Taking a Stand

Purpose: To understand what it means to be an ally and why it is important for someone to have allies for support.

Timing:
This lesson is designed to take 60 minutes.

Objectives
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of some actions that an ally might take to support someone who needs help.
- Understand some of the challenges of being an effective ally.
- Play a game that allows them to practice the skills of being an ally.

Agenda:
Opening: 15 min.
- Welcome
- Review
- Preview
- Concentric Circles (Discussion)

Focus Activities: 35 min.
- Evaluation/Reflection
- Appreciation

Closing: 10 min.
- What is an Ally? (Pair Interviews)
- Airport (Game)

Supplies:
- Pair Interview Handout
- 10 blindfolds, or material that can be used as a blindfold

Key Words:
- Ally: A supporter; someone who takes risks and takes a stand for others.
- Peacemaker: Someone who cooperates with others, communicates respectfully, is kind and fair, and takes a stand for what he or she believes in.
- Teamwork: Two or more people working together for a common goal.

Before You Teach
- Think about and be ready to share experiences you have had with allies – either a time when you were an ally to someone or a time when you were supported by an ally, especially related to your personal friendships and relationships.
- The game Airport will require some open space to create a human obstacle course. Think about how students can help move desks and chairs to create adequate room. If you create clear guidelines about appropriate behavior, this game can be played in another space, such as a playground or gymnasium.
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Opening: 15 minutes

1. Welcome

Use your Quiet Signal to get students’ attention. Welcome students to Peace First time.

2. Review

Review the previous lesson with students so that they can recall some of the concepts and activities that were covered.

Ask: How can rumors harm our friendships?
What is one thing you can do to stop rumors from spreading?

3. Preview

Direct students’ attention to today’s agenda and the title of the lesson: “Becoming an Ally.”

Tell students that today they will be learning how to be an ally for others and why it is important to have allies to support you.

4. Concentric Circles

Goal: To help students prepare for today’s lesson by reflecting on the topic of allies with a classmate.

Remind students that each week they will begin Peace First with a chance to talk to each other. They will get to have a series of short conversations each week with different classmates.

Guide students to count off by 2’s. When they have finished, direct the 1’s to make a tight circle in which they are facing out. Ask the 2’s to make a circle around them facing in.

Each student should be facing one of their classmates so that they each have a partner. Once students are in pairs, tell them that you will read them a question. Each person will have exactly one minute to share their response with their partner. Have each pair choose someone to answer first, then begin.

Read one question at a time.

Ask: Describe a time that you supported a friend who was sad or angry? What did you do?
How did it make you feel to support that friend?
Who is a friend or adult who supports you when you are sad or angry?

After each question, have students in the outside circle rotate two steps to their left, then answer the next question with their new partner. When all questions have been asked, thank students for their participation and tell them to return to their seats.

Debrief the activity by asking a few of these questions:

Ask: What was one thing you heard during your conversations that stood out to you?
In what kinds of situations might you need or want support from someone?
Goal: To generate a definition of an ally and explore students’ own attitudes about being an ally.

Explain that today they are going to explore what it means to be an ally for another person. Ask if students have an idea what it means to be an ally.

After hearing some students’ ideas, help students come to a definition of ally that is close to:

**Ally:** a supporter; someone who takes risks and takes a stand for others.

Ask students if they know anyone who has been an ally, including themselves.

**Explain** that they are going to do an activity to help them figure out some of the things that an ally does.

Put students into pairs.

**Explain** that they will each have three minutes to interview their partner. Tell students that the goal is to learn more about their experiences with allies and as allies.

**Distribute** copies of the *Pair Interview Handout.*

**Tell** students it would be easy to fill out the sheets themselves, but that the objective is to give students a chance to talk about their experiences with allies and as allies.

As students are interviewing each other, rotate around the classroom and help students with their interviews: listen to their conversations, suggest follow-up questions, or offer encouragement.

