

INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Lesson 1.5 - Continued Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's! Let's Celebrate!

Lesson Spotlight

I can practice building healthy and respectful relationships by learning different ways to celebrate growth.

Materials

- Sources of Strength Wheel, choose one (page 169-171)*
- Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's ASL visual (page 174)*
- Helpful Apologies visual (page 175)*
- Talking Circle Norms anchor chart
- Talking Piece

*All worksheets, handouts, and visuals can be found at sourcesofstrength.org/instructor-resources/

Preparation

- Print a Sources of Strengths Wheel
- Read the Celebration Lesson Rationale (pages 12-13)
- Think of an Aha about yourself or an Affirmation for the class; this will be shared during the Talking Circle

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making

Instructor Overview

This lesson serves as a continuation of the previous Celebration Lesson. Students will review what they've learned about Aha's and Apologies and be introduced to the third celebration type, Helpful Apologies. This celebration is taught through the lens of extending authentic and helpful apologies for hurtful actions or words by seeing someone has been hurt, naming what caused the hurt, and offering to help the hurt. Helpful Apologies are an opportunity for students to continue exploring the concept of healthy and respectful relationships.

The lesson begins with an activity in which students practice showing different emotions on their faces and noticing how others express the same emotion. Students will then engage in a Talking Circle in which the Instructor introduces the idea that we all make mistakes, and Helpful Apologies can be a step to rebuilding respect and trust in relationships.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

We recommend Instructors read the Celebration Lesson Rationale beginning on page 12 before teaching this lesson.

Opening Talking Circle (5 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. "Welcome back to our Sources of Strength time. In our last lesson, we learned about two ways to celebrate ourselves and others. Who remembers what they are and how we show our celebrations with American Sign Language?" Get a few Popcorn Shares.



"Yes, we can celebrate ourselves with an Aha. 🙌🏻👏🏻"



It is important to pause every day and celebrate all the ways we are growing and learning. Something as simple as getting a drink of water when we notice we are thirsty can be a celebration because it is caring for our Physical Health. Noticing when we are experiencing big emotions and what helps us bring those big emotions down to size is a celebration too.

"We can also celebrate other people in a similar way with Affirmations. 🙌🏻👏🏻 When others make healthy and helpful choices, like getting help when they are angry instead of hurting others, or getting a Trusted Adult when someone is hurt, those are celebrations. Celebrating ourselves and others is a daily reminder that we are all important and growing in our own

LESSON 1.5 - CONTINUED AFFIRMATIONS, APOLOGIES, & AHA'S! LET'S CELEBRATE!

ways. Celebrations can also help us build healthy and respectful relationships with ourselves and others.

"At the end of our last lesson, we had a class challenge to notice growth in ourselves and others. 'Something I noticed was _____.'" Share either an Aha  about a way you have grown or an Affirmation  for a way the classroom community has grown.

"Does anyone else have an Affirmation  or Aha  to share about something you noticed since our last lesson?" Get a few Popcorn Shares. If no students respond, let the class know this is an invitation for the challenge of noticing growth to continue.

"Today, we will learn about a third type of celebration, one we can use to rebuild relationships when we make a mistake. We all make mistakes, and sometimes those mistakes hurt others and bring up big emotions for them. When this happens, we can offer a Helpful Apology to the person we've hurt."

Oceans of Emotions Activity (8 min)

"Noticing when our actions or words have hurt someone else is the first part of a Helpful Apology. One way we can do this is by paying attention to our emotions and the emotions of others. Let's explore noticing emotions with a joke."

"What did one ocean say to the other ocean?" Pause for response. "Nothing, they just waved." Wait for the laughter to end.

"Some jokes can be funny and leave people smiling or laughing. It is one way we can see the emotion of happiness or joy. Sometimes, a joke is not funny for everyone. What emotions might we feel if someone shared a hurtful joke?" Get a few Popcorn Shares.

"Yes, we might feel embarrassed, sad, or angry. What are some ways we might notice that someone is angry?" Get a few Popcorn Shares (walk away, cry, show an angry face, etc.).

"Let's think about and show each other how we might show we are sad with our face and body." Model for students, and invite them to do the same.

"Now, let's do an activity called Oceans of Emotions. In a moment, we will all be moving around the classroom like we're in the ocean. You can go in whatever direction you would like, but please move slowly and carefully so everyone stays safe. As you move around in our classroom ocean, I will call out different emotions. Your job is to keep moving around and show that emotion with your face and body. As you show the emotion, notice how others express that same emotion with their faces and bodies."

For each emotion, allow enough time for students to notice the expressions of several other students before moving to the next. As the Instructor, please participate in this activity with the students as you facilitate it.

ADAPTATION

If mobility is a challenge for some students, the class may remain seated for this activity.

"OK, everyone stand up and begin moving around the classroom ocean."

"The first emotion is 'happy.' Show others what the emotion happy looks like for you and notice how others show it." Allow time to notice others.

"Next, show 'frustrated.' Don't forget to notice others." Allow time to notice others.

"Alright, now show 'disappointed.' Remember to notice others." Allow time to notice others.

"Next is 'excited.' Remember to notice others." Allow time to notice others.

"This time, show 'confused.' Notice how others express being confused, too."

Invite students to pause their movement. "I have another joke for you all. After I tell it, express, or show, the emotion you feel. Do you know why you never see elephants hiding in trees?" Pause.

"Because they are really good at it." Wait for the laughter to end.

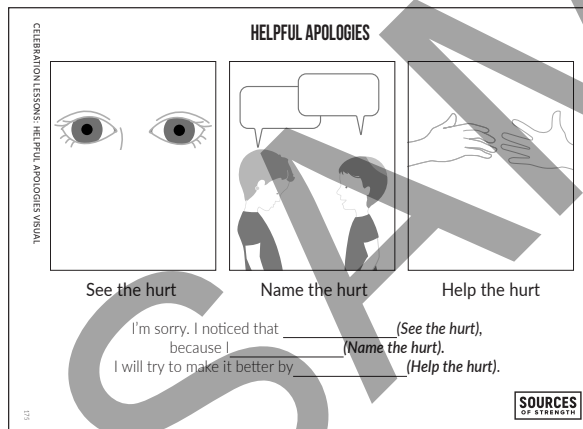
LESSON 1.5 - CONTINUED AFFIRMATIONS, APOLOGIES, & AHA'S! LET'S CELEBRATE!

"Now, after hearing that joke, notice what you feel in your body. Maybe you notice you are smiling. Maybe that wasn't your favorite joke and you notice something different. Now, what emotions do you feel?" Pause "Emotions are a part of being human, and noticing them in ourselves helps us know how we are doing. When we notice emotions in others, it helps us know how they are doing. Now, to help us get ready for the Talking Circle, as you walk back to your spot, breathe slowly and count your steps."


Helpful Apology Talking Circle (10 min)

"Welcome back to our Talking Circle. Let's talk more about Helpful Apologies. We can use Helpful Apologies as a step towards repairing our relationships and rebuilding respect and trust with others. Remember, we all have different Strengths, and each one of us is equally important. We also deserve to be treated well even when we make mistakes or when we disagree with one another. When we offer a Helpful Apology to try to make things better, that is something to celebrate!"

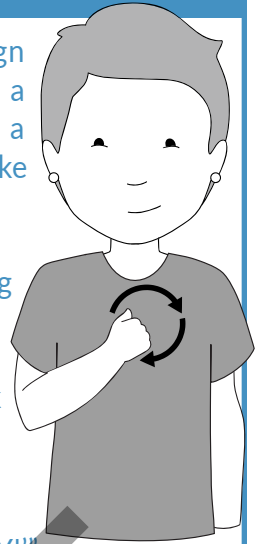
Reference the Helpful Apologies visual.



