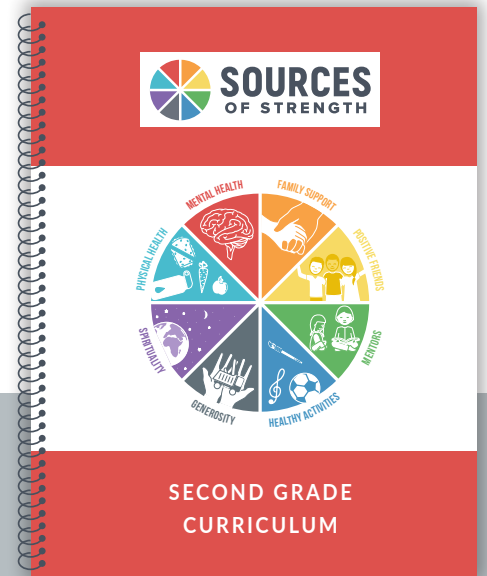
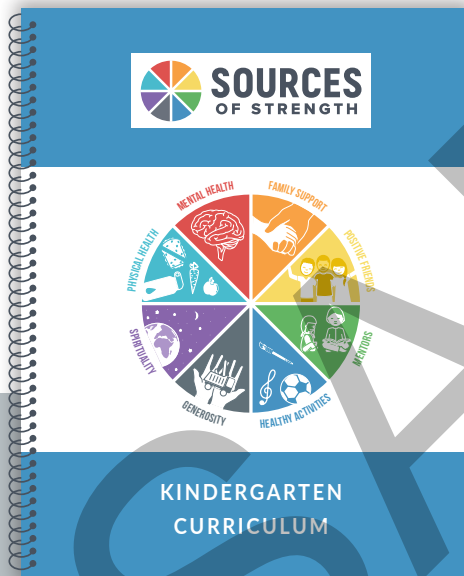




# SOURCES OF STRENGTH



## CURRICULUM PREVIEW

# LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

## Setting the Stage for Connection

KINDERGARTEN

### Lesson Spotlight

I can be an active listener and learn from others.

### Materials

- Talking Piece: Any easy-to-pass object such as a stuffed animal, painted rock, feather, etc. It can be helpful if the Talking Piece is significant to the class. It may be something handmade or that you already have on hand.
- Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page 111)

### Preparation

- Determine what your Talking Piece will be
- Print Talking Circle Norms anchor chart

### Time

30 minutes

### SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Social-Awareness, Self-Management

### Instructor Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to begin building community and establish norms and routines for the Sources of Strength lessons. One of the ways we do that is through Talking Circles. Time in Talking Circles is a meaningful opportunity for students to practice active listening and turn-taking through the use of a Talking Piece, which in turn helps create connection and safety. The Talking Piece is a powerful equalizer. It provides every student an equal opportunity to speak and acknowledges that everyone has something important to offer to the group.

This lesson introduces the first three of the following norms that will be established and used throughout the Sources of Strength lessons:

### Norms:

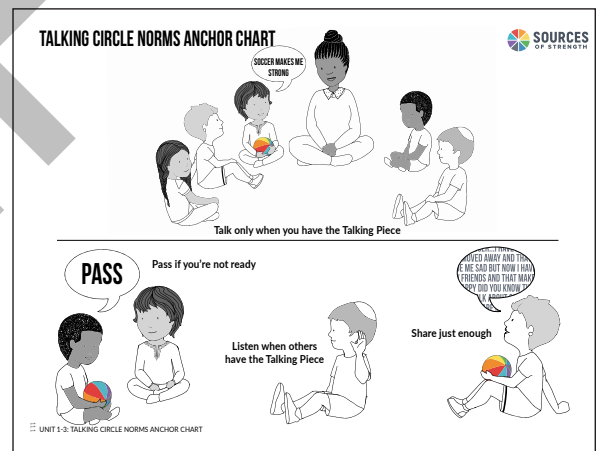
- Talk only when you have the Talking Piece
- Pass if you are not ready
- Listen when others have the Talking Piece
- Share just enough (to be introduced in the next lesson)

This lesson models two types of sharing in the Talking Circle:

- **Popcorn share** is used most frequently in the curriculum and allows for student voice as you move through the lessons. Call on a diverse group of voices and experiences when using Popcorn shares to create an equitable sharing space. Remember that not everyone processes questions at the same rate, so don't forget to pause for a moment and call on a diverse group of students, rather than just the first to raise their hands.
- **Full Circle share** is when every student has an opportunity to share on the prompt provided. Students are always allowed to pass if they are not ready when the Talking Piece reaches them. Make sure to go back and give those students another opportunity to share at the end if they are ready, though never require a student to share.

This lesson also introduces the concept that we share things in common with others and also have things that make us unique and different. Seeing our differences as a sign of strength and uniqueness helps us promote a sense of curiosity over a fear of differences.

As students play games and potentially become dysregulated, a calming breath exercise can serve as an opportunity for you to help students co-regulate (see more about co-regulation in the Introduction on page 2). The topic of emotion regulation will be the focus of Unit 2.



### Introduction (5 min)

Invite the students to sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs with no obstructions or obstacles in the middle. Welcome the students as they join. **“Today, we are going to begin Sources of Strength lessons! Every week we will have time to come together to connect, play games, and talk about things that make us strong and healthy.**

**“We will talk about what makes our bodies strong. Everyone flex your arms with me.”** Model flexing your arms.

**“Eating healthy food, drinking water, and going to the doctor are a few things we can do to help our bodies be strong.**

**“We will talk about how we make our hearts strong. Let’s all put our hands over our hearts.”** Model putting your hand over your heart.

#### ADAPTATION

If your students are able to put their fingers together to form a heart, you can do that instead of them putting their hands over hearts.

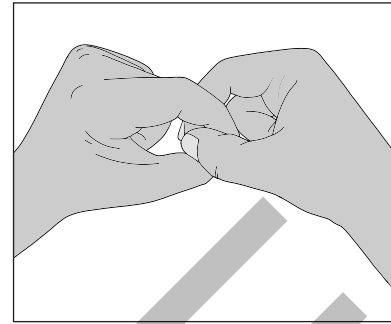
**“We will learn and practice helpful things to do when our emotions like being happy, sad, or mad get really big, and we’ll learn to build healthy friendships with others.**

**“We will also talk about how we make our minds strong. Put your fingers to your head like this.”** Put your fingers to your temples, like you are using mind control.

