



START with
Hello

Belonging Unit

GRADES 6-8



In this Belonging Unit, students will engage in key learnings and messages from the *Start With Hello* Program. They will learn how to apply the *Start With Hello* framework; work collectively to boost social connection, create a more inclusive community, and produce solutions to managing conflict.

Visit this [folder](#) to gain access to supplementary materials for the *Start With Hello* curriculum. To learn more about the full curriculum components and the various resources associated with the *Start With Hello* curriculum, visit this [guide](#). Here, you will gain access to the curriculum's essential questions, thematic unit rationale, and additional engagement activities.



Unit Essential Question:

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

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Know the Signs Community Agreement

A BELONGING LESSON PLAN

Unit Essential Question

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Develop classroom expectations that align with the *Start With Hello* program and Sandy Hook Promise values by engaging in a discussion to produce a classroom agreement.

Standard Alignment

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-Awareness:** The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
- **Social Awareness:** The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.
- **Responsible Decision-Making:** The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

Social Justice Standard

- **Diversity 6:** Students will express comfort with people who have similarities and differences from them and engage respectfully with all people.

Materials and Resources

Students:

- [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#)
- Markers/colored pencils
- Anchor Chart paper



Grades:

6-8

Estimated Time Needed

45 minutes

Notes

Mindful Minute

Safer Space Inventory

Encourage students to place learning materials (including electronic devices and cell phones) aside. Set a timer for one-minute and ask students to take that minute to breathe, stretch, rest, or do a quiet activity that is soothing and relaxing. Prior to the activity, model yourself doing a quick quiet, centering activity. Encourage the class to be creative and do what feels right for them. For instance, using a tennis ball to massage your hands or arms or doing a gentle yoga pose.

Once the minute is over, inform students that they will do a “**safer space inventory**” check. Students may refer to the Safer Space Inventory Checklist Worksheet in their [workbooks](#) or reference the inventory checklist posted in a highly visible area of the classroom.

Inform students that the safer space inventory allows them to check in with themselves and their environment to ensure that they have a lot of resources to help make them feel safe and be productive throughout the day.

The safer space inventory is a tool to help youth and Trusted Adults:

- Be mindful about the physical space surrounding them.
- Find simple ways to feel comforted.
- Identify easy strategies to get into a healthy head space.
- Use their voice and “I statements” to advocate for safety needs and wants.

Student Connector

Common Ground

Place students into random groups of five. Three ways to create random groups are described below. Once in their groups, give students **five minutes to find five things** they all have in common. Let students know that they must be creative and should not choose obvious responses (e.g., same grade). Once the time is up, have each group share their **Common Grounds** and how they came to discover it.

Ways to create student groups

Use a deck of cards (playing cards or Uno). Ask students to select a card and find their group members by finding matches (e.g., Kings find other Kings, form a rainbow with four different colors, add card numbers to equal 15). Organize the deck before class with the correct number of cards for the class size and numbers of like cards depending on the size of groups you would like to create.

Wordle Jumble

Cut out letters that create words connected to the class themes. Instruct students to create five-letter words with cut-out letters and form a group. For this lesson, use: trust, thank, share, build, power, brave, heard.



Main Activity

Our Agreement

This activity requires everyone in the classroom to come together to create a socially and emotionally safe space. The class will construct an agreement, which is a tool used to hold everyone accountable for creating a safe and inclusive environment. This agreement should highlight qualities that align with the *Start With Hello* training.

Introduce the activity by having students think back to the *Start With Hello* training. Revisit the three steps:

1. See someone alone.
2. Reach out and help.
3. “Start with Hello.”

Provide students with 3–5 minutes to complete **Part 1** of the [Know the Signs Community Agreement Worksheet](#) independently, which reflects what they would like to see in their classroom.

Once students complete their individual reflections, place them into groups of four and assign them the task of working on **Part 2** of the [Know the Signs Community Agreement Worksheet](#). Students will take the next 10 minutes to brainstorm what an ideal class would be like by writing a list of at least five qualities and expectations that they would like to see from the classroom community. Remind students that this classroom is a safe space for all. Each member of the group will have different roles.

- **Facilitator:** gets the necessary supplies and relays instructions to the group
- **Speaker:** shares out and communicates the group’s ideas to the whole class
- **Scribe:** will come up to write on the class agreement
- **Timekeeper:** keeps the group on task and ensures on-time project completion



Circle Up

Opening

Tell your students that they’ll be participating in a [Circle Up](#) activity. Use the [Circle Norms](#) and *Know the Signs Community Agreement* when available as reminders to practice speaking and listening skills. Arrange chairs or desks in a circle formation or invite students to sit in a comfortable position in an open space. It can surround a centerpiece of significance to the group/class. Reinforce that it is important that all students feel seen and heard during circle rounds, can participate or pass, and are all important members of the circle community. Allow enough time for students to participate, however they feel comfortable and encourage them to use the [Circle Up Worksheet](#), located in their [workbooks](#). Additionally, model the Circle Up procedures:

- Set up a centerpiece.
- Use “I statements.”