"A Helpful Apology has three parts: first, we need to See the hurt. This means noticing when we've done or said something that has hurt someone. Next, we Name the hurt. This is taking responsibility for what we did that hurt the other person. Finally, we do our best to Help the hurt. This means saying or doing something to try to make things better. It is a celebration when we are brave enough to take responsibility for our actions and words that hurt someone else, and we try to make things better."

"Let's learn the American Sign Language for 'sorry.' We can make a fist with one hand and move it in a clockwise circle near our heart, like this."  Model.


"I invite you to listen to the following examples. If you think it is a Helpful Apology, you can give a thumbs up or nod your head. If you think it is not a Helpful Apology, give a thumbs down or shake your head."




In a sarcastic tone, say, "I'M SORRY!" 

"Is that a Helpful Apology?" Allow students to respond.


"That's right, that was not a Helpful Apology. It doesn't See the hurt, Name the hurt, or Help the hurt." Reference the Helpful Apologies visual.

"Let's try another example. 'I'm sorry.  You look upset that I didn't include you in our game at recess. You can play with us at our next recess, if you would like to.' Is this an example of a Helpful Apology?" Allow students to respond.

"That's right, this Apology follows all three steps of a Helpful Apology." Reference the Helpful Apologies visual.

"Let's do another. 'I'm sorry  you got hurt. If you were less clumsy, then you wouldn't have fallen down.' Is that an example of a Helpful Apology?" Allow students to respond.

"In this example, the first step of See the hurt was included, but it did not name what caused the hurt or try to help the hurt." Reference the Helpful Apologies visual.

"Last one. 'I'm sorry.  It looks like you are angry. I think what I said about you might have made you angry. I've learned that all people deserve to be treated well, even if we are different or we disagree."




LESSON 1.5 - CONTINUED AFFIRMATIONS, APOLOGIES, & AHA'S! LET'S CELEBRATE!

Next time, I will pause and use kind words.' Is that a Helpful Apology?" Allow students to respond.

"Yes, that is an example of a Helpful Apology." Reference the Helpful Apologies visual.

"We all make mistakes and they are often good opportunities to learn something new. It is also important to know that just because we offer a Helpful Apology, it does not mean those who were hurt will feel better or be ready to accept it, especially right away. It takes time and work to rebuild respect and trust in a relationship. Helpful Apologies can be a first step."

Closing Talking Circle (5-10 min)

"We will have more lessons this year in our Sources of Strength time to learn more about and practice offering Affirmations,  Apologies,  and Aha's.  In our future Celebration Lessons, everyone will have the opportunity to offer an Affirmation, an Apology, or an Aha. You can also celebrate yourself and others during other times of the school day. You don't have to wait for a Celebration Lesson. The more we celebrate ourselves, others, and the work of rebuilding healthy relationships, the stronger our community can be."

If there is enough time, review the Talking Circle norms and pass the Talking Piece around the circle for anyone to share an Affirmation, Apology, or Aha. Instructors and other adults present during the Sources of Strength lessons are encouraged to participate in offering Affirmations, Apologies, and Aha's as well.

"Thank you for sharing your Affirmations,  Apologies,  and Aha's  today."

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Consider finishing the school week with the opportunity for students and adults to sit in a Talking Circle to share Affirmations for one another, share Aha's for the growth they have experienced in themselves, or offer a Helpful Apology.



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 Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

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

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

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/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!



UNIT 5 - GROWING IN OUR STRENGTHS

Lesson 5.3 - Helping Our Bodies and Minds Feel Strong

3RD GRADE

Lesson Spotlight

I can name ways to care for my Physical Health and Mental Health, both daily and in moments of need.

Materials

- Sources of Strength Wheel, choose one (pages 169-171)
- Sticky notes or small pieces of paper, at least two per student, and tape
- Classroom Strengths Wheel, started in Lesson 5.1
- Reverse Charades prompts (See Preparation)

Preparation

- Display the Classroom Strengths Wheel from lessons 5.1 and 5.2
- Create Reverse Charades prompt cards by choosing six to eight prompts from the following list of Physical and Mental Health activities. Write each prompt large enough for students to read them from a distance, create a slideshow with an accompanying image, or ask the guessers to step out of the room and share the prompts verbally with the class.

Reverse Charades Prompts

- Eating an apple
- Brushing your teeth
- Washing your hands
- Talking to the school counselor
- Playing kickball (or other sport/game familiar to students)
- Sleeping
- Going to the doctor
- Giving a hug
- Taking a deep breath
- Hanging out with a friend
- Laughing

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making

*All worksheets, handouts, and visuals can be found at sourcesofstrength.org/instructor-resources/

Instructor Overview

This lesson revisits the Health sections of the Strengths Wheel: Physical Health and Mental Health, encouraging students to reflect on how these Strengths show up in their lives and are protective for them. It also explores how these Strengths cultivate healthy and respectful relationships, by highlighting the importance of helping our bodies and minds feel healthy, asking for what we need, and supporting others in what helps their minds and bodies be strong. Finally, students will explore the importance of noticing and celebrating their own and others' ways of practicing Physical Health and Mental Health, and they will contribute to the Health sections of the Classroom Strengths Wheel.

Reverse Charades (10 min)

For this game, three students will become guessers, and guess the prompts the rest of the class will silently act out. Have the guessers sit in chairs facing the rest of the students. Facilitate the game by sharing prompts so the guessers can't see or hear the prompts being shared. Prompts can be shared via a slideshow (with accompanying images to support reading), written on large cards to be seen/read from a distance, or with the class verbally while the guessers are asked to step out of the room.

The provided prompts will prime the class to think about how Physical Health and Mental Health are connected, as well as the variety of ways to care for both of these Strengths.

You may switch out the guessers after every one or two prompts. Just as in a traditional game of charades, talking is not allowed by those acting out the prompts. There is no need to keep score. If a prompt is too hard and no one is guessing it, move on to the next prompt. Make sure to celebrate each guesser, whether they guessed correctly or not.

UNIT 5 - GROWING IN OUR STRENGTHS

Lesson 5.3 - Helping Our Bodies and Minds Feel Strong

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. “Welcome to our Sources of Strength time! Today, we will start with an energizing activity. This is an acting game called Reverse Charades. In this game, most of us will be silently acting out a variety of activities. Three people will be guessers, who will try to guess the activities the class is acting out. Before we begin, let’s practice our silent acting skills. Silent acting means doing your best not to speak or make any noises that might help the guessers. For example, I might ask you to act out drinking water. Let’s all practice this because we’re all actors in this game. Can I see everyone’s best silent acting of drinking water?” Model this with the students to demonstrate what it could look like—don’t shy away from dramatic and silly exaggerations!

“Great job! Let’s keep up the great acting to help our guessers when the game begins.” If necessary, use another example from the list of prompts to make sure the students understand the game.

When students are ready, ask for three volunteers to be the guessers. Once the guessers and the rest of the class are ready, go through four to six rounds of the Charades prompts.

Once you have gone through four to six prompts, invite students back into a seated circle. “Great work with that game! That kind of game is what we call ‘energizing.’ We got to be goofy, move our bodies around, and work together to reach a goal.

“Let’s check in with how we’re feeling after playing an energizing game. Go ahead and close your eyes if that feels comfortable for you, or let your eyes find a spot on the floor in front of you as we go through the Regulation Railroad. We’ll start by checking in with the Roots of our BrainTrees. What do you notice in your body? Maybe your heart is beating faster than normal after such incredible acting. Maybe you notice some warmth in your cheeks after smiling, laughing, and being goofy. You might be a little bit tired, or maybe your body is excited and ready to do even more! Whatever you notice is OK. Your body is doing a good job giving you information.