**“We will talk about how we can learn and grow, especially when we make mistakes, when we need help, or when we go through hard things.**

**“And, we will talk about how we can make our classroom a strong, safe, and connected place. Everyone connect your thumb and your pointer finger on each hand to form a circle. Now connect the two circles to form a chain link to show how we can be connected.”**

Model connecting by forming a chain link with your fingers. If not all students can do this, that is OK.



**“We will explore how we can make a classroom where everyone feels like they belong and are connected to each other.**

**“We all have Strengths in our lives that help us be healthy and strong. Our voices are strong. We can use our voices to help build a classroom where everyone feels connected and safe. Every day we have the chance to use our voices and actions to build a strong classroom community.**

**“Who knows what the word community means?”** Get a few Popcorn answers (See Instructor Overview). (A group of people, our school, neighborhood, our town, etc.). It is NOT necessary at this point for students to have a complete understanding of the word community. Take a few of their responses and try to weave them into the following statement:

**“Good answers! A community can be a group of people who work together and support each other. They can also be connected by the things they have in common. Can you think of a time when we have worked together as a class?”** Get a few Popcorn answers. (Lining up, cleaning up, helping others out, sharing, listening when others talk, etc.).

**“Those are great examples, and we’ll talk more about ways we are connected in our lessons together. We’ve been sitting for a while, so let’s stand up and play a game.”**

### Moose or Mouse Game (5 min)

**“In Sources of Strength we get to share and we also get to have fun! Through laughing, playing, and having fun together we connect and build our community. Let’s play a game called Moose or Mouse. Everyone make your best moose antlers.”**

# LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

## Setting the Stage for Connection

Model antlers with your hands on the side of your head and say, “Moose, moose, moose!”

“Great job, now everyone show me your best mouse whiskers.”

Place your fingers out from the sides of your mouth as whiskers and say, “Squeak, squeak, squeak!”

### ADAPTATION

If there are students who are physically unable to make these motions, please adapt them so all students can participate. Feel free to use any distinctly different, simple gestures representing two animals that your students would be familiar with or enjoy.

Make your breaths audible so students can co-regulate with you.

“Breathe in through your nose... Breathe out through your mouth...”

“Breathe in through your nose... Breathe out through your mouth...”

“Breathe in through your nose... Breathe out through your mouth...”

### INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Emotion regulation will be taught in Unit 2. Inviting students to notice what’s happening in their bodies is the first step in regulation. Here, we are simply seeding this language of noticing bodily sensations and practicing breathwork as one way to regulate. (For more information on co-regulation, see page 2)

“I’m going to turn around. When I say ‘Moose or Mouse,’ you will choose to be a moose by making your moose antlers or a mouse by making your mouse whiskers.” Make the motions as you say the options.

“I’ll count down 3, 2, 1, and before I turn around, you put up your moose antlers or your mouse whiskers like we just practiced. If you match me, you win that round. Let’s practice.” Do a practice round first, then play as many rounds as you like. No student is out. They simply try to match you each time.

“Great job everyone! Now, let’s sit back down in our Talking Circle.”

Invite the students to settle back down in their spots in the circle. “Thanks for playing a game together. I know when I play a game it can sometimes make my heart beat faster, or I start breathing fast. Sometimes my arms or legs might still feel like moving, or I might even be giggly or want to talk to my friends about the game. When I notice those things in my body, it’s helpful for me to calm my body before I move on to the next thing.

“Notice what’s happening in your body right now. Now let’s take three long deep breaths to get our bodies and brains ready for our Talking Circle.”

“Who noticed a change in their body?” Pause for responses.

“Did anyone feel like their breathing slowed down or notice that your legs and arms are less wiggly?” Share your own experience. (Example: I feel like my breathing slowed down and now my legs feel less wiggly.)

### Talking Circle (15 min)

“For us to build a strong community where everyone feels safe and like they belong, it is really helpful for us to get to know each other better. One way we’ll do this is by listening and sharing in this Talking Circle throughout the year. Sometimes in this circle we will use what is called a Talking Piece.” Show the class the Talking Piece you have selected.

“Along with our Talking Piece, we will have some norms, or agreements, that help us know what we do during our Talking Circle time. For example, one norm is that the person holding the Talking Piece is the one who gets to talk. When we don’t have the Talking Piece, we get to listen. Listening when others have the Talking Piece is another one of our norms.” Refer to Talking Circle Norms anchor chart (page 111).



### INSTRUCTOR NOTE

The use of the word norm in this curriculum is intentional. A norm is a routine or practice that helps maintain a safe and equitable environment for all. When a norm is not followed, consider it an opportunity to invite that student into practicing the norm with you. Inviting them to practice the norm together creates positive social norming and opportunities for relationship building and co-regulation. The Norms anchor chart may be a helpful tool to display on a classroom wall.

“Let’s practice these norms now. We are going to pass the Talking Piece around the circle. When you are holding the Talking Piece, you can share your name and then pass it to the next person in the Talking Circle. I will start and then pass it to my neighbor, they will share and pass it to their neighbor, and so on around the circle. Remember, our norms tell us that we can only talk when we have the Talking Piece. If we don’t have the Talking Piece, then we get to practice listening. When it is your turn with the Talking Piece, you will share your name.” You will start the sharing and then pass the Talking Piece.

### INSTRUCTOR NOTE

If your students seem tired, invite them to stand up and shake their wiggles out for 30 seconds, or if they are feeling energized take another few deep breaths together.

“Great job! Another norm we will use in Talking Circles is that you don’t have to talk if you do not want to. If you don’t want to talk, just say ‘Pass’ or pass the Talking Piece to the next person.” Model gently passing the Talking Piece.

“Now, let’s practice sharing again. This time when you have the Talking Piece, share which animal is your favorite while the rest of us listen.” You will start the sharing and then pass the Talking Piece around the circle.



## EXTENSIONS

### Read Alouds

- A Name Like Mine*. Sandore, S.C. (2020). Self-published.
- Your Name Is a Song*. Thompkins-Bigelow, J. & Uribe, L. (Illustrator). (2020), Seattle: The Innovation Press.