- Use a talking piece.
- Check-in with participants.
- Actively listen and be present.
- Listen and speak without judgment.
- Set a time and topic for the discussion.

Discussion

Discuss each group’s ideas by having the **speaker** of each group share their top two ideas. If one idea was already named, have them choose another one from the list.

Now, it is time for the class to **vote** on which ideas they would like to implement in the *Know the Signs* Community Agreement. Then, the **scribe** of each group with an approved agreement will write each expectation or quality on the chart paper, labeled “Our Agreement”. This will continue until every group adds an expectation or quality to the class agreement.

Closing

Encourage students to uphold this agreement by reading the agreement aloud as a class. Display the classroom agreement and keep it visible throughout the school year.

Optimistic Closure and Promise Challenge

Give gratitude to the class for working thoughtfully and intentionally to become a true *Start With Hello* classroom where all students feel safe and included.

Promise Challenge

Start the school year with an activity that builds inclusivity and connectivity by participating in a buddy-up activity throughout the school year. Each advisory or homeroom can be paired up with another class and start a pen pal writing program. Each class will send their buddy class a letter introducing themselves. This can be done by pairing up lower-classmen with upperclassmen.

Explore More

Journal Time

Give students time to Think-Reflect-React to the following prompt in their workbooks:

- *How do you intend to uphold the principles in this agreement?*

Remind students about the protocols for a **Think-Reflect-React**:

Read: Quietly read the *Know the Signs Agreement* that we just created.

Think: Think about the expectation or quality that means the most to you.

Reflect: Consider how you intend to uphold this expectation or quality with your classmates.

React: Share or show your reflections.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to incorporate the *Start With Hello* Program outside of school by handing out this brochure or sending out a digital copy.

SAVE Promise Club Connection

If your school does not have a [SAVE Promise Club](#), considering registering and launching a club by starting with three-to-four students in your class. For your first meeting, collectively develop a Community Agreement. Post the agreement in a location where club members can revisit the agreed upon norms and other students can start to inquire about what the SAVE Promise Club is about.



My Unique Hello Style

A BELONGING LESSON PLAN

Unit Essential Question

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Develop and practice their own unique “Hello Styles.”

Standard Alignment

CASEL Competency

- **Relationship Skills:** develop positive relationships and communicate effectively.

Materials and Resources

Students:

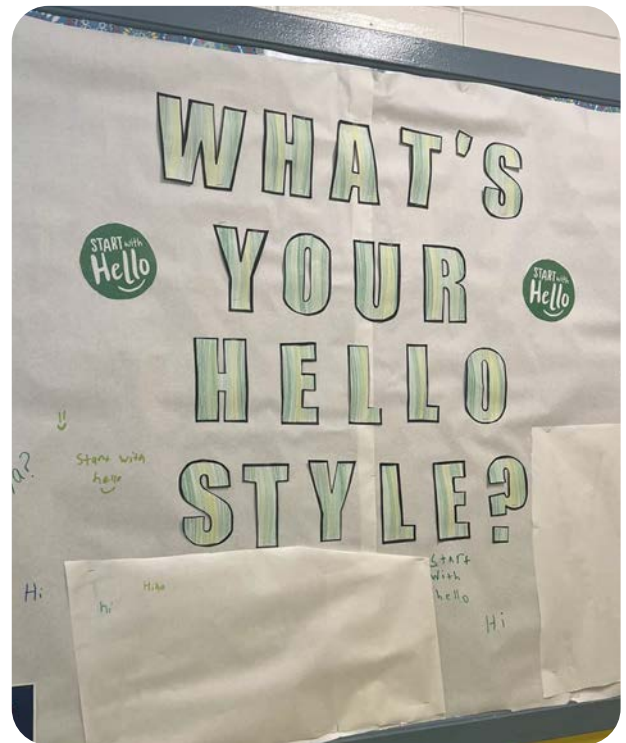
- [Fun Ways to Say Hello by Mukwonago High School SAVE Club](#)

Note to Educator: The student connector will require some planning before the lesson. Prior to the lesson, gather safe items that can be tossed around a circle: stuffed animals, tennis balls, stress balls, etc. The more items you gather, the longer the name game can go.