After each student has had a chance to interview their partner, bring the group back together.

**Ask** students to share one behavior of an ally that they heard in their conversations.

Write down student responses on the board or a piece of chart paper.

**Possible answers:**

- Allies listen.
- Allies take risks.
- Allies get help from others.

Briefly review the list, thank students for their work, and tell students to think about how they can incorporate these behaviors in the game that they are about to play.
Goal: To practice the skills of being an ally by supporting a classmate, taking risks, and using teamwork to complete a task.

Create a clear, safe space where students can move about freely.

Explain that in this game, pairs of students – one “pilot” and one “navigator” – will try to negotiate through a human obstacle course – as if they are guiding an airplane to a landing. Explain the guidelines of the game:

- The object is to get from the start to the finish.
- “Pilots” will have their eyes closed or blindfolded. “Navigators” must guide their pilot safely through the obstacle course.
- Once a pair has left the starting line, the “navigator” should not touch their partner unless they are in danger of hurting themselves or someone else. Instead, they need to direct their “pilot” with words or by offering encouragement.

Ask 5-6 students to be part of the human obstacle course.

Put the rest of the class into pairs and have each person in the pairs choose roles: pilot or navigator. Give “pilots” the blindfolds and have them put them on.

Arrange your “human obstacles” around the open space and direct them to move in a repetitive way that helps to obstruct a clear path: pacing in a straight line back and forth, waving their arms in a slow and predictable way, doing jumping jacks, pairing with another student to create an archway or crevasse, or something else creative.

Make sure that the obstacle course has a clear start and finish. If necessary, have one student represent the finish line.

When the obstacle course is complete, have “navigators” get their “pilots” and guide them to the starting line.

Have one pair begin, then stagger the starts of the other pairs so that there is a safe distance between each pair.

Remind students that navigators may follow pilots or stand near them.

When all pairs have successfully completed the obstacle course, bring the class together to debrief the game.

Choose some of the following questions to have students reflect on the game:

- What risks did you take in this game?
- How did the members of this class support each other well?
- If a pair was unsuccessful, what could they have done differently? What could the group have done to help?
- How does this game help us think about what it means to be an ally – or to rely on allies?
- What is one thing that you learned about being an ally from this game?
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Closing: 10 minutes

1. Evaluation/Reflection

Ask students to stand or sit in a circle.

Remind students that evaluating each Peace First lesson is an important part of each week. They will have a chance to assess what they learned but also how it was taught and how Peace First can improve.

Give students time to think of one thing that they liked about today’s class.

Invite 2-3 students to share with the class.

Give students time to think of one thing that they would like to go differently in the next Peace First class.

Ask students to share with a neighbor. Then ask if any students would like to share what they heard from their neighbor.

Give students time to think of one thing that they learned during Peace First today.

Invite 2-3 students to share with the class.

2. Appreciation Circle

Remind students of the appreciation activity that they did in the last class, and that they will close every Peace First lesson by expressing appreciation for something that relates to the day’s lesson.

Tell students that everyone in the circle is going to be given the opportunity to express appreciation for someone in their class.

Model for students by going first. Then give each student the opportunity to share her/his appreciation. Allow students to pass if they cannot think of something.

Thank the students and tell them that they did a great job today.

Tell students that now it is time to transition out of Peace First time and into their next classroom activity.

Use your Quiet Signal. When you feel students are ready, move on to your next activity.
With your partner, take about five minutes to ask these questions.

**Remember:** A good interviewer listens carefully to the other person, asks additional follow-up questions, and takes enough notes to remind them what was said without writing down every word.

What do you need from a person who is an ally for you? What does an ally do?

Who has taken a stand for you? Who has helped you the most when you feel angry, sad, or at risk? What made them a good ally?

What do you think makes it difficult to be an ally? How do other people make it difficult? Why is it sometimes hard to help someone who is angry, sad, or at risk?