### Home Connection

- Share the Parent/Caregiver (page 131) introduction letter with families.
- Invite families to begin a practice of sharing something new that they learned each week. Encourage parents to also share as an opportunity to model a growth mindset. “What is something new that you have learned?”
- Send home this sharing prompt and invite everyone in the family to share: “What was something you really enjoyed about kindergarten?”

### Academic Integration

- Make a connection between rules (classroom, school, community) and norms. Both help create and keep order, as well as keeping us safe.
- Pair up students and have them teach each other how to write the letters in their name. Partners could also look for similar and different letters in their names.
- When discussing the weather, ask students about similarities and differences they notice from the previous day.

### Talking Circle Prompts

- Try to utilize the Talking Circle process and Talking Piece several times (daily if possible) between lesson 1.1 and 1.2. Prompts might include...
- “Share one or two words that tell us what you enjoyed today.” (experiment, play, write, count, etc.) This will take a

# LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

## Setting the Stage for Connection

### INSTRUCTOR NOTE

In this lesson, you are encouraged to share first to set the tone and model the expectations for sharing. In future Full Talking Circles, ask for a volunteer to go first. This reinforces the importance of student voices in the classroom and in Talking Circles.

“Thanks for sharing your favorite animal! We will keep sharing in Talking Circles this year. What you share is important, and listening to one another helps us build a strong and connected community.”

### Similarities and Differences Activity (5 min)

“Now we’re going to do an activity that will help us build connections with each other. In every community, there are some things that are the same for everyone and others that are different. Similarities are the things that are the same or almost the same; they help connect us to others in our community. Differences are a part of what makes our community special and strong. In this activity, you’ll notice the ways friends are the same as you and the ways they are different from you. Let’s all stand up right where we are.

“Alright, if you are in kindergarten, raise your hand.” Model.

“Look around. Each of us has that in common; we are all connected by being in kindergarten. OK, you can lower your hands.

“Everyone pretend you are a bird and flap your arms like wings.” Model.

“Now, everyone pretend you’re a fish and hold a bubble in your mouth.” Model.

“Think about which animal you’d rather be: a bird or a fish. I’ll count to three, and then everyone use one of those actions to show us which animal you’d rather be.” Model. “Ready? 1, 2, 3!

“Look around again. Now we can see some ways that we are different from each other. Some of you would like to be a bird and others would like to be a fish. It’s nice to have some of each animal. Now let your bubbles out or put your wings down.

“If you have ever felt sad, make a frowny face.” Model.

“Look around at your classmates. It looks like we have all felt sad at some point.” Pause.

little bit of skill to build but can be a really nice way to see into the minds and experiences of your students on a regular basis.

- “How did you feel connected to someone in our class today?” (I am connected to Maria because we both want to be dogs. etc.)
- “Share about your favorite place.”
- “Share about something fun you’ve done.”
- “If you were an animal, what would you be and why?”

### Mindfulness

- When finishing a high energy activity, have the students check in and notice their heartbeat or breathing and take a few slow, deep breaths with you.

### Music

- Play a variety of music genres to expose students to various styles of music and talk about how we may like different types of music.
- What are the ritual songs that you already have for lining up, cleaning up, or even just being a good friend? These are great ways to practice norms and set rhythms in the classroom.
- After reading *Your Name Is a Song* (see book extensions), put each student’s name to song allowing students to help create the sound of their name.

### Creative Expression

- Create ‘I am Me’ introduction posters. Celebrate how students bring unique skills and knowledge into the classroom.
- Invite students to bring a Talking Piece from home or create their own to use in future Talking Circles.

### Transitions

- When lining up after recess, ask for volunteers to share the name of a person they connected with during recess.

“Now, if you have ever felt happy, make a smiley face.” Model.

“Wow, everyone has also been happy! Sad and happy are two emotions we all feel sometimes. A few other emotions we all experience are scared, excited, and angry. Everyone feels these emotions from time to time too.

“If you have a pet at home, put up one hand.” Model. “Keep that hand up.

“If you have no pets, make an X with your arms.” Model. “Keep those X’s up.

“If you have more than one pet, put up both hands.” Model. “Look at that; the number of pets we have is different for some people and the same for others. You can put your hands down now.

“Now, think about your favorite animal. On the count of three, everyone make the sound of that animal. Ready? 1...2...3... GO!” Be sure to join the students in this, and feel free to embrace the silliness of the moment as you share the noise of your favorite animal.

“That was wonderful! Let’s sit back down in our circle spots.” Pause while everyone gets settled.

“Thank you all for sharing a little more about yourselves today and for listening so well to others as they shared in our Talking Circle. Learning about one another helps us build a strong community.”

### Looking Ahead

The next lesson is the first Celebration Lesson. These lessons are intended to incorporate celebrations of student growth, as well as learning about and practicing how to offer apologies when someone is hurt. These lessons are structured as Full Talking Circles and are structured to last 20 minutes. Any remaining time could be filled with Extensions from this lesson 1.1. (Please see page 7 for more information about the Celebration Lessons.)

- Have students turn to the person next to them in line and ask, “Could you please share something cool/fun that I might not know about you?”

# LESSON 1.1 - CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY

## Reflection

### REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

What is a Strength you noticed in a student or your class in this lesson or this week?

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What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

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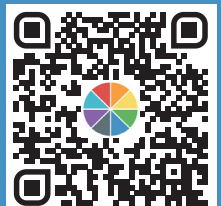
What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit [www.sourcesofstrength.org/K2Feedback](http://www.sourcesofstrength.org/K2Feedback) to give feedback on this lesson!



# LESSON 2.1 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

## The Trunk of the BrainTree

FIRST GRADE

### Lesson Spotlight

I can name memories and emotions that live in the Trunk of my BrainTree.