Mindful Minute

Take a deep breath. Keeping your eyes open or closed, think about being around one of your favorite people. It could be a friend, family member, teacher, or a Trusted Adult in your life. Try to visualize being with that person now. What feelings come up for you? What activities are you doing? What are the qualities in that person that makes you want to hang out with them?

After the Mindful Minute, allow time for students to share by asking the following questions:



Grades:

6–8

Estimated Time Needed

30 minutes

Notes

- Does anyone want to share how they feel when they are hanging out with one of their favorite people?
- What are some of the activities you enjoy doing with your favorite people?

Go on to state: Most often, we feel comfortable, relaxed, at ease, happy, content, peaceful, joyful, safe, and inspired when we are with some of our favorite people. It is often the reason we keep wanting to hang out with these people. Today, we are going to explore the feelings that arise when we start with “hello” with someone we don’t know very well and then figure out how to move forward with a conversation or activity to keep the relationship going.

Student Connector

Getting to Know You Ball Toss

Stand or sit in a circle and demonstrate tossing one ball to another student by saying “Hello, (Name)” and the person who receives the ball says, “Thank you, (Name)” and then tosses it to a different person with the same greeting “Hello, (Name).”

This ball toss goes until everyone has had someone say “Hello” to them in the circle. Now, the game continues by starting the ball toss again, in the same order. Once the ball has been tossed twice, add another ball, then another one. The idea is to keep the ball moving and to build a lot of energy in the room by getting everyone to say “Hello” to each other.



Main Activity

Hello Styles

Tell students that today they will be creating their own special Hello Styles with a partner. A Hello Style is their own unique way of warmly greeting someone. Play this video of [Mukwonago High School’s SAVE Club](#) showing off their unique Hello Styles to give students inspiration.

Place students into pairs and provide them with 10 minutes to develop their own unique Hello Styles. Once all groups have completed developing their unique Hello Styles, have students **mix-n-mingle** with at least three others in the class and practice their new Hello Styles. Then, ask for volunteers to share their very own Hello Styles with the class.

To take this activity one step further, record a video of your own class displaying all the fun and unique hello styles, just like Mukwonago High School’s [SAVE Promise Club](#).

Optimistic Closure and Promise Challenge

Thank students for developing their own unique ways to “start with hello.” Ask the group how and when they will use their new Hello Styles outside of the classroom environment. Encourage students to use their new Hello Style to reach out to three students this week in their school community that they don’t typically socialize with.

Explore More

Hello Around the World

Teach students how to say hello in different languages. This can be a great opportunity to allow for student leadership and have students teach their classmates how to say hello in their first language. Students can also do their own research on different languages and present this new way to say hello to the class. Students can even show their classmates a map of all the regions this special way to say hello may originate from.

Family Engagement

Belonging In Our Home

Encourage students to develop a Hello Style handshake with their families. Send a note home with your students or send an email blast to families with the following activity announcement or encourage families to complete an activity from the [Start With Hello Family Monthly Activity Guide](#):

Develop a Personalized Family Hello Style. This week/month our class is learning about the Start With Hello Program. Today, your child/children practiced new Hello Styles. Ask your child what their favorite way they learned to say “hello” was from watching their classmates. Then, come together to create your own unique family handshake by incorporating “hello” in different languages or fun actions. This is a great activity for kids and adults of all ages! Get the whole family involved by creating a little friendly competition to see who can come up with the most creative Hello Style. Encourage your child/children to try out this new Hello Style at school!



SAVE Promise Club Connection

Connect with the SAVE Promise Club by asking them to create a video collage of all the unique Hello Styles seen throughout the school. Then, have them share the video during the next morning meeting or whole school assembly. Encourage the SAVE Promise Club to share on social media by adding the hashtag #SAVEPromiseClub in your posts.



INCLUSIVI-Tree

A BELONGING LESSON PLAN

Unit Essential Question

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Construct their own meaning of inclusivity.
- Create an INCLUSIVI-Tree.

Standard Alignment

CASEL Competencies

- **Self-Awareness:** The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
- **Social Awareness:** The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.

Social Justice Standard

- **Diversity 9:** Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection.

Materials and Resources

Students:

- [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#)

Mindful Minute

What do I NOTICE? Finish the "I Statement"

The following Mindful Minute is also located in the [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#).

Notice how you feel. How do you feel in your body? How do you feel outside of your body?

I feel _____.



Grades:

6-8

Estimated Time Needed

35-40 minutes

Notes

Gently inhale and exhale. A breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Be still for a moment.

