others the way we want to be treated - with kindness, honesty, and care. Respect is something we practice every day, not just during October.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



TUES \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Words are powerful. They can build people up or tear them down. Keep working on our challenge this week by using words that encourage, include, and inspire others.

Tomorrow is walk to school Wednesday - share kind words with other classmates that are also walking to school.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



WED \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Respect isn't just what we say; it's what we do. Hold the door. Listen when others are speaking. Follow directions. Help someone who needs it. Little actions make a big difference.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



THUR \_/\_/\_

Good Morning! Tomorrow may be the end of Respect 24/7 Upstander Month, but kindness, respect, and inclusion don't end with October. Let's continue making our school a place where everyone belongs.

**REMEMBER**

every choice you make can help someone feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Have a wonderful day!



FRI \_/\_/\_

Congratulations! Throughout October, you've been learning about belonging, kindness, being an upstander, and showing respect every day. Every smile, kind word, helping hand, and act of courage has helped make our school a place where everyone can feel welcomed, valued, and included. Although Respect 24/7 Upstander Month is coming to an end, the choices we've practiced this month can continue every day of the year. Together, we can keep building a school community where everyone belongs.



TRIVIA

This portion should be shared with classroom teachers to lead.

**Trivia TK-2:****Which actions show respect?**

- E. Listening when someone else is speaking?
- F. Interrupting others.

**Answer:** E!

**Trivia 3 - 5:****What helps create a positive school culture?**

- D. Choosing kindness
- E. Including others
- F. Being an upstander
- G. Showing respect every day

**Answer:** All of the above!

**CHALLENGE**

Use words that encourage, include, and inspire others.







# READING LIST

Stories That Build Respect,  
Belonging & Connection



The books included in this resource are intended as **optional suggestions** to support your school's Respect 24/7! Anti-Bullying Month activities. Schools and teachers are encouraged to select titles that best meet the **needs, interests, and reading levels** of their students.



These books can be incorporated in a variety of ways, including teacher read-alouds, YouTube read-along (links below), classroom library selections, or buddy reading opportunities. The goal is to use **engaging stories to spark meaningful conversations** about **kindness, empathy, inclusion, respect, and the power of being an upstander**.

## WAYS TO USE THE READING LIST



### TEACHER READ-ALLOUDS

Share a story with the class and use it as a starting point for discussion.



### YOUTUBE READ-ALONGS

Use the read-along links provided in this resource to make stories accessible to students.



### CLASSROOM LIBRARY

Offer selected titles for independent reading or student choice.



### BUDDY READING

Pair students together to read and discuss a story with a partner or another class.



### THE GOAL

The goal is to use engaging, meaningful stories to spark conversations about:



KINDNESS



EMPATHY



INCLUSION



RESPECT



BELONGING



BEING AN  
UPSTANDER

A good story can help students see situations from another person's perspective, recognize the impact of their choices, and explore ways they can help create a school community where everyone feels **welcomed, valued, and included**.



Read. Connect. Reflect. Make a Difference.

Use these books as conversation starters—not just reading assignments—to help make **Respect 24/7!** part of everyday school life.





Focus: Inclusion, friendship, belonging

1

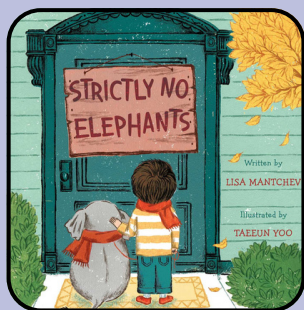
## Strictly No Elephants

Lisa Mantchev



Show how small acts of kindness matter.  
(TK-2)

Strictly No Elephants



2

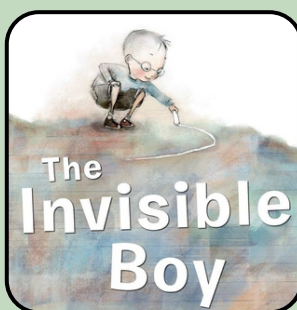
## The Invisible Boy

Trudy Ludwig



A story about including classmates who feel invisible.  
(K-5)

The Invisible Boy



3

## All Are Welcome

Alexandra Penfold



Emphasizes diversity and belonging in school  
(TK-3)

All Are Welcome Here



4

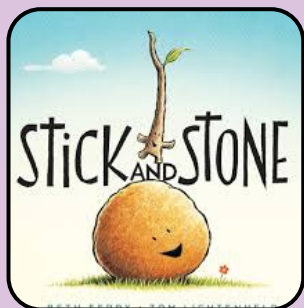
## Stick and Stone

Beth Ferry



A story about loneliness, making friends, and handling mean.

Stick and Stone



5

## Our Class is a Family

Shannon Olsen



Building a sense of belonging by showing kindness, respect, and support for each other

Our Class is a Family



6

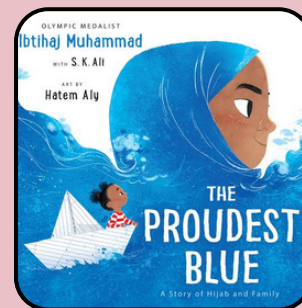
## The Proudest Blue

Ibtihaj Muhammad



A story about embracing identity, celebrating differences, and showing inclusion

The Proudest Blue



Focus: Empathy, compassion, everyday kindness



1

**Be Kind**Pat Zietlow  
MillerShows how small acts of  
kindness matter  
(TK - 5)**Be Kind**

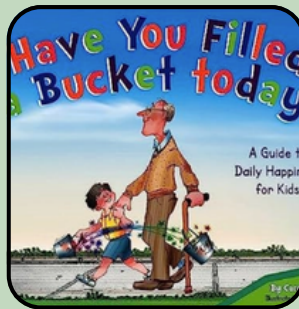
2

**Have You Filled a  
Bucket Today?**

Trudy Ludwig



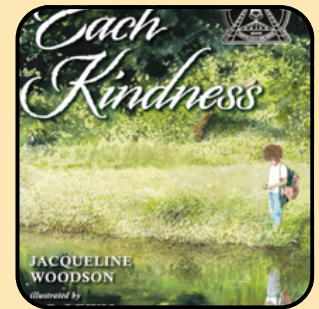
Teaching kindness (TK - 4)