### Materials

- Talking Piece
- BrainTree visual (page 116)

### Preparation

None

### Time

30 Minutes

### SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Self-Management

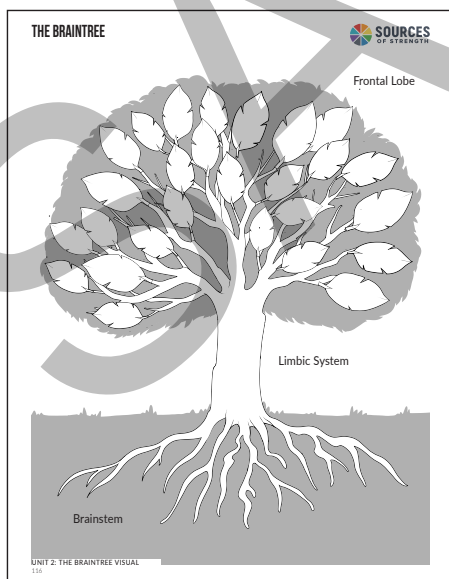
### Instructor Overview

This lesson briefly introduces the BrainTree metaphor, helping students understand the three parts of our brain and their functions. The Trunk of the BrainTree, which represents the limbic system, is the focus of this lesson. Students will learn that the Trunk of the BrainTree is where their emotions and memories live. It is important for students to acquire the skills of identifying and naming their emotions as part of the process of regulating when big emotions surface.

### Opening Talking Circle (5 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle, and welcome them as they arrive. “If you had Sources of Strength lessons in kindergarten, you might remember learning about the BrainTree. If you didn’t have Sources of Strength lessons last year, or if you’ve forgotten about the BrainTree, that’s OK. We’ll spend some time reviewing it so we all understand.

“Our brains and bodies are connected to one another, and our brain gives us information about what’s happening in our body. Just like a tree has three main parts that work together to keep it healthy and strong, so do our brains.” Show the BrainTree visual.



“The roots of a tree are like the bottom part of our brain that lets us know when we are hungry or thirsty, when we need to sleep, or even when we need to go to the

bathroom. This part of our brain also keeps our heart beating, our body at the right temperature, and helps us know if we are safe or not. Let’s all wiggle our fingers down towards the ground like the roots of a tree.” Model.

“Now touch the back of your neck where your hair starts.” Model.

“This is where the Roots of our BrainTree live. That part of our brain is called the Brainstem.

“The middle part of our brain is like the trunk of a tree. The Trunk of the BrainTree is where our memories and emotions live. Let’s make a circle with our arms out in front of us to represent the trunk of a tree.” Model. “Has anyone ever smiled when remembering something fun you did?” Get a show of hands.

“Yeah, that’s the Trunk of our BrainTree talking to us through our memories and emotions. This year, we will be learning more about emotions that live in the Trunk of our BrainTree.

“The top part of our brain is like the Branches and Leaves of a tree. Let’s all reach our arms above our heads and sway back and forth like the branches and leaves of a tree. The Branches and Leaves of our BrainTree help us think, learn new things, be creative, make choices, and solve problems.”

### Memories and Emotions Trunk Activity (10 min)

“Let’s do an activity to help us better understand the Trunks of our BrainTrees and what that part of our brain

# LESSON 2.1 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

## The Trunk of the BrainTree

does. First, let's focus on some memories. If you remember a time you ate broccoli, pretend you're eating some right now." Feel free to be playful with these responses and encourage students to pretend they're dipping their broccoli in some ranch dressing or poking it with a fork.

"Now, if you remember seeing a dog, pant like a dog." Model.

"If you have ever spent a rainy day indoors, wiggle your fingers like falling raindrops." Model.

"If you have ever gone to a park or a playground, stand up and pretend you are climbing the monkey bars." Model. Invite students to sit down again in the Talking Circle.

"We all have lots of memories from our lives. Memories like our first day of school, birthday parties, time with friends and family, and smelling delicious cookies all live in the Trunk of our BrainTree. What are some memories of delicious foods you have eaten?" Get a few Popcorn answers.

"Thanks for sharing, these are great examples of how our brains are filled with memories!

"We might also have memories in our Trunks of an experience that we learn from. Through our memories, this part of our brain gives us important information that helps us learn and grow. For example, if we tripped because our shoelaces weren't tied, the memory in our Trunk can help us remember to tie our shoes next time."

During the following prompts, be sure to participate as well. "Let's put our Trunks to work again. This time, we are going to focus on emotions.

"If you enjoy eating broccoli, stand up." Pause.

"If you think broccoli is really disgusting, kneel on one knee." Pause.

"If you don't really feel much emotion about broccoli, stay seated." Pause.

"Look around the circle and notice the different emotions we have about eating broccoli. Some of us feel disgusted, some of us enjoy it, and others don't feel much about it at all. All of these feelings are OK. Let's sit back down and get ready for the next example.

"Let's go back to our memory of seeing a dog. If you feel really excited seeing a dog, stand up." Pause.



## EXTENSIONS

### Everyday Application

- Create opportunities for students to do a morning emotion check-in.

### Read Alouds

- Edward Fudwupper Fibbed Big.* Breathed, B. (2003). New York: Little, Brown.
- The Brain is Kind of a Big Deal.* Seluk, N. (2019). New York: Orchard.
- Your Fantastic Elastic Brain.* Deak, J., & Ackerley, S. (2017). Illinois: Little Pickle Press.

### Home Connection

- Invite family members to share a favorite memory and the emotion tied to that memory.

### Academic Integration

- Consider science connections to the BrainTree in units on plants, habitats, human body, etc.

### Talking Circle Prompts

- "What is an example of a time you had an emotion that was small?"
- "What helps you when you are having a big emotion?"
- "When was a time you listened to your Roots and gave your body what it needed like a drink of water or a snack?"

### Mindfulness

- "Let's imagine we are in a garden preparing to plant some flower seeds. As we get ready to plant our seeds, you can choose to close your eyes or find a spot on the floor to focus your eyes. First, we'll need to make a hole in the dirt. Imagine poking your finger into the ground. What do you notice about the dirt? Does it feel warm or cool? Is it wet or dry? Now,



# LESSON 2.1 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

## The Trunk of the BrainTree

“If you feel nervous when you see a dog, kneel on one knee.” Pause.

“If you don’t really feel excited or nervous when you see a dog, stay seated.” Pause.

“Looks like we might experience different emotions again. That’s OK, those differences are a part of what make us a community.

“Alright, let’s reset and sit back down. Now, let’s think about rainy days again. If you feel sad on rainy days, stand up.” Pause.