“Now, let’s check in with the Trunks of our BrainTrees to identify our emotions. Maybe you feel happy after playing a fun game. Maybe you feel disappointed because you wanted to be the guesser and didn’t have a turn this time. However you are feeling is perfectly OK. Just notice that emotion. How big does it feel? Are you more excited than you’ve ever been in your life? Or maybe your emotion doesn’t feel as strong, and you feel more of a calm happiness, which we might call ‘content.’ Now, let’s do a regulation activity together as a class to prepare our minds and bodies to learn.

“Let’s take a few deep breaths together and pay attention to how that feels in our body. Maybe you notice your belly rising and falling. Maybe you notice the air moving in and out of your nose.” Pause. “Now, I invite you to direct your attention to your feet and wiggle your toes. How do they feel?” Pause. “Next, move your attention to your legs. Do you notice what the floor feels like beneath them? Pause. “What is it like to notice your clothes touching your legs? Now, wiggle your fingers and slowly roll your shoulders. What do you notice? Pause. “Finally, gently move your head from side to side. How does that feel?” Pause.

“When you are ready, open your eyes or look up from the floor and check in with the Roots of your BrainTree again. What do you notice? Is your heartbeat any different? What else do you feel?”

Talking Circle (10 min)

Invite students to sit down in the circle. “Today, we will continue our conversation about our Strengths. The last two Strengths on the Wheel have to do with our health. Our Physical Health is about taking care of our bodies and our Mental Health is about taking care of our minds.” Reference the Sources of Strength Wheel.

“During our charades game, every prompt you acted out was related to different ways we might care for our minds and our bodies. We can think about caring for our minds and bodies in several different ways. First, let’s think about how we care for ourselves when something hurts or feels wrong in our bodies. For instance, if you scrape your knee at recess, what could you do to help it feel better?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (get an ice pack or bandage, tell a Trusted Adult, stop playing, go to the school nurse, etc.).

UNIT 5 - GROWING IN OUR STRENGTHS

Lesson 5.3 - Helping Our Bodies and Minds Feel Strong

“That’s right! There are many ways we can take care of our bodies when they are hurting. This is related to our Physical Health.

“When you scrape your knee you might also feel a big emotion like sadness, fear, or anger and that is related to your Mental Health. What if you’re feeling sad? Can you put a bandage on your brain? No, of course not, but there are still many ways we can get help with our big emotions. What ideas do you have for regulating the emotion of sadness so it doesn’t feel too big or overwhelming?” Get some Popcorn Shares (ask for help from a Trusted Adult, check in on the Regulation Railroad, talk to a Positive Friend or engage with a Healthy Activity, color, play a game you love, go outside, talk to the school counselor, etc.).

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Highlight any school mental health resources for your students here. Be as specific as possible by providing names of staff members and their roles. Also, encourage students to think about regulation strategies you’ve been practicing all year.

“Those are great ideas! If you remember, at the beginning of our Sources of Strengths lessons this year, we all created our own personal Strengths Wheels, just like the Wheel we’re making as a class. All of the Strengths you identified for yourself on your own Wheel can be strategies to try when you need to take care of your Mental Health.

“Those are examples of times when our Mental Health and Physical Health are hurting and might need help right away. But there are also ways we take care of our brains and bodies every day. Raise your hand if you have ever brushed your teeth.” Get a show of hands.

“Brushing our teeth is an example of how we care for our bodies even when they’re not hurt. This keeps our teeth and mouths clean and healthy. What are other ways we can take care of our Physical Health every day?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (showering, flossing, stretching, drinking water, going to the doctor/dentist for check-ups, eating healthy food, sleep, washing our hands, etc.).

“In the same way we can strengthen our Physical Health every day, we can also take care of our Mental Health every day. For example, we might play an instrument because it’s fun or talk to a Positive Friend because they make us laugh. How else can we strengthen our Mental Health every day?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (prompt students to think about their Strengths on the Wheel and how they are helpful. For example, practicing thankfulness, talking to family and friends, being in a place we enjoy, any Healthy Activity, practicing Generosity, etc.).

“These two Strengths on the Wheel, Physical Health and Mental Health, are super connected. Let’s think of an example. When you feel worried, what do you notice in your body?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (happy tears on your face, out of breath, hands on your face, etc.).

“That’s right, we might notice our hands are shaking, or our muscles are tight, or our stomachs hurt. We might also feel our stomachs hurting after laughing really hard. What else have you noticed in your body while laughing really hard?” Get a few Popcorn Shares.

“Noticing what we feel in our bodies and our minds is a great first step to caring for them. We all deserve to feel healthy and strong in our brains and bodies, even though that can look different for each one of us. We’ve been talking all year about building healthy and respectful relationships with ourselves and others. Respecting ourselves can look like figuring out the things that help our bodies and minds feel healthy and strong and then asking for what we need. Respecting others can look like asking and noticing what helps them feel healthy and strong and helping them when we can. Maybe this looks like connecting a friend to their Trusted Adult when you notice they are feeling big emotions or have hurt their body.”

Classroom Strengths Wheel - Health (10 min)

“Today, we are going to finish our Classroom Strengths Wheel. Remember, last time we thought about the activities that help us feel strong, including Healthy Activities, Generosity, and Spirituality.” Reference the Classroom Strengths Wheel. Highlight a few activities that students have added to the Wheel, or if there is time, invite students to share some of the activities that are Strengths for them.

Pass out writing utensils and two sticky notes or pieces of paper per student, leaving extras in the middle of the circle.

“We just shared some of the different ways we can take care of our minds and bodies and thought about how our Physical Health and Mental Health are connected. Now, let’s add some of that to our Classroom Strengths Wheel.”

“On the first piece of paper, draw or write one way you practice taking care of your body. Maybe that looks like drinking water when you’re thirsty or washing your hands when they’re dirty.” Allow students time to fill out the first piece of paper. As the Instructor, you are also encouraged to participate in this activity.

“These look great! Let’s put our first piece of paper down in front of us and move to our second piece now. On this piece of paper, draw or write one way you practice caring for your mind. Maybe that’s laughing with a Positive Friend or talking to a Trusted Adult when your emotions feel big. Maybe it’s taking deep breaths when the Trunk of your BrainTree feels unbalanced.” Allow students time to fill out their second piece of paper. As the Instructor, you are also encouraged to participate in this activity.

“Before we add the ways we care for our minds and bodies to our Classroom Strengths Wheel, let’s take a moment to share what we drew or wrote with a shoulder partner. When I say, ‘GO,’ we will all turn to a partner, and each share what we put on our two pieces of paper. You can also form groups of three and invite others nearby to join if they don’t have a partner.”

“Remember our norm of ‘Share Just Enough’ so everyone has enough time to share. GO!” Please participate in the Pair Share with a student or two next to you.

After all students have shared, invite everyone to add their papers to the appropriate slice of the Classroom Strengths Wheel. Once all students have added their papers, invite the students to gather around the Wheel.

“Let’s hear from a few people about how they practice taking care of their Physical Health.” Invite a few Popcorn Shares.

“Who would like to share a way they care for their Mental Health?” Invite one or two Popcorn Shares.

“I see many examples of our Mental Health Strength that reflect other parts of the Wheel.” Give an example or two of how some of the Mental Health Strengths are connected to other Strengths



EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- Allow students to keep adding how they practice Physical Health and Mental Health to the Classroom Strengths Wheel throughout the week.
- Consider inviting any visitors to the classroom (other teachers, guardians, etc.) to add to the Health sections of the Classroom Strengths Wheel over the next several weeks while it is up.
- Promote hydration throughout the day by allowing students to keep a water bottle on their and/or encouraging them to get drinks of water during bathroom breaks.
- When incorporating stretching exercises as a brain break, celebrate students for taking care of their Physical Health.

Read Alouds

Look for opportunities to connect this lesson’s content to the suggested read aloud books below.