**Have You Filled a Bucket  
Today?**

3

**Each  
Kindness**

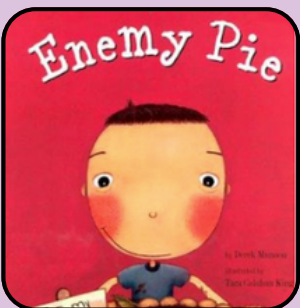
Jacqueline Woodson

How small acts of kindness ripple  
and the regret of missing a  
chance to be kind. (2- 5)**Each Kindness**

4

**Enemy Pie**

Derek Munson

Turning a neighborhood "enemy"  
into a friend**Enemy Pie****Starts at 1:45**

5

**What Does it  
Mean to Be  
Kind?**

Rana DiOrio



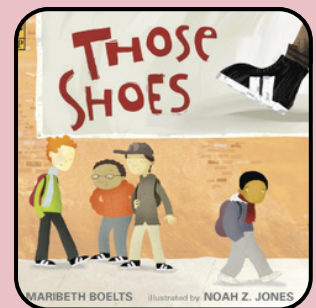
Examples of kindness.

**What Does it Mean to Be  
Kind?**

6

**Those Shoes**

Author

A story about empathy, generosity,  
and recognizing that kindness and  
friendship are more valuable.**Those Shoes**

Focus: Courage, speaking up, helping others



1

**Stand Tall,  
MaryLou Melon**Pat Zietlow  
MillerCelebrates confidence  
despite teasing (TK - 4)**Stand Tall**

2

**One**

Kathryn Otashi

Introduction to bullying,  
courage, and becoming an  
upstander. (K - 5)**One**

3

**Say  
Something!**

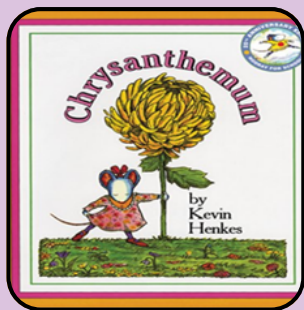
Peter H. Reynolds

Encourages students to use  
their voices to make a  
difference. (K - 5)**Say Something!**

4

**Chrysanthemum**

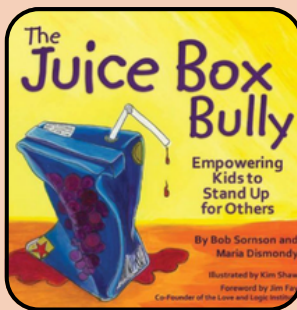
Kevin Henkes

Addresses teasing, self-esteem, and  
acceptance. (TK-3)**Chrysanthemum**

5

**The Juice Box  
Bully**Bob Sornson and Maria  
Dismondy

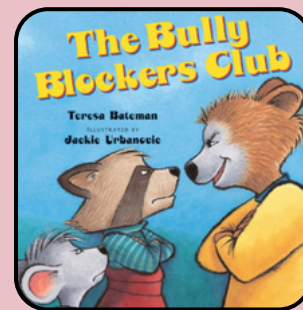
Students becoming upstanders

**The Juice Box Bully**

6

**The Bully  
Blockers Club**

Teresa Bateman

Kindness and teamwork can stop  
bullying.**Stand Up to Bullying**





Focus: Acceptance, diversity, positive school culture

1

## The Day You Begin

Jacqueline Woodson



Encourages students to embrace what makes them unique. (1 - 5)

The Day You Begin



2

## We're All Wonders

R.J. Palacio



Introduces empathy and inclusion through the world of Wonder. (TK-3)

We're All Wonders



3

## The Sandwich Swap

Kelly DiPucchio



How small acts of kindness ripple and the regret of missing a chance to be kind.

The Sandwich Swap



4

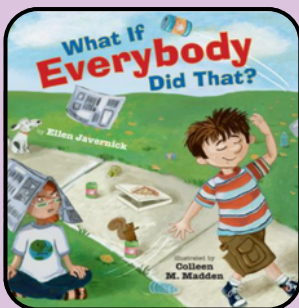
## What if Everybody Did that?

Ellen Javernick



Reinforces personal responsibility and respect. (TK-3)

What if



5

## The Recess Queen

Alexis O'Neill



A book on bullying, conflict resolution, kindness, and respect

The Recess Queen  
Begins at 0:34



6

## The Last Stop on Market Street

Matt de la Peña



Gratitude, compassion, and respect by helping children see beauty

The Last Stop on Market Street







# NOVELS

## for 3rd – 5th Grade

Great Books.  
Big Conversations.  
Lasting Impact.



The books included in this resource are intended as **optional suggestions** to support your school's Respect 24/7! Anti-Bullying Month activities. Schools and teachers are encouraged to select titles that best meet the **needs, interests, and reading levels** of their students.

## FEATURED NOVELS

3RD  
GRADE



**The Hundred Dresses**



**Focus:**

Understanding  
the impact of  
our actions.

4TH  
GRADE



**Save Me a Seat**



**Focus:**

Developing empathy  
and inclusion.

5TH  
GRADE



**Wonder**



**Focus:**

Taking responsibility  
while becoming leaders  
and upstanders.



## Why These Books?

These three novels form a natural progression for students: understanding the impact of our actions (**3rd grade**), developing empathy and inclusion (**4th grade**), and taking responsibility while becoming leaders and upstanders (**5th grade**). They align closely with the goals of Respect 24/7 and provide rich opportunities for classroom discussion and social-emotional learning.



# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

## 3rd Grade



1

### The Hundred Dresses

Eleanor Estes



A story about empathy, inclusion, and the lasting impact of teasing and kindness



2

### We're All Wonders

R.J. Palacio



Bat teaches readers that understanding and accepting differences builds stronger friendships.



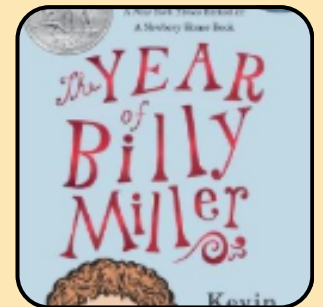
3

### The Year of Billy Miller

Kevin Henkes



Billy learns that kindness, perseverance, and family support help him overcome everyday challenges.