“If you feel cozy on rainy days, kneel on one knee.” Pause.

“If you feel a different emotion on rainy days, stay seated.” Pause.

“Maybe some of us have felt several emotions. Sometimes when it rains we might feel sad, but other times we might get excited. It doesn’t have to be just one emotion, people can feel lots of emotions.

“We just used our bodies to show that we experience emotions in all kinds of situations. We also saw that each one of us might experience different emotions in the same situation. Lastly, we saw that each of us might experience multiple emotions depending on the situation. These are all examples of our emotions helping us understand our experiences. This is why it is really important for us to listen to what the Trunks of our BrainTrees are saying and regulate when we feel big emotions.”

### **Body Breath** (5 min)

“Let’s learn a new way to help us get our brains and bodies ready for the next part of our lesson. We call this a Body Breath. Open our arms wide like we’re getting ready to hug a tree.” Model.

“As we open our arms, we’ll take a big breath in through our nose.” Breathe audibly so students can co-regulate with you.

“Now, as we exhale through our mouth, we’ll wrap our arms around our body and give ourselves a big hug.” Model.

“Let’s do the Body Breath two more times together. Breathe in and stretch our arms out wide, now breathe out and give ourselves a big ol’ hug.

“Breathe in and stretch wide, breathe out and give ourselves a hug. OK, let’s all sit down in the circle again.”

gently place your seed in the hole you just made and fill it as you cover your seed with dirt. These seeds are going to need some water to grow, so let’s grab our watering can and sprinkle them with water. Look! Our flowers are slowly breaking through the dirt. As they start to sprout, can you see the green stem poking through the dirt? Our flowers are growing taller in the warm sun and beginning to open. Look closely at the petals and notice their color. Let’s enjoy the smell of our flowers by taking one big breath in through our nose and gently blowing that breath out.” (Breathe audibly.) “Now, let’s bring our attention back to the classroom and find out what colors we saw in our garden.” Follow with a Talking Circle where everyone shares the color of their flower.

### **Music**

- I’m An Old Oak Tree* (to the tune of I’m a Little Tea Pot)

“I’m an old oak tree, tall and strong  
Trunk is wide and branches long  
Roots go underground to help me grow  
Underground below, below.”

### **Creative Expression**

- Do an art activity in which students are allowed to draw any kind of tree that includes the three main parts (roots, trunk, branches and leaves) and label them with the three main parts of the brain (Brainstem, Limbic System, and Frontal Lobe).
- Have students draw pictures of a favorite memory and create a “Memories Live in Our Trunks” display.

### **Transitions**

- When lining up for gym class, lunch, or recess, point out to students these are times of the day when they are caring for the Roots of their BrainTree.

# LESSON 2.1 - ENGAGING OUR STRENGTHS

## The Trunk of the BrainTree

### Closing Talking Circle (10 min)

“Let’s begin our closing Talking Circle today with a Pair share. Turn to a neighbor and share a favorite memory of a time you went to a park or a playground. You might share about what you did at the park or an emotion you felt. Remember to share just enough so each partner has time to share.” Pair share.

Support students who need help finding a partner. Allow time for students to share, and give them a one minute warning.

“Now we’re going to use our Talking Piece to share one emotion we’ve felt today in the Trunk of our BrainTree. I will start and then we will pass the Talking Piece to the right.” Review Talking Circle norms if needed. Simply name an emotion you have experienced today and pass the Talking Piece.

“Thank you for sharing some of your memories and emotions today. We all have emotions, they are a part of being human and how our brains work. We will continue exploring what helps us with our big emotions this year.”

### INSTRUCTOR NOTE

In the next share we are looking to simply name emotions that have been experienced today, not to tell the stories behind those emotions. If a student does name a big emotion or tells a hard story, use this as an opportunity to follow up and offer connection to support after the lesson.

## REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

What is a Strength you noticed in a student or your class in this lesson or this week?

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What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

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What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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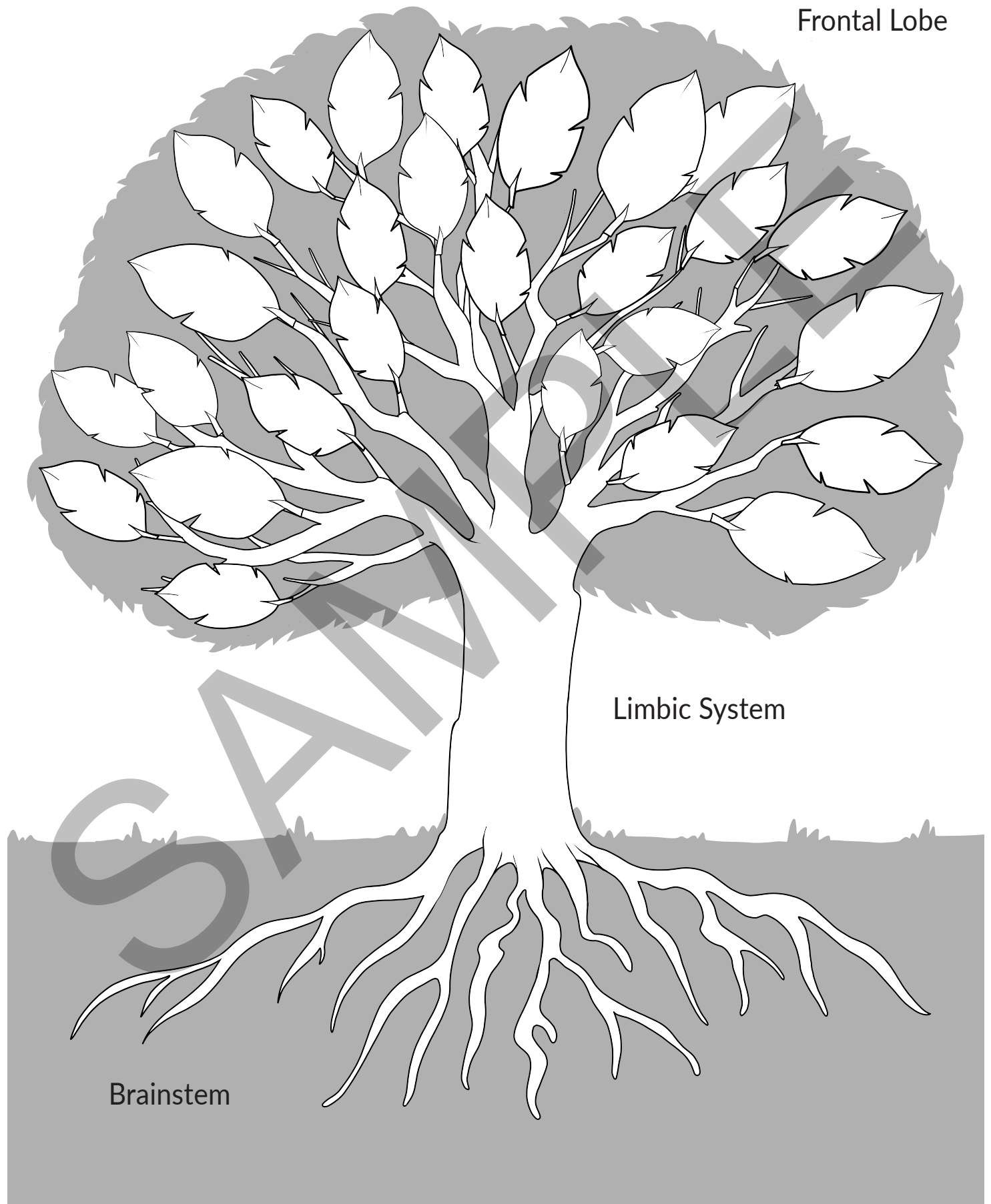
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We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit [www.sourcesofstrength.org/K2Feedback](http://www.sourcesofstrength.org/K2Feedback) to give feedback on this lesson!