Student Connector

Cue up music. Use a song or playlist with positive song messages. Play the music during the **Move-and-Meet-Up** activity described below. A few sample songs include:

“I Ain’t Worried” by One Republic

“I Run to You” by Lady A

“Try Everything” by Shakira

“My Universe” by Coldplay and BTS

“Over the Rainbow” by Israel Kamakawiwo’ole

“Here Comes the Sun” by the Beatles

“Stand by Me” by Ben E. King

“The Best” by Tina Turner

“La Vida Es Un Carnaval” by Celia Cruz

“Skyscraper” by Demi Lovato

Ask: What’s a song that represents you?

Invite students to move and meet up with a partner. Instruct pairs to each take a minute to share the name of the song and why or how that song represents them.

When possible, encourage students to share a line from the song that is also representative of their unique and special qualities, characteristics, interests, and hobbies.



Main Activity



Circle Up

Opening

Tell your students that they’ll be participating in a [Circle Up](#) activity. Use the [Circle Norms](#) and *Know the Signs* Community Agreement when available as reminders to practice speaking and listening skills. Arrange chairs or desks in a circle formation or invite students to sit in a comfortable position in an open space. It can surround a centerpiece of significance to the group/class. Reinforce that it is important that all students feel seen and heard during circle rounds, can participate or pass, and are all important members of the circle community. Allow enough time for students to participate, however they feel comfortable and encourage them to use the [Circle Up Worksheet](#), located in their [workbooks](#). Additionally, model the Circle Up procedures:

- Set up a centerpiece.
- Use “I statements.”
- Use a talking piece.

- Actively listen and be present.
- Check-in with participants.
- Listen and speak without judgment.
- Set a time and topic for the discussion.

Discussion

Share a couple of definitions of the word “Inclusivity” and “Inclusive.” If possible, write the definitions on chart paper and place in the center of the circle, or write the definitions on a white board.

- “Inclusivity means including everyone. Especially allowing and accommodating people who have been historically excluded (because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability).” – Merriam-Webster Dictionary
- Being inclusive is making sure everyone is valued, equal, and included in the group. No one is excluded or left out.

Emphasize the importance of each class member’s role in building an inclusive classroom community. Begin a circle round discussion. Use the following discussion questions to spur thinking for the INCLUSIVI-Tree independent activity.

- *What can we do as a classroom community to be proactive and intentional about including all students in class lessons, activities, and projects?*
- *Which prosocial actions will you do, and which communication strategies will you use to help build a classroom culture where everyone feels a sense of belonging?*

Circle Closing

To close the Circle Up, have students **Mix-N-Mingle** by moving around the classroom.

When you say the word “mix,” instruct students to start moving.

When you say “mingle,” instruct students to stop and begin a conversation with a classmate by using their unique Hello Style. Before starting to move again, ask students to give each other a compliment.

Independent Activity

Instruct students to return to a desk or table for independent work. Inform students that they will create their own INCLUSIVI-Tree using the provided worksheet as well as pencils/pens/crayons. Project the Instructions for creating the INCLUSIVI-Trees and read what each part of the tree represents:

Roots and Tree Trunk: In and along the tree roots and trunk, write down how you will:

- Apply the three steps of Start With Hello on a regular basis.
- Make connections with classmates who have different identities, ethnicities, skills, and interests than you.
- Use inclusive language.

- Be a proactive citizen in building a school community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
- Be an Upstander by taking actions against racism and discrimination.

For example: Each Friday, I will reach out to a new classmate and invite them to lunch. I will use the time to connect to the student and learn about our similarities and differences when it comes to identity, ethnicity, background, and interests.

Branches and Leaves: On the branches and leaves, write down:

- Positive impacts your actions will have on the classroom and school community.
- Positive impacts your actions will have on you.

For example: As a result of my actions to be inclusive, a student will never feel lonely or left out in our class because they don't have a partner for group activities.

Optimistic Closure and Promise Challenge

Thank students for their reflections today. Not all relationships are easy, but you can always improve your relationships if you try. Reflections are an important part of self-growth and if you find yourself unhappy with a relationship in your life it is important to reflect and identify what you can do to try to manage the problem in your relationship.

Explore More

Check out this blog post, by Joel, a youth leader, who talks about [creating a more inclusive school community](#).

Family Engagement

Share the [INCLUSIVI-Tree Worksheet](#) and task them with creating one from the perspective of the family:

- **Roots and Tree Trunk:** Include goals and actions to reach out and help family members and make new connections with one another.
- **Branches and Leaves:** Discuss the positive impact your actions will have on the family.