- ***Zombies Don’t Eat Veggies.*** Lacera, M. & Larcera, J. (Illustrator). (2019). New York: Children’s Book Press, an imprint of Lee & Low Books, Inc.
- ***The Water Princess.*** Verde, S. & Reynolds, P. (Illustrator). (2016). New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons.
- ***Morning With Grandpa.*** Liu, S. & Forshay, C. (Illustrator). (2016). New York: Lee & Low Books, Inc.

Academic Integration

- **Physical Education:** Invite the PE teacher to have students reflect on how their minds feel before and after moving their bodies. This will serve as a reminder to students that caring for their Physical Health can have a positive impact on their Mental Health, and vice versa.

UNIT 5 - GROWING IN OUR STRENGTHS

Lesson 5.3 - Helping Our Bodies and Minds Feel Strong

on the Wheel. For example, “I see someone added, ‘Talking to a Positive Friend’ as something that supported their Mental Health,” or “I see someone named a Healthy Activity that could take their mind off stress.”

“Those are great examples of how taking care of our Mental Health is connected to other Strengths on our Wheel. In fact, doing the things we enjoy and reaching out to the people who make us feel strong are ways we can care for our Mental Health every day. In general, when we notice and ask for what our bodies and brains need, whether that’s an ice pack for our knee or a conversation with a Trusted Adult when we’re sad, we are taking care of ourselves and showing ourselves respect. In the same way, when we notice and ask what others may need for their body or their brain, and help connect them to the help they deserve, that’s a way to practice building healthy and respectful relationships with others.”

“Thank you for helping create our Classroom Strengths Wheel! Let’s take a moment to celebrate learning more about each of the eight Strengths.” Lead the class in applause and the ASL sign for applause 🙌🙌🙌 to celebrate the completion of the Classroom Strengths Wheel.

“In our next Sources of Strength lesson, we will look more closely at our Classroom Strengths Wheel and celebrate the ways we’ve grown in our Strengths this year.”

If you have enough wall space, keep the Classroom Strengths Wheel on display for the remainder of the Sources of Strength lessons. Otherwise, store it until the next lesson, ensuring the students’ responses don’t fall off.

Talking Circle Prompts

- ❑ “What is one way you have cared for your Physical Health recently?”
- ❑ “What is one way you have cared for your Mental Health recently?”

Mindfulness

- ❑ Invite students on a mindfulness walk. Encourage them to focus on how their brains and bodies feel during the walk, noticing the wind on their skin, their feet connecting with the ground, or the smells around them.

Music

- ❑ Invite students into dance breaks with a class-generated playlist. Remember to go through the Regulation Railroad when finished, and encourage students to think about how their brains and bodies feel afterwards.

Creative Expression

- ❑ Print an outline of the human body for each student. Encourage them to decorate the page with representations of what makes their minds and bodies feel healthy.

Transitions

- ❑ Invite students to check in on their Physical Health and Mental Health with the use of the Regulation Railroad after recess or PE class and engage in a regulation strategy that can support both Strengths.

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 Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

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

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

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/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!



Lesson Spotlight

I can use the Regulation Railroad to listen to my BrainTree and identify Strengths and strategies for regulating in healthy ways.

Materials

- BrainTree visual (page 172)*
- Regulation Railroad visual (page 177)*
- Regulation Scenarios (page 178)*
- Round and Round the Regulation Railroad worksheet, one per student (page 179)*
- Writing utensils
- Music and speaker
- Clipboards or other hard writing surfaces (optional)

*All worksheets, handouts, and visuals can be found at sourcesofstrength.org/instructor-resources/

Preparation

- Print copies of the Round and Round the Regulation Railroad worksheet
- Print and cut the Regulation Scenarios, one scenario per group of four or five students
- Choose one or two upbeat songs to play for the Dance Leader game

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making

Instructor Overview

This lesson begins with a review of both mirror neurons and the BrainTree, as this information is important to understanding the four stops on the Regulation Railroad. The Regulation Railroad is a tool designed to support the emotional regulation process. The accompanying worksheet has a circular Regulation Railroad to illustrate that regulation strategies may not always work the first time. Different strategies may work better than others depending on the situation or emotions, and repeating the stops of the Regulation Railroad is sometimes necessary to fully regulate. A critical concept within this lesson is help-seeking. Students will learn that if they have used the Regulation Railroad on their own several times, and the strategies have not brought their emotions back down to a manageable size, it is a time to ask for help from others to regulate.

Working in groups, students will discuss scenarios in which the Regulation Railroad could be helpful and complete their own Round and Round the Regulation Railroad worksheet. The lesson concludes with an energizing game and the opportunity for students to select a regulation strategy for the class.

As with all the skills in Sources of Strength, it is important to practice emotional regulation strategies outside of the lesson itself. Staff are highly encouraged to lead the class through the Regulation Railroad several times a day, followed by a regulation activity. This can be done with the railroad visual, worksheet, or simply aloud. This continued practice outside of the lessons will support the development and reinforcement of neural pathways for this skill, making it more accessible in times of higher stress.

Opening Talking Circle (7 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. **“Welcome to our Sources of Strength time. In our last unit, we learned about our BrainTrees and an amazing part of our brains called mirror neurons. As a reminder, our mirror neurons reflect back to us the actions and emotions we see or hear in other people.**

“Let’s do a quick activity to activate our mirror neurons. All you need to do is copy my actions.” Model raising your left arm, then your right arm, then sticking out your

tongue as students mirror your actions. **“Great job!”**

“Did you know even babies have mirror neurons? We have them the moment we are born, which is why babies will often mirror someone sticking out their tongue. Babies use their mirror neurons to learn about the world and emotions by observing and copying the people around them. This is a skill we all use, even as we get older, to understand others and learn new things.

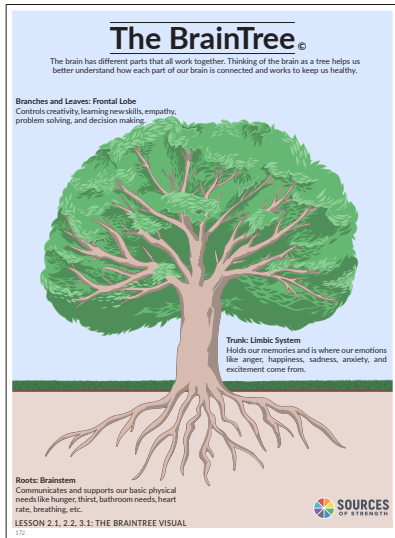
“We’ve also been learning about our BrainTrees. Who remembers the three different parts of the BrainTree?”

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.1 - Round and Round the Regulation Railroad

Get a few Popcorn Shares (Roots/brainstem, Trunk/limbic system, Branches and Leaves/frontal lobe). **“Good job remembering each of those parts.”**

Reference the BrainTree visual, as needed, while reviewing the parts of the BrainTree.



“Each part of our BrainTree has a specific job and communicates to us in its own way. Our brainstems, which are represented by the Roots of our BrainTrees, take care of the basic things we need and communicate to us through physical sensations, like when we notice our eyelids are heavy because we’re tired. This part of our BrainTree also controls many important things we don’t often think about, like blinking, breathing, and keeping our heart beating.

“Next is our limbic system. It is represented by the Trunk of our BrainTree. This part of our brain communicates to us through our emotions and memories. What are some different emotions that we can feel?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (excited, sad, worried, happy, frustrated, etc.).

“That’s right. We can also feel our emotions at different levels, like if we move from feeling annoyed to frustrated to angry about a constant sound that is bothering us.” Model expanding your hands out after naming each emotion to demonstrate the growing intensity of the emotion.

“Another example could be feeling content, happy, or ecstatic.” Use your face and voice to model increased intensity as you say each emotion.

“This is true for all of our emotions. They can feel small at times, and at other times, they might feel bigger.

“We can also recognize the emotions of others with the help of our mirror neurons. Our mirror neurons allow us to feel a bit of the emotions we notice in others. It is an amazing way that humans can connect to each other.