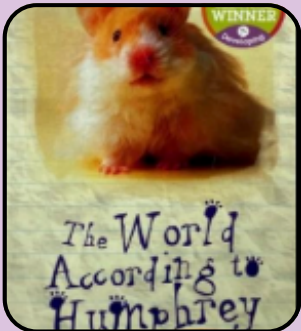
4

### The World According to Humphrey

Betty G. Birney



A classroom hamster observes how kindness and cooperation bring students together.



5

### The Lemonade War

Jacqueline Davies



A story about sibling conflict, communication, and repairing harm.



6

### Ways to Make Sunshine

Renee Watson



A story about finding joy through kindness and community.





# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4th Grade



1

### Real Friends

Shannon Hale  
&  
LeUyen Pham



Tackles bullying issues through a story of elementary students.



2

### Fish in a Tree

Elana K. Arnold



A student discovers her strengths while learning that everyone deserves understanding and encouragement.



3

### Because of Mr. Terupt

Rob Buyea



Seven students learn about friendship, accountability, and the power of a caring classroom community.



4

### Save Me a Seat

Gita Varadarajan



A classroom hamster observes how kindness and cooperation bring students together.



5

### Out of My Mind

Sharon M Draper



A student with cerebral palsy reminds others that every voice deserves to be heard and respected.



6

### Front Desk

Kelly Yang



A courageous girl learns to advocate for those facing injustice.



# BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5th Grade



1

### Wonder

R.J. Palacio



Encourages students to choose kindness, empathy and inclusion every day.



2

### The Benefits of Being an Octopus

Ann Braden



A story about finding your voice, advocating for others, and standing up for what you believe.



3

### The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl

Stacy McAnulty



A gifted student discovers the importance of friendship, courage, and belonging.



4

### Ghost

Jason Reynolds



A young runner learns that positive choices can shape a brighter future.



5

### A Rover's Story

Jasmine Warga



A story about connection, empathy, and what it means to care for others.



6

### The One and Only Ivan

Katherine Applegate



A tale about using your voice to help those who cannot speak for themselves.





# Circle Activities

Build Community | Practice Listening | Share | Be Heard



# Circle Activities

K-2



WEEK

1

# We All Belong



Oct 5 - 9



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Introduce yourself to someone in  
your class or school that you  
don't know.



### Monday

This week's challenge is to introduce yourself to someone in your class or school that you don't know.

1. What is your favorite color?
2. What is one thing you like to play at school?
3. How do you think introducing yourself will help someone feel welcome?
4. Turn to your elbow partner and practice introducing yourself.

Example:

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am in \_\_\_\_\_ class. What is your name?

Think about one new person you might say hello to today.

### Tuesday

1. If you could choose one animal to have as a pet, what would you choose?
2. Show me with a thumbs up or down if you had a chance to introduce yourself to someone new. (That's great! If you haven't had a chance, don't worry, you still have plenty of time.)
3. Tell us one thing about yourself that you think your classmate may not know. (For example, I have a baby sister, I speak another language, I can ride a bike...)
4. Turn to your elbow partner:
  - a. Each partner shares one more thing about themselves that wasn't shared in the circle
  - b. Students practice replying: One new thing I learned about you is...

### Wednesday

1. What is your favorite thing to do at recess?
2. Who do you like to play with at school, and why?
3. How do you think someone feels when they are invited to join a game or activity?

Practice inviting someone to join you.

Use one of these sentence starters:

- "Would you like to play with us?"
- "Do you want to join our game?"
- "Would you like to sit with us?"
- "Come join us!"

Switch roles so everyone practices inviting someone.

Popcorn Share: Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"One way I can help someone feel included today is \_\_\_\_."

### Thursday

1. What is one thing you really like to do?
2. What is something you are good at?
3. How would you feel if someone noticed and celebrated something special about you?
4. What might make it hard to tell someone something kind about what makes them unique?

Elbow Partner Practice: Take turns sharing one thing that makes you special.

Then respond to your partner using the sentence stem:

"I think it is special that you \_\_\_\_."

Remind students to celebrate differences respectfully and only repeat something their partner is comfortable sharing.

Popcorn Share: Invite volunteers to complete the sentence

"One thing I learned that makes someone in our class unique is \_\_\_\_."

### Friday

1. What was your favorite part of this week?
2. What made you smile at school this week?
3. This week we learned something new about a classmate, invited others to join us, and celebrated what makes each person unique. Which challenge was your favorite? Why?
4. How do you think our class helped people feel like they belong this week?

Elbow Partner Practice: Tell your partner about one kind or welcoming thing you did this week. Use the sentence stem:

"This week I helped someone feel like they belonged by \_\_\_\_."

Then switch.

Popcorn Share: Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"One way our class showed belonging this week was \_\_\_\_."

Closing: Let's keep looking for ways to help everyone feel welcomed, included, and valued.



# WEEK 2

# Choose Kindness



Oct 12 - 16



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Try to complete one unexpected act of kindness each day this week.



## Monday

1. What is something kind that someone has done for you?
2. How do you feel when someone is kind to you?
3. What is one unexpected act of kindness you could do for someone today?

(encourage simple ideas like helping clean up, inviting someone to play, sharing supplies, holding a door open for someone, giving a compliment)

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share your idea with your elbow partner. Then practice saying a kind compliment using one of these sentence starters:

- "I like how you \_\_\_\_\_"
- "You're really good at \_\_\_\_\_"
- "Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_"

**Popcorn share:** invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"One unexpected act of kindness I can do today is \_\_\_\_\_"

## Tuesday

Keep the messaging going about making kindness "contagious". Using the "pay it forward" idea - recognizing someone has done something kind for you and you pay it forward by doing something kind for someone else.

1. Who is someone that is kind to you?
2. What is one kind thing you saw someone do yesterday?
3. If someone is kind to you, what kind thing could you do for someone else?
4. Examples: helping clean up, sharing supplies...

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns telling your partner one kind thing someone has done for you.