Frontal Lobe



Brainstem

Limbic System

**Lesson Spotlight**

I can build a healthy community of belonging.

**Materials**

None

**Preparation**

Read Ecosystem game directions and consider adaptations as needed.

**Time**

30 minutes

**SEL Focus**

Relationship Skills, Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management

**Instructor Overview**

This lesson highlights how each person in the class has unique qualities and strengths they can contribute to a community of belonging. Initially, students are invited to play a game illustrating that a healthy ecosystem has many parts that work together. The lesson continues by reviewing the ways each student has created belonging for others and has felt belonging. The Full Circle share concludes the lesson with an invitation to use our social influence in taking action to create belonging for others.

**Ecosystem Game (14 min)**

Gather the students in an open space to play the Ecosystem game. Students will move about in a random order and then be invited into creating the different parts of an ecosystem. When the instructor says soil, sun, rain, or tree, the students will do the following actions\*:

- **Soil:** Lay on the ground
- **Sun:** Make a circle with your arms above your head
- **Rain:** Wiggle your fingers like raindrops and say 'Shhhhhhhhh.'
- **Tree:** stand tall and reach your arms up like the branches of a tree

\*Co-create actions to represent the different parts of the ecosystem with students as needed so that all are able to participate fully.

For the final rounds, students will be invited to create groups of four representing each part of the ecosystem. If students are not part of a group initially, they will be invited to join a group as additional soil, sun, rain, or trees. The intent of the game is to highlight that each person has something to contribute and belongs to our community. A secondary purpose of this game is to help students see the ways they can invite others into belonging.

**“Today we will begin our Sources of Strength time with a game. It is called the Ecosystem Game. Many of you**

**already know what an ecosystem is; it is a group of living things that works together to be healthy. In nature, there are many things that work together to make a healthy ecosystem. Let’s think about a tree and the things it needs to be healthy. What does a tree need to root down into?”** Get a few Popcorn answers (soil, dirt).

**“That’s right, a tree needs soil or dirt to grow deep roots in so it can get the nutrients it needs. Trees also need rain and sun. All of these things belong in the ecosystem.**

**“In this game, we will be these four parts of a healthy ecosystem. There are actions for each of these four things that belong in the ecosystem: soil, rain, sunshine, and trees. Let’s all stand up as we are able and practice the different actions together.**

**“The first action is to be the soil in our ecosystem. When we hear, ‘soil!’ we all will lay down or crouch down low to the ground. Let’s practice together, ready, ‘Soil.”** Model.

**“OK, we can stand back up. Soil is really important for trees. Trees grow deep roots in the soil to stay safe if a big storm comes up. The soil also has food and nutrients to help the tree continue to grow big and strong.**

**“When we hear ‘tree!’ we will put our feet close together and reach our arms and hands up high like the branches of a tree.”** Model.

# LESSON 3.5 - WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## An Ecosystem of Belonging

“Next is the sun. When we hear ‘sun’ we will make a big circle with our arms and pretend to be the sun shining down on the trees.”

Model.

“Finally, there is rain for trees when they are thirsty. When we hear, ‘rain’ we will put our arms up in the air and wiggle our fingers while we all say, ‘Shhhhhhhhh.’” Model.

“Great job. To begin the game you will be blowing around our space like leaves caught up in the wind. As you are blowing around, listen for ‘soil,’ ‘sun,’ ‘rain’ or ‘tree.’ You will do the action for each and when you hear me say, ‘Blow in the wind!’ then you will start walking and blowing around in the wind again as you listen for the next action.”

Play a few rounds until the students have the different movements down. Allow them to blow around in the wind between each round. Support students by modeling the actions as you say them.

Pause the game. “For our final few rounds, you all will be blowing around like the wind and I will say ‘ecosystem.’ When you hear ‘ecosystem’ you will need to form a healthy ecosystem with all four parts together. One person will be the soil lying on the ground, one will be the sun shining down, one will be the rain, and another will be the tree.” Model each action.

“Once your ecosystem has all four parts, look around and see if there are others still blowing in the wind. We can invite them to join us by saying, ‘Come join us!’ We can always have more trees, soil, or rain because everyone belongs in our ecosystem.” Play the game for two or three more rounds. Remind students to invite others into their ecosystem if they do not have a group.

“That game raised the energy in the room. Let’s go through the Regulation Railroad to get ourselves ready for a Talking Circle.

“What do you notice in your body?” Instructor name areas of your body that you notice. Pause.