“Finally, our frontal lobe is represented by the Branches and Leaves of our BrainTree. This part of our brain helps us make decisions, solve problems, be creative, and learn.

“Let’s use our frontal lobes right now to imagine it just rained. You might feel delighted by that because you love rain. Maybe you are annoyed by the rain because it keeps you from going outside to play. Now, let’s imagine the rain has stopped, and as we head outside, we find a giant puddle blocking our way! Our frontal lobes can help us decide what to do. Here are three choices: we could go back inside, we could walk around the puddle, or we could splash through the puddle.

“Who would go back inside?” Get a show of hands.

“Who would do anything to avoid the puddle and walk around it or jump over it?” Get a show of hands.

“And who would choose to splash and play in the puddle?” Get a show of hands.

“You all just used your frontal lobes to imagine a scenario and decide what you would do. Today, we will use what we know about the brain to practice regulating ourselves. The word ‘regulation’ means not too much and not too little of something. Remember when we talked about lopsided BrainTrees? Something our Roots might tell us is that we are thirsty. Has anyone ever felt thirsty?” Get a show of hands.

“That’s an example of drinking too little water. If we are really thirsty, the Roots of our BrainTree will become lopsided. We can also have too much water which can make our BrainTree lopsided. Did anyone ever drink so much water that your stomach hurt afterward?” Get a show of hands. “If we are not thirsty and our stomach doesn’t hurt, the amount of water in our bodies is regulated.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.1 - Round and Round the Regulation Railroad

"We can regulate our emotions as well. Our emotions help us to know how we are doing, so paying attention to them is important. Regulating our emotions to a size that is not too much and not too little is important for finding balance. At times, all people can feel out of balance. Too much emotion can feel overwhelming and make it difficult to respond to what is happening. Too little emotion can feel like we aren't engaged, even in things we care about.

"Let's imagine we have an audition or a tryout for something we care a lot about, like a big part in a play, a solo in a singing group, or making a sports team. If we have too much emotion, such as excitement or worry, we might get stuck in our Trunks and be unable to access the rest of our BrainTree. This could look like freezing or wanting to hide and having a hard time remembering the skills we want to show. If we have too little emotion or don't pay attention to our Trunks, we might forget to practice or try as hard as we want to. Remember, emotions are neither good nor bad. We have them to help us understand how we are doing. When we regulate our emotions, we're not getting rid of them completely; we are bringing them to a size that allows us to still access our Roots and Branches and Leaves."

Reference the Regulation Railroad visual.



"Here is a tool to help us regulate our emotions when the Trunk of our BrainTree feels out of balance. It's called The Regulation Railroad. Stop 1 starts with what the Roots of our BrainTree are telling us by asking, 'What do I notice in my body?' This could be tight muscles, a

faster heart rate, or other physical sensations we notice in our bodies." Reference Stop 1.

"Stops 2 and 3 help us to pause and think about what our Trunk is communicating by asking, 'What emotion do I feel?' and, 'How big is the emotion?'" Reference Stops 2 and 3.

"At Stop 4, we will use the information from Stops 1 through 3 and the Branches and Leaves of our BrainTrees to make a decision by asking, 'What will I do to regulate?'" Reference Stop 4.

"Sometimes, even after Stop 4, the Trunks of our BrainTree might communicate that the regulation strategy didn't quite bring our big emotion back down to size yet. That's OK; it happens to all of us! It is one way we learn which regulation strategies work for us in different situations and with different emotions. Our worksheet today shows the Regulation Railroad in a circle." Hold up the Round and Round the Regulation Railroad worksheet.

"This image can help remind us that we can always go back through the Regulation Railroad Stops and try regulating again. If we go through the Regulation Railroad several times and our emotions still feel too big, that is a sign we should ask for help from a Trusted Adult."

Round and Round the Regulation Railroad Activity (15 min)

"We're going to transition to an activity. We will imagine ourselves in a scenario where we might need to regulate our emotions, then we will use the Regulation Railroad to bring those emotions back down to size. In a moment, we will divide up into small groups, and each group will get a different scenario to think about and discuss."

Divide the class into randomized groups of four or five students. Random groups allow students to interact with classmates they may not typically work with. Hand out one regulation scenario slip to each group. Provide support to the groups if they need assistance understanding their scenario. Six different scenarios are provided. Depending on class size, some groups may receive the same scenario.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.1 - Round and Round the Regulation Railroad

REGULATION SCENARIOS
Print and cut along the dashed lines. Give one scenario to each group.

SCENARIO 1
You planted some flowers, and the next day you notice they have been stepped on.

SCENARIO 2
Your teacher came into the classroom riding a horse.

SCENARIO 3
When you arrived at school, you realized you forgot to bring your class project that is due that day.

SCENARIO 4
Your teacher just gave a lot of directions for a project, and you can't remember all the steps.

SCENARIO 5
The class is going on a field trip to the moon.

SCENARIO 6
You see a good friend after not seeing them for a whole year.

LESSON 3.1: REGULATION SCENARIOS
170

SOURCES OF STRENGTH

ROUND & ROUND THE REGULATION RAILROAD
LESSON 3.1: ROUND AND ROUND THE REGULATION RAILROAD WORKSHEET

Name: _____

What do I notice in my body?

What emotion do I feel? Write or circle below.

Disgusted 😞 Nervous 😟 Confused 😵
Scared 😨 Silly 😜 Excited 😄
Shocked 😱 Angry 😡
Surprised 😲 Sad 😞 Happy 😊
Furious 😡 Hurt 😞 Frustrated 😡
Disappointed 😞

How big is the emotion? 1 2 3 4 5

What will I do to regulate myself?

DID IT HELP? YES NO

171

- Scenario 1:** You planted some flowers, and the next day you notice they have been stepped on.
- Scenario 2:** Your teacher came into the classroom riding a horse.
- Scenario 3:** When you arrived at school, you realized you forgot to bring your class project that is due that day.
- Scenario 4:** Your teacher just gave a lot of directions for a project, and you can't remember all the steps.
- Scenario 5:** The class is going on a field trip to the moon.
- Scenario 6:** You see a good friend after not seeing them for a whole year.

"In your groups, read your scenario out loud together, then think about and discuss how you might feel in that scenario." Give students time to read their scenarios and support groups as needed.

"In a moment, you will each receive a worksheet with the circular Regulation Railroad on it. We will travel through each stop together as you complete your own worksheet based on your reaction to your group's scenario."

Pass out the Round and Round the Regulation Railroad worksheets and writing utensils.

"You will work by yourself as we go through each stop of the Regulation Railroad and then have the opportunity to share it with the others in your group."

"Starting at Stop 1, think about your group's scenario and color in any part of the body where you might notice a change or feel something in your body. Based on your scenario, maybe you'd notice a frown on your face or tears running down your cheeks. Your scenario might make you think you'd notice extra energy in your legs, like wanting to jump up and down. It's also OK if you're not sure what you would notice or if you might notice nothing at all." Pause for students to read and fill in Stop 1.

"Now, show your group how you colored the figure at Stop 1. Notice how others have shown what their Roots are telling them. How is that similar or different from yours? Remember, even if we're in the same exact situation, our Roots might respond differently because we are all unique." Give students a moment to share within their groups.

"Let's move on to Stops 2 and 3. At Stop 2, you can write an emotion on the line describing how you would feel in your group's scenario, or you can circle one of the emotion words or emojis in the box. If you see an emotion that you don't know, please ask me for help." Give students time to complete Stop 2.

"At Stop 3, color in the circle that shows how big you think that emotion might feel for you on a scale of 1 to 5." Give students time to complete Stop 3.

"Remember, each person might feel different even when we are in the same situation. We can be curious and

notice how each classmate might be similar or different from us; there is no right or wrong answer. The ways we are each unique make our classroom a more interesting community. Let's take a couple of minutes to share in our groups how we completed Stops 2 and 3, keeping our Talking Circle norms in mind." Reference your class Talking Circle norms poster or review them aloud with the class, and give students time to share within their groups.