Finish the sharing with: "Because someone was kind to me, I can be kind by \_\_\_\_\_."

OR

"I am going to make kindness contagious and show kindness by \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: "Kindness spreads when \_\_\_\_\_."

## Wednesday

As we continue to make kindness contagious, we also need to notice and appreciate others showing kindness.

1. Who is someone at school that helps you every day?
2. What is something that person does to help you or your class?
3. How do you feel when someone says "thank you" to you?

**Elbow partner practice:** Tell your partner who you want to thank today and why. Then practice saying:

1. "Thank you for helping me \_\_\_\_\_."
2. "I appreciate you because \_\_\_\_\_."
3. "You make our school better by \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite a volunteer to complete the sentence:

"Today I want to thank \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

Encourage students to think beyond their classroom teacher: custodians, cafeteria staff, office staff, nurse, crossing guards, playground supervisors, librarians, volunteers and others who help the school community.

## Thursday

1. What is something brave you have done?
2. Who helps you feel brave?
3. What is one kind thing that might take courage to do?

(eg: Invite someone new to play, say "I'm sorry", help someone who is sad, stand up for someone...)

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one way you can be brave and kind today. Then practice using one of these sentence starters:

- "Would you like to play with us?"
- "I'm sorry."
- "Can I help you?"
- "You can sit with us."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"Today I will be brave by \_\_\_\_\_."

## Friday

1. What is one kind thing someone did for you this week?
2. What is one kind thing you did for someone else?
3. How can a small act of kindness change someone's day?

**Elbow Partner Share:** Tell your partner about one act of kindness you noticed, gave, or received this week.

Use the sentence stem: "One kind thing I noticed this week was \_\_\_\_\_."

Partners may respond: "That was kind because \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: "Kindness can make a difference by \_\_\_\_\_."

**Keep looking for small ways to brighten someone's day.**

WEEK

3

# Be an Upstander



Oct 5 - 9



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Look for one opportunity to help someone or include someone who may need a friend. Small actions can make a big difference.



### Monday

1. Who is someone that helps others at school?
2. What does it mean to be a helper?
3. What are some ways you can help someone at school?

Examples: Tell an adult if someone needs help, say kind words to someone who is sad, help pick up...

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one way you can be an upstander today. Then practice what you might say using one of these sentence starters:

- "Can I help you?"
- "You can join us."
- "Let's tell a teacher and ask for help"

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"Today I can help someone by \_\_\_\_\_."

### Tuesday

1. What is one small way you can help someone at school?
2. How do you think someone feels when another person asks, "are you okay?"
3. When might someone need a friend or helper? (provide examples)

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Practice checking in with a classmate. Take turns saying one of these: are you ok?, would you like to play with us? Can I help you? Do you want to walk with me?

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence: "One small thing I can do to help someone is \_\_\_\_\_."

### Wednesday

1. What does it mean to be brave?
2. Who is someone you think is brave? Why?
3. What is one brave thing you can do if you see someone being left out or having a hard day?

Examples:

- Invite them to play.
- Ask if they're okay.
- Tell a trusted adult.
- Sit with them.
- Say something kind.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns practicing what you might say.

Use one of the sentence starters:

1. Would you like to play with us?
2. Are you okay?
3. Come sit with us
4. Lets ask the teacher to help

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence "Being brave means \_\_\_\_\_."

### Thursday

1. What makes our school a great place to be
2. Who helps make our school safe and welcoming? (you can encourage students to think about classmates as well as school staff)
3. What is one thing you can do today that would make someone smile?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** "Share one way you can make someone in your class smile. "Today I can make someone smile by \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: "One small action that helps make our school even better is \_\_\_\_\_."

### Friday

1. What is one way you helped someone this week?
2. What is one kind or brave thing you saw someone else do this week?
3. How does helping others make our school a better place?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Tell your partner about one time this week when you were an upstander or saw someone else be an upstander.

How do you think that helped someone?

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: "I can be an upstander by \_\_\_\_\_."

# WEEK 4

# Respect Every Day



Oct 5 - 9



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Choose words that encourage, include others, and make people feel good. Respect begins with the words we choose.



## Monday

1. What does respect look like at school?
2. This month we learned about belonging, kindness and being an upstander. Which one is easiest for you to do? Why?
3. What some words you can use today that would encourage, incld, or inspire someone else?

Examples: Good job, would you like to join us? You can do it! Thank you. I'm gald you're here. Can I help you?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns giving your partner an encouragin message. You can use one of the sentence starters:

- I appreciate that you \_\_\_\_\_
- You're really good at \_\_\_\_\_
- I'm glad you're in our class because \_\_\_\_\_
- I know you can do it!

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence  
One respectful think I can say today is \_\_\_\_\_

## Tuesday

1. What is something kind someone has said that made you smile?
2. This month we've learned about belonging, kindness, and being an upstander. How can kind words help someone feel like they belong?
3. What are some encouraging words you could say to a classmate today or tomorrow or while walking to school?

Examples: good morning, i'm glad you're here, have a great day, you can walk with us,

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns practicing kind greetings and encouraging words.

Use one of these sentence starters:

- "Good morning! I'm glad you're here."
- "Would you like to walk with us?"
- "I hope you have a great day!"
- "You did a great job!"

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:  
"One kind thing I can say tomorrow is \_\_\_\_\_."

## Wednesday

1. What is one helpful thing you did for someone this week?
2. This month we've learned about belonging, kindness, and being an upstander. Which one of those can you show by your actions today? How?
3. What is one respectful action you can do today?

Examples:

Hold the door open.  
Listen when someone is speaking.  
Help clean up.  
Include someone in a game.  
Follow directions the first time.  
Help someone who needs it.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one respectful action you will do today.  
Then complete the sentence:

"Today I will show respect by \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"One respectful action that makes a difference is \_\_\_\_\_."

## Thursday

1. What was your favorite Respect 24/7 challenge this month?
2. This month we've practiced:
  - belonging by including others,
  - kindness by helping others,
  - being an upstander by standing up for what's right.

Which one do you want to keep doing every day? Why?

