

## Community Circle

**Purpose - to encourage good listening skills and empathy.**

Before beginning this activity, choose a “talking piece” – this is an object that will be passed around the group, and signals that the holder has exclusive speaking rights. You can use a stuffed animal, a small beach ball, or any object with special significance to the classroom that is easy to hold and pass around.

Arrange the chairs in a circle or sit on the floor with the whole class.

Tell your students that in the Community Circle, only one person may talk at a time and everyone must listen quietly and respectfully to whoever is speaking. Show the class the talking piece you have chosen, and explain that only the individual holding the talking piece may speak.

First, have the students pass the talking piece around the circle to “check in” with each member of the circle. This is a good opportunity for everyone to practice holding and passing the talking piece, as well as an opportunity for students to say a few quick words about **how they are feeling or what is on their mind.**

As the teacher/facilitator of the activity, introduce a topic or ask a question that you would like the circle to respond to. However, after you have sparked the conversation, make sure to take your seat in the circle and become a member rather than a leader.

**This activity can be a good way to start the day, end the day, or simply encourage community and kindness at any point during the day. It is especially useful after something particularly emotional or traumatic happens, whether the event takes place in the classroom, in the school.**

**The Community Circle helps students relate to one another, and it can encourage students to accept and share feelings that may be difficult to talk about.**