"Before we complete Stop 4, discuss with your group some Strengths or strategies you might use to regulate your emotions and bring them back down to a 'just right' size. Don't write anything on your papers yet.

"A few examples of regulation strategies are using a Strength from the Sources of Strength Wheel, asking for support, taking a walk, practicing thankfulness, coloring, writing in a journal, using a fidget, taking some deep breaths, reading a book, or maybe you have a different idea." Give groups a few moments to discuss, offering support if it seems like groups are struggling to come up with healthy regulation strategies.

"I heard some great regulation strategy ideas shared! Now each of you can decide what Strength or strategy you would use to regulate in this scenario and write or draw it in the box at Stop 4 of your worksheet. It could be a strategy you talked about as a group or one you came up with yourself." Give students a few minutes to fill out their worksheet. When students finish, invite them back to the Talking Circle.

"You all did a great job using your frontal lobes, or your Branches and Leaves, to think of a regulation strategy that could work for you in your specific scenario. After Stop 4, it is helpful to ask ourselves if the regulation strategy helped." Reference the "Did it help?" question on the worksheet.

"Often, the answer will be 'Yes, it worked,' and we can continue our day with a balanced BrainTree. Other times, we may find that our emotions still feel out of balance, which is also OK. It means we would answer the question 'Not yet,' and go through the Regulation Railroad again. We might try the same strategy or try something new.

"For example, imagine you were feeling big emotions and decided to regulate by eating as much candy as possible, as fast as possible. When you ask yourself, 'Did it help?' you might realize not only does your stomach hurt, but your emotions also still feel really big. This is an example of when it might be helpful to go back through the Regulation Railroad again. This time, maybe you would try a



EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- ☐ When inviting the class or a student to check in on the Regulation Railroad, pause after Stop 4 and ask, "Did it help?" Remind students we can always go through the Regulation Railroad again.

Read Alouds

Look for opportunities to connect this lesson's content to the suggested read aloud books below.

- ☐ **Ruby's Worry.** Percival, T. (2018). Australia: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- ☐ **The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story.** Bruchac, J. & Vojtech, A. (Illustrator). (1998). New York: Puffin Books.
- ☐ **The Tale of Despereaux.** DiCamillo, K. & Ering, T. (Illustrator). (2006). Massachusetts: Candlewick Press.

Home Connection

- ☐ Invite students to share the Regulation Railroad with family members and practice using it together at different times. For example, when leaving to go to school, coming home from school, after playing outside, before bedtime, etc.

Academic Integration

- ☐ Support students in identifying which parts of school may bring up big emotions for them. Examples may include getting a low grade, speaking in front of the class, taking a test, or participating out loud in class. Remind students these are all times when using the Regulation Railroad can be helpful.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.1 - Round and Round the Regulation Railroad

different strategy, like talking to a Positive Friend or Mentor or writing down three things you are thankful for.

“If we go through the Regulation Railroad two or three times and our emotions still feel too big, that is a good time to ask for help. Sometimes, a strategy that usually helps us isn’t possible in the moment. For example, maybe playing video games is a helpful regulation strategy for us. But if we are feeling big emotions during school, we will probably need to think of something different that could help in this setting. It is important to have several different strategies for different situations and different emotions.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

We highly recommend creating a safe space in the classroom that students can access when they are experiencing big emotions. This Regulation Station can include a variety of items, such as:

- Sources of Strength Wheel
- Breathing activities
- Coloring activities
- Stress ball
- Glitter jar
- Mindfulness prompts
- Thankfulness prompts
- Mindfulness activities
- Music with headphones
- Round and Round the Regulation Railroad worksheets
- Art and journaling supplies
- A pass to see the counselor

Have a discussion with colleagues about other possible activities or items to include in your classroom Regulation Station. Involve students in the creation of your Regulation Station as well, and continue to add resources throughout the year.*

**When students access the Regulation Station, the Instructor and/or the classroom teacher are encouraged to check in with them as these are excellent opportunities for connection and co-regulation. For more information, see the Emotional Regulation Rationale on page 53.*

Dance Leader Game (8 min)

“We have been sitting for a while, so let’s stand for a game called Dance Leader. I’ll play some dance music, and there will be one Dance Leader at a time who will lead us in a simple dance move. The rest of us will use our mirror neurons to copy the Dance Leader’s moves. About every ten seconds, I will say ‘Switch!’ and the next person in the circle will have the chance to be the Dance Leader. Just like in the Talking Circle, you can pass when it is your turn to lead. Let’s dance!” Choose a student you feel would be silly, comfortable, and confident being the first Dance Leader, or begin

Talking Circle Prompts

- ❑ “What is a new regulation strategy you’ve tried recently? Did it help the first time, or did you need to repeat it?” Invite students to simply share their strategy, not the reason for needing it.

Music

- ❑ As a way to introduce how music can help us regulate, play music of your choice and invite students to draw or doodle along with the music.

Creative Expression

- ❑ Allow students to choose an emotion familiar to them and create something that represents that emotion through their choice of creative expression, such as with art, poetry, music, or dance.

Transitions

- ❑ Invite students to develop a regulation activity for each transition in your day. Write it down next to your daily schedule and practice.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.1 - Round and Round the Regulation Railroad

as the first leader yourself. Start the music and switch to the next person in the circle about every ten seconds.

“Nice dancing! We each used our mirror neurons to learn some new moves. Now, let’s practice a regulation strategy together. After playing a silly game like that, it’s helpful to check in on the Regulation Railroad to see how we feel.

“We’ll start at Stop 1 and ask, ‘What do you notice in your body?’ Maybe you notice you are breathing faster, or you feel energy in your arms or legs after all that dancing. You might notice your cheeks are warm from smiling.” Pause.

“Stop 2 asks, ‘What emotion do you feel?’ Some emotions we might feel are excited, happy, nervous, joyful, or amused.” Pause.

“Stop 3 asks, ‘How big is the emotion on a scale of 1 to 5?’” Pause.

“Finally, let’s do Stop 4 out loud together. It is important to think of a regulation strategy that will work here in the classroom. For example, we might not be able to go

on a quiet walk through nature right now, but we could take a walk around the classroom. Would someone like to offer one of the strategies you thought about and discussed in your groups earlier that we all could try now here in the classroom?” Get a few Popcorn Shares.

If students offer suggestions that are difficult to implement in the classroom, consider how they could be adapted, or encourage students to think of a new strategy that will work in the classroom. Invite students who offered suggestions to lead the class through the regulation strategy. If no students offer a healthy regulation strategy, you may offer one such as a Body Scan, Relax and Release, or another strategy from the Regulation Strategies Appendix on page 212.

“When we practice regulation strategies together, we are using our mirror neurons to co-regulate. It is one of the best ways to learn how to regulate ourselves, and we will continue to learn about it during our next Sources of Strength time. Thanks for a great lesson today!”

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 Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

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

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

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/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!



UNIT 1 - INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Lesson 1.1 - Connecting Through Strengths

5TH GRADE

Lesson Spotlight

I can begin to identify my Sources of Strength and connect with others.

Materials

- Connecting Through Strengths Bingo card, one per student and Instructor (page 177)*
- Writing utensils, one per student and Instructor
- Timer
- Poster paper and marker
- Talking Piece (see Instructor Overview for more information)
- Clipboards or other hard writing surface (optional)

*All worksheets, handouts, and visuals can be found at sourcesofstrength.org/instructor-resources/

Preparation

- Print copies of Connecting Through Strengths Bingo cards
- Label the poster paper “Talking Circle Norms”

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills

Instructor Overview

Sources of Strength is excited to partner with your class this year as you and your students connect, grow, play, learn about Strengths, and create a community of belonging. This first lesson invites students to reflect on the people, places, activities, and things that bring them Strength. Students will play an interactive game of bingo, connecting with one another through Strength-based, getting-to-know-you prompts.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Please familiarize yourself with the rationales and definitions for Talking Circles and Talking Circle Norms. For a deeper explanation of terms and concepts, please see the [Introduction to the Elementary Curriculum](#) on pages 5-8.