1. What is one thing you can keep doing after October to help everyone feel like they belong?

Examples:

Invite someone to play.  
Say kind words.  
Help a classmate.  
Thank an adult.  
Include someone new.  
Tell a trusted adult if someone needs help.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one Respect 24/7 habit you want to keep all year. Complete the sentence:  
"Even after October, I will continue to \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:  
"Our school is stronger when we continue to \_\_\_\_\_."

Respect doesn't end with October. Keep choosing to include others, show kindness, and be an upstander every day.

## Friday

1. What is one thing you learned during Respect 24/7 Upstander Month?
2. This month we practiced:

Belonging by helping everyone feel included.  
Kindness by caring for others.  
Being an Upstander by helping when someone needed us.  
Respect by showing these choices every day.

Which one are you most proud of? Why?

1. What is one thing you will keep doing all year to help others feel welcomed, valued, and included?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one thing you're proud of from this month and one thing you'll continue doing all year. Complete these sentence starters:

"I am proud that I \_\_\_\_\_."  
"This year I will continue to \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"Respect means \_\_\_\_\_."

Encourage students to use ideas like: helping others, being kind, including everyone, listening, standing up for others, using kind words.

**Congratulations! Every smile, kind word, helping hand, and brave choice helped make our school a place where people feel safe, welcomed, and included. Remember, Respect 24/7 isn't just something we practiced this month, it's something we can choose every day.**



# Circle Activities

3-5



WEEK

1

# We All Belong



Oct 5 - 9



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Try to complete one unexpected act of kindness each day this week.



### Monday

1. If you could learn any new hobby, what would it be?
2. Do you think of yourself as a shy or outgoing person?
3. Think about this week's challenge: what might be the hardest part about introducing yourself to someone you don't know?
4. Practice with an elbow partner. Introduce yourself to your partner as if you've never met before.
5. What follow-up question could you ask to get to know someone better?

### Tuesday

1. If you could instantly become really good at one hobby or activity, what would you choose?
2. What is something you enjoy doing that helps you relax or have fun?
3. Share one thing about yourself that most people in this class probably don't know.

Encourage students to think beyond favorite colors or foods. Examples might include a talent, family tradition, a place they've visited, something they're proud of, a goal they have, a unique interest.

**Partner Practice:** With your elbow partner:

Each person has one minute to share something about themselves.

Then switch.

After both have shared, each partner introduces the other to the class by saying:

"One interesting thing I learned about \_\_\_\_\_ is..."

(If time is limited, teachers can have pairs simply thank one another instead of sharing with the whole class.)

**Closing Reflection**

How does learning about one another help everyone feel like they belong?

### Wednesday

- What is your favorite activity during recess, lunch, or free time?
2. What makes you feel welcome when you join a new group or activity?
  3. What might make it difficult to invite someone you don't know very well to join your group?

**Partner Practice:** With your elbow partner, practice inviting someone into a group.

One partner pretends to be sitting alone.

The other partner practices inviting them using one of these sentence starters:

- "We're playing if you'd like to join us."
- "Would you like to work with us?"
- "Come sit with us."
- "There's room for you if you'd like to join."

Switch roles.

Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"One invitation I could give today is \_\_\_\_\_."

Examples:

- "Would you like to join us at recess?"
- "Do you want to be our partner?"
- "Come eat lunch with us."

### Thursday

1. What is a hobby, interest, or activity you enjoy?
2. What is one talent, tradition, experience, or quality that is important to you?
3. How do different talents, backgrounds, traditions, and ways of thinking make our class stronger?
4. What might make someone uncomfortable sharing what makes them unique, and how can we help them feel respected?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns sharing something about yourself that is important to who you are. After listening, respond with:

"Something I appreciate about what you shared is \_\_\_\_\_."

or

"That is interesting because \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"One thing I appreciate about someone in our class is \_\_\_\_\_."

Students should share only information their partner gave permission to repeat.

### Friday

1. What is one word that describes your week?
2. What is one moment this week that made you feel included or appreciated?
3. Think about this week's challenges:
  - learning about a classmate,
  - inviting someone to join,
  - and celebrating differences.
4. Which challenge had the biggest impact on you or someone else? Why?
5. What is one thing our class can continue doing to help everyone feel like they belong?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one example of how you helped build belonging this week. Use the sentence stem:

"One way I helped someone feel included this week was \_\_\_\_\_."

Then ask your partner:

"How did your actions make a difference?"

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: "One thing I noticed someone else do that helped another person belong was \_\_\_\_\_."

Closing: As we move into next week, remember that belonging isn't something that happens once; it's something we create every day through our words and actions.

# WEEK 2

# Choose Kindness



Oct 12 - 16



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Try to complete one unexpected act of kindness each day this week.



## Monday

1. Describe a time when someone did something kind for you that you weren't expecting?
2. Why do you think small acts of kindness can make a big difference?
3. What might make it difficult to choose kindness, even when you know it's the right thing to do?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one unexpected act of kindness you plan to do today.

Then practice giving your partner a sincere compliment using one of these sentence starters:

- "I appreciate that you \_\_\_\_\_"
- One strength I notice about you is \_\_\_\_\_."
- "Thank you for always \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"Today I will surprise someone by \_\_\_\_\_"

## Tuesday

Keep the messaging going about making kindness "contagious". Using the "pay it forward" idea - recognizing someone has done something kind for you and you pay it forward by doing something kind for someone else.

1. What is one act of kindness you noticed at school yesterday?
2. Why do you think kindness can spread from one person to another?
3. Can you think of a time when someone else's kindness inspired you to be kind? What happened?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one example of kindness you witnessed recently. Then discuss: "How could that act of kindness continue spreading to other people?"

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to share: "Today I can help kindness spread by \_\_\_\_\_."

**Closing Challenge:** Imagine kindness like a chain reaction. One smile, one compliment, or one helping hand can inspire someone else to do the same. Today, see how many acts of kindness your class can start.

## Wednesday

As we continue to make kindness contagious, we also need to notice and appreciate others showing kindness.