“Now what emotions are you feeling?” Name any emotions you are feeling. Pause.

“Now, how big or small is that emotion?” Name the size of the emotion you are feeling. Pause.

“Finally, what strategy will you choose to regulate yourself? You all have worked hard to learn what helps you regulate through our Sources lessons. We could choose to look around the room and count ten things that are blue, we could take some big deep breaths,



## EXTENSIONS

### Everyday Application

- When you notice students engaging in activities of belonging, name and celebrate the ways students are contributing to belonging for others.
- Use the Ecosystem prompts as a regulation activity. Pause after each action.

**Sun:** make a circle with your arms above your head

**Tree:** stand tall and reach your arms up like the branches of a tree

**Rain:** wiggle your fingers like raindrops and say ‘Shhhhhhhhh.’

**Soil:** lay on the ground

### Read Aloud

- The Circles All Around Us.* Montague, B. (2021). New York: Dial Books.
- Empathy is Your Superpower.* Bussolari, C. Grzeszkowiak, Z. (Illustrator). (2021). Callisto Books.
- Just Ask! Be different, be brave, be you.* Sotomayor, S., López, R. (Illustrator). (2019). New York: Philomel Books.
- Be Kind.* Zietlow, M., Hill, J. (Illustrator). (2018). New York: Roaring Book Press.

### Home Connection

- Have a conversation with the people in your home. What are the different Strengths each person brings as Family Support?
- How can we celebrate the ways we have grown our strengths this year?

### Academic Integration

- In other subject areas where multiple parts work together or depend on each other, highlight the connection that each part belongs. Invite students to see the many different ways that belonging shows up all around us.



or we could picture our favorite place in our mind.” Model this for students by stating the strategy you have chosen. Pause for students to regulate.

### Closing Talking Circle (16 min)

Invite the students to the Talking Circle.

“We have been talking about belonging this year where everyone in our class can show up and participate as their full selves. We have made our classroom and place of belonging by building connections with each other, sharing our Strengths, and we have gotten help for ourselves and others when we have needed it. That is because we all belong in our classroom community.

“We just played a game where we created an ecosystem where each of the different parts belongs and needs each other. In order for an ecosystem to be healthy enough for the plants and animals to live, it needs soil, sun, rain, and trees.

“You all are Positive Friends. Sometimes Positive Friends are like the soil in our classroom ecosystem. Raise your hand if you have ever shared a snack with someone.” Get a show of hands.

“Sharing is a way that helps others feel like they belong.

“If you have ever shared your happiness with another person at school, make a circle with your arms like the sun and share a smile with others.” Model.

“If you have ever gotten someone a glass of water when they were thirsty, raise your hands above your head and wiggle your fingers.” Model.

“Each of us have done so many things this year to help us build a healthy ecosystem in our classroom. We have helped others to feel like they belong in our classroom by listening when others are speaking, giving Affirmations, helping out when there is a conflict or when someone is hurt, inviting others to play, sharing, and so much more. In a moment we will find a partner that we don’t normally pair up with, and share what you have done this year to help others feel like they belong.” Pair share. Support students in finding a partner. Be sure to participate as well.

“Now, find a different partner and share one way that others have made you feel like you belong in our classroom.” Pair share. Encourage students to mix it up and find different partners. Support students in finding a partner.

Invite the student to sit back down for a Full Talking Circle.

### Talking Circle Prompts

- “What are the specific ways you try to help others belong?”
- “If you were a new student at this school, what things would help you feel like you belong?”
- “What are the things in our community that remind you that you belong?”

### Mindfulness

- Create a rainstorm - rub hands, snaps, light tapping on legs, stomp feet and then slowly work your way back to rub hands.
- Lead students through a progressive relaxation mindfulness practice.  
“Everyone tighten up your feet for the count of three. 1, 2, 3 and release.  
“Now tighten up the muscles in your legs as tight as you can. 1, 2, 3 and release.  
“Now tighten up your belly and hold it. 1, 2, 3 and release.  
“Now make your hands and arms as tight as you can. 1, 2, 3 now release.  
“Finally, scrunch up your face and feel all the muscles in your face as you hold it. 1, 2, 3 and release.”

### Music

- We’re All In This Together* by High School Musical Cast
- Yes We Can* by The Pointer Sisters
- Treat People With Kindness* by Harry Styles

### Creative Expression

- Invite students to draw or name the things that help them feel like they belong. Consider creating a mural of things that help us feel like we belong.

### Transitions

- When students are physically transitioning during the day, give them instructions to move in a specific way (tiptoe, side shuffle, hold a friend’s hand, etc.).



# LESSON 3.5 - WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## An Ecosystem of Belonging

“For this Talking Circle let’s share one thing you will do to help others feel like they belong today or in the next week. Who would like to go first?” Pass the Talking Piece to the volunteer and continue sharing around the circle. Be sure to offer another chance to anyone who passes.

“Thank you all for sharing. Each of us are helpful parts of our healthy class ecosystem where everyone belongs.”

### REFLECTION

The practice of self reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

What is a Strength you noticed in a student or your class in this lesson or this week?

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What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

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What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

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We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

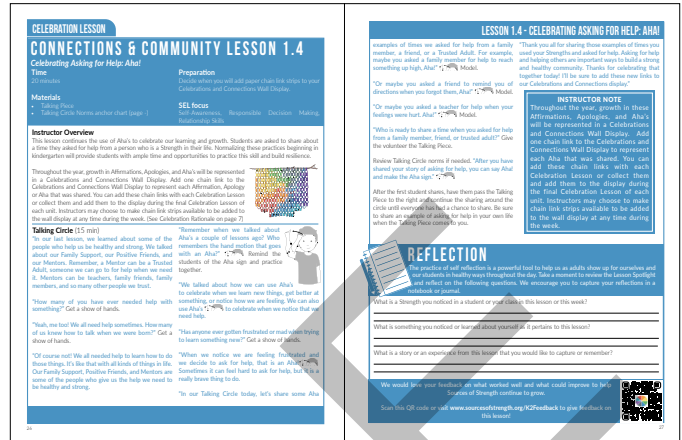
Scan this QR code or visit [www.sourcesofstrength.org/K2Feedback](http://www.sourcesofstrength.org/K2Feedback) to give feedback on this lesson!