The lesson concludes with a discussion about norms to use during Sources of Strength lessons, including during Full Talking Circle Shares, to help promote inclusivity, equity, and centering students' voices. The Instructor will guide students in establishing several foundational Talking Circle norms, and students will have the opportunity to create any additional norms they believe can support a space where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued.

Opening Talking Circle (10 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive.

“Welcome to our first Sources of Strength lesson! Sources of Strength helps us discover and grow our Strengths and find new ways to develop resilience, which is our ability to navigate life’s ups and downs. During these lessons, we’ll work together to create a strong, healthy community of belonging by sharing, connecting, celebrating, reflecting, laughing, and having fun together. I’m excited to begin this journey together as a class!”

“We’re going to play a game of bingo today to help us connect with one another and explore different Strengths in our lives. To help us, we’ll use these Connecting Through Strengths Bingo cards.” Pass out the Connecting Through Strengths Bingo cards and writing utensils. Hold up your card for reference as you give directions.

CONNECTING THROUGH STRENGTHS BINGO

Find someone who can answer yes to a prompt, ask them how to spell their name, and write their name in the blank space. Try to fill each space with the name of a different classmate.

B	I	N	G	O
Find someone who plays an instrument	Find someone who has a pet that is NOT a dog	Find someone who has the same number of siblings as you	ME SQUARE! What is one thing you feel thankful for today?	Find someone who likes to cook or bake
ME SQUARE! What is an activity you enjoy doing?	Find someone who has the same favorite color as you	Find someone who likes funny movies	Find someone who has a pet dog	Find someone who enjoys doing arts and crafts
Find someone who likes warm weather better than cold weather	Find someone who likes being barefoot outside	ME SQUARE! Who is one person who makes you happy?	Find someone who enjoys playing indoor games (video games, board games, puzzles, etc.)	Find someone who has a different favorite subject at school than you
Find someone who enjoys helping others	Find someone who enjoys playing sports	Find someone who likes action movies	Find someone who has a different favorite color than you	ME SQUARE! Where is one place that makes you feel calm?
Find someone who enjoys reading	ME SQUARE! What is one thing that lifts your mood?	Find someone who likes spicy food	Find someone who likes cold weather better than warm weather	Find someone who likes to sing

LESSON 1.1: CONNECTING THROUGH STRENGTHS BINGO CARD

SOURCES OF STRENGTH 177

UNIT 1 - INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Lesson 1.1 - Connecting Through Strengths

"The goal is to fill out as many squares on the card as possible. Most of the squares require us to talk to other people, so when the game starts we will all move safely around the room and ask each other questions to complete the squares. There are a lot of squares to complete, so before we begin the game, let's give ourselves a headstart.

"You'll see five shaded 'Me Square!' spaces on your bingo cards." Point these out for students.

"We'll start by answering these five questions for ourselves. Then, we'll have one square completed in each row and column before learning about others in the class.

"Let's start with the Me Square in the top row. This prompt asks us about something we feel thankful for today. This could be something big or small. It could be a person, place, activity, or thing that is lifting your spirit today. Go ahead and write down one thing you are feeling thankful for today in that square." Give students a few moments to write. Be sure to participate on your own bingo card alongside the students.

"Great! Would anyone like to share what they are feeling thankful for?" As the Instructor, you can get the ball rolling by sharing what you are thankful for, then take a few Popcorn Shares.

"Thank you for sharing! During our Sources of Strength time, we'll be sharing with each other often, so it's great to get that started. The Me Square in the second row asks us about an activity we enjoy doing. This could be something we enjoy doing at school or out of school, with others or by ourselves. Go ahead and write down one activity you enjoy doing." Give students a few moments to write. Be sure to add an activity that you enjoy doing to your bingo card, too.

"Let's do a Pair Share this time. I invite you to turn to a shoulder partner and share about the activity you named. Ready? GO!" Ensure all students have a partner (groups of three are OK), and join a student or two seated next to you. After a few moments, invite students to turn back to the full circle.

"Thanks for sharing with each other! Now, let's fill out the next Me Square in the middle of our cards. This square asks us to name one person who makes us happy. Maybe this is someone who supports you or makes you laugh, or someone you simply enjoy spending time with. Take a few moments to write down the name of the person who is coming to mind." Give yourself and the students a few moments to complete the square.

"This time, instead of sharing out loud, let's all take a moment to picture this person in our minds. Maybe you imagine hugging them, calling them on the phone, or doing an activity with them. I invite you to imagine telling this person that you appreciate them." Pause.

"Let's move to the next Me Square on our cards, in the fourth row. This one asks about a place we go that makes us feel calm. This could be somewhere outdoors, like in a park, by the water, or sitting next to a specific tree you love. It could also be somewhere indoors, like in your bedroom or the library. Let's all fill in this square." Allow time for yourself and the students to complete this square.

"Let's turn to another shoulder partner and tell them about the place we named where we feel calm." Ensure everyone has a partner or two. Be sure to partner with a student or two for this Pair Share. After a few moments, invite students to turn back to the full circle.

"That leaves one final Me Square. We all have hard days or feel down from time to time, and that's totally normal. This last Me Square asks us about one thing that helps lift our mood when we're feeling down. This might be an activity you enjoy, a certain type of weather, the kind of music you love, a person you like to talk to, or something else. Choose something that helps lift your mood, and write it in the last Me Square." Give yourself and the students a few moments to write your responses in the square.

"Let's hear from a few people. Who would like to share what they wrote?" Get a few Popcorn Shares. You are encouraged to share what lifts your mood, too.

"Great work everyone! Whenever we take time to think about the people, places, activities, and things that bring us joy, lift us up, or make us feel connected, it

UNIT 1 - INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Lesson 1.1 - Connecting Through Strengths

can remind us that we all have Sources of Strength in our lives. We can find Strength in many different places, including from the people who support us, the activities that lift our mood, the practices that help us live our healthiest lives, the places where we feel happy, and so much more.

“We’ll spend a lot of time during these lessons talking about our Strengths, and we’ll play games during several lessons. So now, let’s start our bingo game!”

Connecting Through Strengths Bingo (15 min)

ACCOMMODATION

This game requires the ability to read and communicate about the prompts on the bingo cards. For students who may find this challenging, such as English language learners, provide support in determining how they can participate in an inclusive way. For example, consider pairing them with a partner, inviting the whole class to play in pairs, or reviewing the questions with them ahead of time.

“Here are the rules for Connecting Through Strengths Bingo. To complete a square, you must find someone who can answer yes to the prompt in the box. For example, this first square says, ‘Find someone who plays an instrument.’” Reference the top left square.

“As I move around the room, I might ask someone, ‘Do you play an instrument?’ If they say yes, I will ask them how to spell their name, then write their name in the box to complete the square. If they say no, I can ask them another question from the card.”

ADAPTATION

As scripted, the rules specify students should not write someone’s name in multiple squares. This is to encourage students to connect with as many classmates as possible. However, Instructors with smaller class sizes may want to consider changing that rule. In smaller class sizes, consider making a rule that students must talk to a specific number of different people before returning to someone they already named.

“Remember, everyone else is also trying to complete their squares, so when you ask someone a question, make sure they have time to ask you a question in return. Because this game is about getting to know everyone, each person can only be your answer to one square on your card. Once you write someone’s name down in one box, and they write your name down in one box, you would both move on to talk to someone else.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

For this game, students should complete as many boxes on their bingo cards as possible. You can modify the directions so students can try to complete a simple five-in-a-row bingo (horizontally, vertically, and/or diagonally) instead.