1. Who is someone at school whose work often goes unnoticed?
2. How does that person's work help everyone have a safe, welcoming, or successful school day?
3. Why is it important to thank people even when they're just doing their job?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share with your partner who you plan to thank today. Then practice what you might say using on these sentence starters:

- "Thank you for everything you do to help our school"
- "I notice that you always \_\_\_\_\_, and I appreciate it."
- "Your work makes a difference because \_\_\_\_\_."

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"One person I appreciate at our school is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

Encourage students to recognize a variety of staff members, not just classroom teachers.

## Thursday

1. When is it easier to be kind? When is it harder?
2. What does it mean to have courage?
3. Why do you think kindness sometimes takes courage?

Encourage students to think about situations such as:

- Including someone who is often left out
- Apologizing after making a mistake
- Standing up for someone who is being treated unfairly
- Helping someone who seems lonely
- Choosing kindness even when others are not.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share a situation where someone might need courage to be kind. Then discuss: "What could you say or do in that situation?"

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: "One courageous act of kindness is \_\_\_\_\_."

Being kind isn't always the easiest choice, but it is often the most meaningful. Keep looking for opportunities to show courage through kindness, even if no one else notices.

## Friday

1. What is one act of kindness you noticed at school this week?
2. Think about this week's challenges: unexpected kindness, spreading kindness, thanking someone, and showing courageous kindness. Which challenge was most meaningful to you, and why?
3. How can one small act of kindness influence other people's choices?

**Elbow Partner Share:** Share one example of kindness you gave, received, or witnessed this week. Then discuss what difference that act of kindness made.

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete one of these sentences: "one way kindness spread this week was \_\_\_\_\_." OR "One kind choice I want to continue making is \_\_\_\_\_."

Choose one act of kindness from this week that you want to turn into a regular habit. Remember that a kinder school is created through the small choices people make every day.

# WEEK 3

# Be an Upstander



Oct 5 - 9



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Try to complete one unexpected act of kindness each day this week.



## Monday

1. What do you think an upstander does that is different from a bystander?
2. Can you think of a time when someone helped another person at school? What happened?
3. Why might it be hard to speak up or help someone who is being left out or treated unfairly?

Discuss that being an upstander doesn't always mean solving the problem alone. It can mean: checking on someone, inviting someone to join, speaking up respectfully, getting help from a trusted adult.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** With your partner, choose one situation:

- Someone is sitting alone at lunch.
- A student drops all of their books.
- Someone is left out of a group activity.
- You hear unkind words being used.

Discuss what an upstander could do or say in this situation.

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"An upstander is someone who \_\_\_\_\_."

*Being an upstander isn't about being a hero; it's about making a choice to help. Today, notice one opportunity where you can support someone, include someone, or ask an adult for help if someone is being hurt or left out.*

## Tuesday

1. Have you ever helped someone in a small way? What did you do?
2. Why do small actions sometimes make a bigger difference than we expect?
3. Imagine you notice someone sitting alone or looking upset. What are some safe and respectful ways an upstander could respond

**Elbow Partner Practice:**

Choose one situation:

1. A student is sitting alone at recess.
2. Someone seems upset after class.
3. A new student doesn't know anyone.

Take turns practicing what you would say.

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"One small action that can make a big difference is \_\_\_\_\_."

*Tomorrow is Walk to School Wednesday. As you walk to school or around campus, look for opportunities to be an upstander. Walk with someone who may be alone, greet classmates, or include someone in a conversation. Small actions can help everyone feel safe, welcomed, and connected.*

## Wednesday

1. What does courage look like at school?
2. Why is it sometimes easier to stay silent than to help someone?
3. Think about a time when someone was left out, teased, or having a difficult day. What could an upstander do to help in a safe and respectful way?

**Elbow Partner Practice:**

Choose a scenario:

1. A classmate is being teased.
2. Someone is sitting alone at lunch
3. A student keeps getting left out of a game.
4. You hear someone say something hurtful.

Discuss: What would an upstander do first?

Then discuss: When would it be important to ask an adult for help?

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"Choosing courage over silence means \_\_\_\_\_."

Being an upstander doesn't always mean having the perfect words. It means choosing to do something that helps rather than doing nothing.

## Thursday

1. What does a strong school community look and feel like?
2. How do students help create a positive school culture?
3. Why is it important for both students and adults to work together to make our school safe, welcoming, and respectful?

**Encourage students to think about:**

- Treating others the way they would want to be treated
- Including classmates
- Reporting concerns to trusted adults
- Taking responsibility for their actions
- Supporting one another

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one thing students can do to strengthen the school community.

Discuss: What is one thing our class could do together to make our school even stronger?

**Popcorn Share:** Invite volunteers to complete the sentence: I help build a stronger school when I \_\_\_\_\_.

*Strong schools aren't built by one person; they are built by all of us. Today, think about how your choices can help create a school where everyone feels safe, respected, included, and valued.*

## Friday

1. What is one example of an upstander you noticed this week?
2. Think about this week's challenges: helping someone, checking in with others, choosing courage over silence, and working together to build a strong school. Which challenge stood out to you the most? Why?
3. How can one person's decision to be an upstander influence other people?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share a time this week when you helped someone or noticed someone else helping

Discuss: What made that action important?

**Popcorn Share:** invite volunteers to complete the sentence:

"Our school is stronger than students \_\_\_\_\_."

Examples: include others, speak up respectfully, help someone who needs it, tell a trusted adult when someone is being hurt or left out, choose courage instead of silence.



WEEK

4

# Respect Every Day



Oct 5 - 9



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Try to complete one unexpected act of kindness each day this week.



### Monday

1. When you hear the word "respect", what comes to mind?
2. This month we've learned about belonging, kindness, and being an upstander. How are these three ideas connected?
3. How can your words make someone feel included, encouraged, or respected?

Examples: giving a compliment, encouraging someone who's struggling, inviting someone into a conversation, thanking someone, speaking respectfully during disagreements.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns sharing an encouraging message with your partner.

- One strength I see in you is \_\_\_\_\_
- I appreciate the way you \_\_\_\_\_

### Tuesday

1. Think of a compliment or encouraging comment you've received. Why do you still remember it?
2. This month we've learned that:
  - belonging means helping others feel included,
  - kindness means choosing caring actions,
  - being an upstander means helping when someone needs support.