# CELEBRATION LESSON RATIONALE

Throughout the curriculum, every other lesson is a Celebration Lesson designed to be 20 minutes long. These lessons are structured as Talking Circles where students have the opportunity to celebrate themselves and each other in one of three ways:

- **Affirmations:** Naming and recognizing the growth and the good we notice in others
- **Apologies:** Extending authentic and helpful apologies for hurtful actions or words by seeing the hurt, naming what caused the hurt, and offering to help the hurt
- **Aha's:** Noticing and naming personal growth and discovery



Example of Celebration Lesson

These lessons are designed to reinforce norms, establishing a rhythm and framework for celebration that creates a strong and healthy community of belonging. The intention behind every other lesson focusing on celebration is to help everyone internalize their own rhythms of celebrating oneself, others, and healthy relationships. As these rhythms become internalized, we naturally begin to actively participate in the formation of healthy and strong communities where everyone can show up, participate as their full selves, and feel that they belong.

Students will be formally introduced to the terms Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's throughout the lessons and will have ample opportunities to practice different aspects of each concept. The use of American Sign Language is introduced with each Affirmation, Apology, and Aha in order to incorporate visual cues to help students remember the difference between these concepts.

**Affirmations:** Affirmations are designed to encourage everyone to notice and name the positive growth in others and their contributions to a healthy community. In the school setting, affirmations are often limited to performance and outcomes such as grades, attendance, or behavior charts and are typically offered only by an adult. The intention here is to empower students to see that they can play a part in noticing and naming the good and growth in those around them. This will help the classroom be a healthy, safe, and strong place where everyone feels like they belong.

The concept of Affirmations is scaffolded in the following ways:

<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>	Build the skill of noticing and naming simple Affirmations for others in the class and school community.
<b>FIRST GRADE</b>	Improve our ability to notice and name specific growth of others from a place of genuine celebration and without jealousy. Skill-building on what to do and say when we receive an Affirmation.
<b>SECOND GRADE</b>	Create opportunities to appreciate and celebrate different aspects of diversity represented in the regulation skills, contributions, individual talents, and abilities represented in the class. Foundation building for deeper levels of relationship, connection, and friendship.

**Apologies:** All of us, students and adults alike, make mistakes in relationships. Learning how to recognize our mistakes and apologize for our own actions and words is a critical life skill. It is needed to strengthen our connections with each other and repair harm others may have experienced from our mistakes. Moments of relationship repair strengthen our community and are worthy of celebrating. When apologies and relationship repair are celebrated equally alongside our personal and collective successes, our community is able to reach a more authentic level of trust, connection, safety, and belonging. Seeing and noticing that someone may have been hurt, naming how our actions or words caused

hurt, and offering to help heal the hurt are the foundation of a helpful apology. The framing of “See the hurt, Name the hurt, Help the hurt” is introduced and practiced throughout the Celebration Lessons to support the skill set of offering helpful apologies.

There are nuances and pitfalls in offering apologies. In our culture, unhelpful apologies can cause further harm by blaming and shaming those involved. Throughout the Celebration Lessons focused on apologies, all are invited, never forced, to use their voice to offer helpful apologies and celebrate relationship repair. Forgiveness may be offered in return, but it is not a requirement. Apologies can be a step toward re-establishing trust, which can be a powerful form of repair for all involved. There may be times when all involved are presented with an opportunity to take responsibility for their own words and actions, and offer repair. Over time, students will learn through modeling and invitation that this time is valuable and can be a brave space to express and receive apologies. With teaching and practice, the hope is to cultivate an environment where it is OK to mess up, acknowledge our mistakes, learn from them, and offer appropriate repair.

**MOMENTS OF  
RELATIONSHIP REPAIR  
STRENGTHEN OUR  
COMMUNITY AND ARE  
WORTHY OF CELEBRATING**

The concept of Apologies is scaffolded in the following ways:

<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>	Teach the difference between a helpful and unhelpful apology. Focus on ‘See the hurt, Help the hurt’ as a foundation for relationship repair. Introduce Apologies as a form of helpful repair and trust building.
<b>FIRST GRADE</b>	Add ‘Name the hurt’ to the helpful apology framework. ‘Naming the hurt’ is an invitation to acknowledge and take responsibility for the hurt that has been caused, building skills around giving and receiving an apology.
<b>SECOND GRADE</b>	Apologizing and acknowledging when we make a mistake reduces shame, builds empathy, and rebuilds trust, allowing for a growth mindset as it relates to relationships. Apologies and forgiveness when practiced are powerful tools for getting unstuck from big emotions such as anger, resentment, guilt, embarrassment, and shame.

**Aha’s:** Aha’s are celebrations of personal growth and discovery. They provide a reflective opportunity to name and celebrate one’s own social, emotional, academic, and relational growth. Aha’s provide an invitation to name and celebrate progress versus outcomes. This is the practice of telling our stories through the lens of Strength and a growth mindset. Celebrating our own growth and developing healthy coping strategies, discovery, and learning normalizes and supports a space of belonging for everyone.

The concept of Aha’s is scaffolded in the following ways:

<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>	Celebration of learning new concrete skills. Reflective practice of identifying and meeting basic needs.
<b>FIRST GRADE</b>	Celebration of learning new skills related to social emotional development. Reflective practice of naming growth and celebrating social and self-awareness. Identifying moments of responsible decision-making.
<b>SECOND GRADE</b>	Adding layers of celebration when we are able to self-regulate and co-regulate. Naming moments of mindfulness, self-awareness, and social awareness. Recognizing, advocating for, and responding to our needs.

# CELEBRATION LESSON RATIONALE

Throughout the year, growth in these Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's will be represented in a Celebrations and Connections Wall Display. Add one chain link to the Celebrations and Connections Wall Display to represent each Affirmation, Apology, or Aha that was shared. You can add these chain links with each Celebration Lesson or collect them and add them to the display during the final Celebration Lesson of each unit. Instructors may choose to make chain link strips available to be added to the wall display at any time during the week.

The continual practice of celebration of self, others, and healthy relationships is a powerful lifelong skill. This strengthens a sense of trust, connection, community and belonging well beyond the classroom, helping to empower a Well World.