“In a moment, I’ll set a timer for five minutes. The goal of this game is to get as many squares filled out as possible in that time.” When students are ready, start the timer and invite them to begin. Play alongside the class and support students in finding partners, as needed. When the time is up, invite students to return to the Talking Circle and bring their bingo cards with them.

“Thank you for playing Connecting Through Strengths Bingo! Let’s take a few big breaths in and out to ground ourselves after that energizing game. Breathe in slowly through your nose.” Model for the students.

“And let it out slowly through your mouth.” Model, and repeat a few times.

“Great work! Who found someone who has the same number of siblings as you?” Get a show of hands, and call on one or two students to share how many siblings they have and whose name they wrote in that square.

“Did anyone find someone who has a pet that is not a dog?” Get a show of hands.

“Would anyone who has a pet that is not a dog like to share what kind of pet they have?” Get a Popcorn Share.

“Did anyone write down a classmate’s name for the square that says ‘Find someone who enjoys helping others?’” Get a show of hands.

UNIT 1 - INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Lesson 1.1 - Connecting Through Strengths

"Would anyone like to share one thing they enjoy doing to help others?" Get one or two Popcorn Shares.

"Thank you for sharing! During our Sources of Strength time this year, we'll continue getting to know each other and sharing about the people, places, activities, and things that bring us Strength."

Talking Circle Norms Introduction (10 min)

"We had a few chances to share already today, and we'll spend a lot of time in upcoming lessons sharing about our Strengths. One way we'll do this is in a Talking Circle. Sitting in a circle like this, where we can see and hear from everyone, reminds us that each voice is important and we all have meaningful things to share that can help others."

"Let's spend some time thinking about what we can do in the Talking Circle to help create a space where everyone feels seen, heard, and like we all belong. To do this, we're going to create some norms together. Norms are routines and practices that we all agree on that help us know what to do and how to act in our Talking Circle. Norms help us understand what to expect and make sure everyone has an opportunity to get what they need."

"As we decide on Talking Circle norms together today, we'll add them to this poster." Reference the poster paper labeled "Talking Circle Norms."

"Let's think about different moments we shared with others in this lesson. We did some Popcorn Shares as a larger group, had some Pair Shares with another person or two, and had many conversations when we were playing Connecting Through Strengths Bingo."

"When you share with someone else, what do others do to let you know they are listening to you?" Get a few Popcorn Shares (I'm not interrupted, I see them nodding, I feel like others care about what I'm saying, etc.).

"Yeah, it's nice when people pay attention and listen to us when we share. During Full Circle Shares, we will pass this Talking Piece around the circle." Hold up the Talking Piece so students know what will be used.

"The person holding the Talking Piece is the person who will share while the rest of us listen. If you would like to participate in a Talking Circle where we share when it's our turn and we each practice listening when others are sharing, give a thumbs up." Pause for students to give a thumbs up, then write a version of



EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- ❑ Consider printing Connecting Through Strengths Bingo cards and encouraging students to use them to continue to get to know each other, students in other classes, as well as teachers and other staff members.
- ❑ Highlight when you notice students following the Talking Circle norms throughout the day, even outside of Sources of Strength lessons.
- ❑ When students share about their lives, name anything you see showing up as a possible Strength for them.

Read Alouds

Look for opportunities to connect this lesson's content to the suggested read aloud books below.

- ❑ ***Millie Fleur's Poison Garden***. Mandin, C. (2024). New York: Cartwheel Books.
- ❑ ***Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You***. Sotomayor, S. & López, R. (Illustrator). (2019). New York: Philomel Books.

Home Connection

- ❑ Invite students to take their completed Connecting Through Strengths Bingo Cards home and encourage them to share about who they met and what they learned. The prompts can also facilitate discussions of Strengths in students' homes.

Academic Integration

- ❑ **Language Arts:** Keep a copy of a Connecting Through Strengths Bingo card nearby, and write down characters' names from the books students read in any squares describing those characters.

UNIT 1 - INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Lesson 1.1 - Connecting Through Strengths

these two norms on the Talking Circle Norms poster (e.g., Share when it's your turn, Listen when others are sharing).

"In our Sources of Strength time, it's important that we can all choose when we want our voices to be heard. If we choose not to share, we can say, 'Pass,' and hand the Talking Piece to the next person in the circle. If you would like to participate in a Talking Circle where it is OK to pass when it is your turn to share, give a thumbs up." Pause for students to give a thumbs up, then write a version of this norm on your Talking Circle Norms poster (e.g. Pass if you're not ready).

"Everyone in this classroom is important, and we want everyone to have the opportunity to share if they want to. If you would like to participate in Talking Circles where everyone has time to share, give a thumbs up." Pause for students to give a thumbs up. "Let's call this norm, 'Share just enough.'" Write this norm on your Talking Circle Norms poster.

"These norms will take practice, and that's OK. Now that we've had the chance to share and listen to others, are there any other norms we might add that would help us feel comfortable, heard, and seen during our Sources of Strength time?" It's OK if no additional norms are added at this point. You may revisit the prompt for new norms in the next few lessons as students become more familiar with the Talking Circle.

Please use the following guidelines in creating any new norms:

- Make sure to get the input of as many students as possible when an additional norm is proposed.
- Remember to phrase the norm as a positive action statement (e.g. "Treat others with kindness," rather than "Don't be mean").
- Aim to be concise. The final list, including those already agreed upon in this lesson, should include no more than five or six norms. If students continue to have ideas, consider how those may or may not fit into already existing norms.

Display the norms for easy reference and review them as needed in future Sources of Strength lessons.

"Thank you for helping create our class Talking Circle norms. We'll continue to use these norms in our Sources of Strength lessons the rest of the year."

Talking Circle Prompts

- ❑ "What is an activity or hobby that brings you joy?"
- ❑ "What do others do that make you feel like you belong?"
- ❑ "What is a way you like to connect with others?" (Talking, playing games, watching movies, playing sports or instruments together, etc.)
- ❑ "What is something you've learned by listening to someone else's experience?"

Mindfulness

This lesson includes a scripted imagination exercise for students to reflect on a person who makes them happy. Invite students into similar practices for the other free spaces on their Connecting Through Strengths Bingo cards. Scripted examples are below:

- ❑ "What is an activity you enjoy doing?"
"Take a moment and picture yourself doing this activity." Pause.
"How does your body feel when you do this activity? Do you feel energized? Calm?" Pause.
"What emotions do you feel when you are doing this activity?" Pause.
- ❑ "Where is one place that makes you feel calm?"
"Take a moment and picture yourself in this place." Pause.
"Are you indoors or outdoors?" Pause.
"Are you alone or with other people?" Pause.
"What does being in a calming place feel like in your body?" Pause.
"What can you see in this place?" Pause.
"Are there any sounds you associate with this place?" Pause.

Music

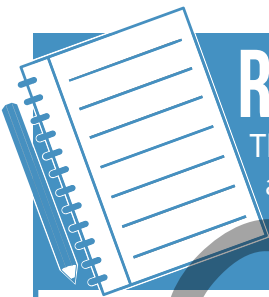
- Create a class playlist of music that brings students joy. Play one song daily or weekly, and invite students to draw what comes to mind as they listen. Highlight for students that music can be a strength in their lives and bring happiness and joy.

Creative Expression

- Invite students to choose one of the Me Square prompts from the Connecting Through Strengths Bingo cards and express their feelings about that person, place, activity, or thing in a creative way. For example, students may choose to draw, paint, make music, choreograph a dance, etc.

Transitions

- Invite students to reflect on the beginning of the school year (or a recent transition) and think about and share the people or activities that helped them through that transition.



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 Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

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

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

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/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!