How can your words show all three?

1. What kinds of words encourage, include, and inspire others? How can those words help create a respectful school community?

Examples: welcoming someone into a conversation, encouraging a classmate who is struggling, thanking someone, recognizing another person's strengths, standing up with respectful words when someone is left out.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Take turns sharing one encouraging message you could say to a classmate tomorrow during Walk to School Wednesday.

Use one of these sentence starters:

- "I'm glad you're here."
- "Want to walk with us?"
- "I appreciate the way you \_\_\_\_\_."
- "I know you'll do great today!"

**Popcorn Share Complete the sentence:**

"One encouraging sentence I can say tomorrow is \_\_\_\_\_."

### Wednesday

1. What is one respectful action you noticed someone do this week?
2. This month we've practiced: belonging by including others, kindness by helping others, being an upstander by taking positive action. How do all three show respect?
3. Which respectful actions make the biggest difference in creating a positive school community? Why?

Examples:

Listening when others speak.  
Helping without being asked.  
Including classmates.  
Taking responsibility for mistakes.  
Following directions.  
Speaking respectfully.  
Helping someone who needs support.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one respectful action you plan to do today.

Discuss: "How could that action make someone else's day better?"

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"Respect is shown through actions like \_\_\_\_\_."

*Remember, respect isn't just something people hear it's something they experience through your actions.*

### Thursday

1. Which Respect 24/7 theme had the biggest impact on you this month: belonging, kindness, or being an upstander? Why?
2. Think about the three themes we've practiced: Belonging, Kindness, Being an Upstander. How do these three ideas work together to create a respectful school?
3. What is one habit from this month that you want to continue all year? Why is it important?

Examples:

Welcoming new students.  
Using encouraging words.  
Speaking up respectfully.  
Helping others without being asked.  
Thanking people.  
Including others.

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one Respect 24/7 habit you'll continue after October. Then discuss:  
"How could continuing that habit make our school better throughout the year?"

**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"Respect is something I will continue to show by \_\_\_\_\_."

### Friday

1. Looking back over this month, what lesson will stay with you the most? Why?
2. This month we've learned that:

- Belonging helps everyone feel included.
- Kindness shows people they matter.
- Being an Upstander means taking action when someone needs support.
- Respect is how we bring all of these ideas to life every day.

How have these ideas changed the way you think about your role in creating a positive school community?

1. What commitment can you make to continue building a school where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and included?

**Elbow Partner Practice:** Share one thing you're proud of from this month and one commitment you'll make for the rest of the school year.

Then ask: "How will that commitment make our school stronger?"

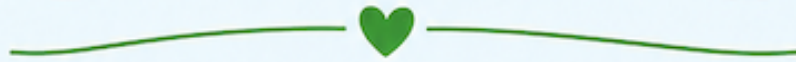
**Popcorn Share:** Complete the sentence:

"This year I will help our school by \_\_\_\_\_."

*Congratulations on completing Respect 24/7 Upstander Month! This month reminded us that every student has the power to make a difference. Whether it's including someone new, choosing kindness, speaking up with courage, or showing respect through everyday actions, each choice helps create the kind of school community where everyone belongs.*



# PARENT NEWSLETTER BLURBS



Weekly updates and conversation starters  
to keep families connected, informed,  
and involved



**BELONGING**



**KINDNESS**



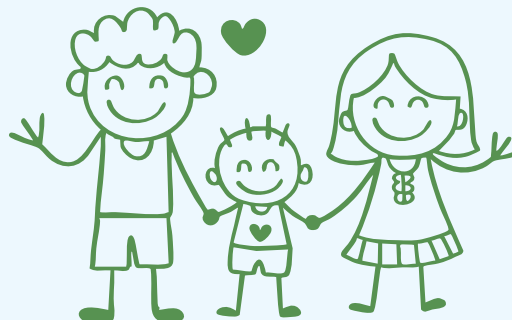
**UPSTANDER**



**RESPECT**



**EVERY DAY**



**WEEK**

**1**

# We All Belong

**October 5 - 9**



This week, our school is kicking off Respect! 24/7 Upstander Month by focusing on belonging. Every student deserves to feel welcomed, included, and valued at school.

Throughout the week, students will learn how small actions, like introducing themselves, inviting someone to join a game, or including others in conversations, can help create a school where everyone belongs.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- ☐ What helped you feel like you belonged at school today?
- ☐ Did you help someone feel included this week?
- ☐ Has someone ever made you feel especially welcome?  
What did they do?



## FAMILY CHALLENGE

As a family, introduce yourselves to a new person in your neighborhood, at school drop-off/pick-up, or during an activity this week. Talk about how small acts of welcome help build stronger communities.

**WEEK**

**2**

# Choose Kindness

**October 12 - 16**



This week, students are exploring how kindness can make a difference every day. Kindness isn't about grand gestures; it often looks like helping someone, offering encouragement, showing gratitude, or simply noticing when someone needs support.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS



What was the kindest thing you saw today?



Did someone show kindness to you?



What's one small act of kindness our family can do this week?



## FAMILY CHALLENGE

Complete one unexpected act of kindness together this week. It could be writing a thank-you note, helping a neighbor, or doing something thoughtful for a family member without being asked.



**WEEK**

**3**

# Be an Upstander

October 19 - 23



This week, students are learning what it means to be an upstander: someone who helps others, includes those who may be left out, speaks up respectfully, or seeks help from a trusted adult when someone is being hurt. Being an upstander doesn't mean handling every situation alone. Sometimes the bravest choice is asking an adult for help.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- ☐ What does being an upstander mean to you?
- ☐ When is it important to ask an adult for help?
- ☐ How can you help someone who seems left out?



## FAMILY CHALLENGE

Talk through a few everyday scenarios (someone sitting alone, someone being teased, someone left out of a game). Ask your child, "What could you do?" and discuss safe, respectful ways to respond.

**WEEK**

**4**

# Respect Every Day

**October 26 - 30**



As Respect! 24/7 Upstander Month comes to a close, we celebrate everything our students have learned about belonging, kindness, courage, and respect. These lessons don't end with October. Every day is an opportunity to create a positive school community through the choices we make.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- ☐ What lesson from this month stands out to you?
- ☐ How have you grown as a friend or classmate?
- ☐ What is one thing you'll continue doing after October?



## FAMILY CHALLENGE

As a family, create your own "Respect Every Day" commitment. Have each family member choose one action they will continue throughout the year to help others feel welcomed, respected, and valued.

# Resources and References



# Why Circles?

Community-building circles create an intentional space for students and adults to strengthen relationships, build trust, practice listening, and ensure that every person has an opportunity to be heard. During Respect 24/7 Upstander Month, each circle connects to the morning announcement and weekly theme, helping students explore belonging, kindness, upstander behavior, and respect through conversation and reflection.

Circles are rooted in Indigenous traditions of gathering in a circle to listen, share stories, and strengthen community. The physical shape of the circle allows participants to see one another and reduces traditional barriers or positions of authority within the group (Fisher & Frey, 2022). Educators should approach circle practice with respect for these roots and recognize that circles are more than a classroom management strategy. Boyes-Watson and Pranis explain that circles intentionally attend to the whole person by creating space for emotional, social, moral, mental, and physical development. Skills and qualities such as empathy, patience, resilience, and emotional self-management are not simply fixed traits; they can be strengthened through practice and interaction with others. Regular opportunities to speak, listen, reflect, and connect allow students to develop these skills within the classroom community (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015).

Community-building circles are a proactive, Tier I restorative practice. They can help students develop social-emotional skills such as listening, respecting different perspectives, communicating thoughtfully, and solving problems. They also build the relationships and sense of community that schools can draw upon when challenges or conflicts arise (Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, n.d.; Schott Foundation, 2014). Fisher and Frey (2022) caution that schools may struggle when restorative practices are used only in response to conflict without first investing in positive relationships and a broader restorative culture.



Research on restorative practices suggests that consistent implementation may contribute to stronger student–teacher and student–student relationships, improved perceptions of school climate, increased attendance, and reductions in exclusionary discipline and aggressive behavior (Augustine et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2023; Gregory et al., 2016; Jain et al., 2014; Jarjoura et al., 2023).

Educators have also reported that community circles help students feel welcomed, develop empathy, trust their teachers, and improve their ability to work through conflicts with peers.



## The Power of the Circle

It's more than a classroom strategy – it's a way to build community, develop essential life skills, and create culture of belonging

# Building the Questions

Each Respect 24/7 circle includes two warm-up questions followed by a main prompt. The questions are intentionally sequenced from low-risk to more reflective.

**1 Warm-Up Question 1**  
An easy and comfortable way to enter the conversation

**2 Warm-Up Question 2**  
Helps students make a connection to the day's topic

**3 Main Prompt**  
Invites students to think more deeply about their own experiences, choices, or role within the classroom community

## Keep in Mind

You do not need to use every question, and you may want to use your own! Depending on available time and students' familiarity with circles, you could use one warm-up and the main prompt or extend the conversation across several rounds. When students are new to circles, begin with short, familiar, and low-risk topics. Consistent practice with less emotionally charged questions helps students build the skills and confidence they may later need for more challenging conversations (Fisher & Frey, 2022).

Participation should be encouraged but not forced. Students should always have the opportunity to pass and may choose to contribute during a later round.

*Example: "I pass, but I am still listening."*

# Before Beginning a Circle

Before facilitating the circle, review and visibly post the class's **Circle Agreements or Sharing Norms**. Predictable expectations help students understand how to participate and contribute to an environment where everyone feels safe and respected.



## Suggested Sharing Norms

- ✓ One person speaks at a time
- ✓ Respect the talking piece
- ✓ Listen to understand without interrupting or judging
- ✓ Speak from your own experience
- ✓ It is okay to pass
- ✓ Say enough for others to understand, while allowing everyone time to share
- ✓ Respect different identities, ideas, and experiences
- ✓ Do not repeat another person's private story outside the circle.
- ✓ What is shared in the circle remains private unless someone is unsafe, may be harmed, or needs adult support.
- ✓ Everyone deserves an opportunity to be heard.

**You should not promise absolute confidentiality. Students should understand that adults may need to seek additional support when information is shared involving abuse, harm, safety concerns, or another situation that requires intervention.**

# Essential Elements of a Community-Building Circle

Although circles may be adapted to fit the age and needs of the group, effective circles commonly include the following elements:

## The Circle

Participants sit/stand where they can see one another, supporting open and direct communication.

## A Talking Piece

The person holding the talking piece has the opportunity to speak without interruption. The talking piece helps slow the conversation, supports focused listening, and ensures that each participant has an opportunity to contribute.

## Circle Guideline

The facilitator establishes clear expectations for listening, speaking, respecting the talking piece, and sharing time.

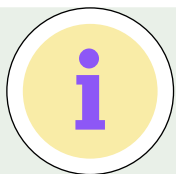
## Circle Agreements

Participants collaboratively identify what they need from one another to feel safe, respected, and able to participate. These agreements should be revisited regularly.

## A Predictable Rhythm

Circles should follow a consistent structure, such as a welcome, check-in, warm-up question, main prompt, reflection, and check-out question (Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, 2016).





## Facilitation Tips

- ✓ Sit in a circle whenever possible so everyone can see one another.
- ✓ Begin with a brief welcome or grounding activity.
- ✓ Review the circle agreements before asking students to share.
- ✓ Use a talking piece to support equal participation and active listening.
- ✓ Model a response that is honest, appropriate, and brief.
- ✓ Listen without immediately correcting, judging, advising, or fixing.
- ✓ Allow silence and give students time to think.
- ✓ Keep early circles brief and predictable.
- ✓ Close with a check-out question, reflection, or positive statement.
- ✓ Revisit agreements when the group needs a reminder or when new students join



## The Power of the Circle

The purpose of these circles is not to reach one correct answer. The goal is to create repeated opportunities for students to practice voice, choice, empathy, listening, reflection, and responsible decision-making. Over time, these practices can help build a classroom and school community where students feel safe, welcomed, valued, and connected.

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# Thank You for Being Here!



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Brighter Futures.



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