SAVE Promise Club Connection

Create a Collaborative SAVE Promise Club INCLUSIVI-TREE

Invite your school's [SAVE Promise Club](#) to your class to develop a collaborative INCLUSIVI-TREE together. Your class will learn about all the work the SAVE Promise Club is doing to create an inclusive school community steeped in belonging as they work together with club members. Share on social media by adding the hashtag **#SAVEPromiseClub** in your posts.



Be An Includer Backpack

A BELONGING LESSON PLAN

Unit Essential Question

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Identify three ways they can proactively be includers in the classroom.
- Create an includer backpack to carry throughout the school year.
- Analyze the negative effects of 'othering.'

Standard Alignment

CASEL Competencies

- **Responsible Decision-Making:** The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.
- **Relationship Skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

Social Justice Standard

- **Action 19:** Make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.

Materials and Resources

Students:

- [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#)
- Crayons, color pencils, markers



Grades:

6–8

Estimated Time Needed

40–60 minutes

Notes

Mindful Minute

Ask students to open their [workbooks](#) and have them choose a mindfulness coloring page or provide students with the *Start With Hello* themed mindfulness coloring pages. Ask students to leave all thoughts and worries outside the class and focus on silently coloring for five minutes.

Student Connector

Mingle Bingo

Have students connect on similarities and fun tasks through [Mingle Bingo](#). Before students can use the included bingo card to identify similarities with one another, have them fill in the center box with their own topic. Remind them to keep it simple and lively. Students can initial the bingo boxes and put an “X” through the box once they get one, two, or three signatures in the box (use your discretion).



Main Activity Role Play



Circle Up

Opening

Inform your students that will be participating in a [Circle Up](#) activity. Use the [Circle Norms](#) and Know the Signs Agreement when available as reminders to practice speaking and listening skills. Arrange chairs or desks in a circle formation or invite students to sit in a comfortable position in an open space. It can surround a centerpiece of significance to the group/class. Reinforce that it is important that all students feel seen and heard during circle rounds, can participate or pass, and are all important members of the circle community. Allow enough time for students to participate, however they feel comfortable and encourage them to use the [Circle Up Worksheet](#), located in their [workbooks](#).

Additionally, model the Circle Up procedures:

- Set up a centerpiece.
- Use “I statements.”
- Use a talking piece.
- Actively listen and be present.
- Listen and speak without judgment.
- Set a time and topic for the discussion.

Definitions

Introduce students to four terms. Ask students to **Turn-N-Learn** with a partner to their right. Explain the definitions in their own words to their partner. If possible, ask each student to give a specific example of each vocabulary term.

- **Inclusive**
 - Including everyone.
 - Aiming to provide equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.
- **Exclude**
 - To leave someone out purposely.
- **Rejection**
 - The act of not accepting, believing, or considering something.
- **Othering**
 - A way to label individuals that are seen/viewed/perceived as not fitting in with a group.

Discussion

Engage the class in a discussion about **othering**. Here are a few guiding questions:

- *Think about a time when you were left out or excluded. What could someone have done to include you?*
- *Why is othering considered negative?*
- *How can othering lead to violence?*
- *What can we say to someone when we hear them othering someone based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, etc.?*
- *How do we think someone feels when they are given a label?*

Closing

To close the Circle Up, ask students to provide one word that they will take away from this discussion.

Includer Backpack Activity

Next, inform students that they'll create a class [Includer Backpack](#) of ways they can be proactive about creating an inclusive classroom community. Typically, students carry the tools and resources in their backpacks that they need to be successful during the school day. By carrying around the strategies, tools, and resources of ways that they can be an 'Includer' in class and help prevent excluding and othering, each student will help strengthen a "Start With Hello" philosophy. Instruct students to draw a backpack or use the provided worksheet and write and/or draw actions that you can take in this class to:

- Include everyone.
- Stop othering from ever happening.
- Speak up when you or your classmates are experiencing exclusion, rejection, or othering.
- Take action against racism and discrimination.

Optimistic Closure and Promise Challenge

Next time you take a look at your backpack, think about the Includer Backpack you developed today and apply those actions into the classroom. We will be on our way to strengthening a “Start With Hello” philosophy this school year.

Explore More

Instruct students to make vocabulary flash cards for the new terms by writing the definition on one side and drawing an image that represents that definition on the other side. Next, create a class list of all the includer actions and strategies. Work together to create a class Includer Backpack and post it in a highly visible location like the classroom door or a Google classroom page.

SAVE Promise Club Connection

Connect with your SAVE Promise Club and have them gather Includer Backpacks from different classes and post them in a highly visible area of the school, like classroom doors.

Strategies for Managing Conflict: Role Plays

A BELONGING LESSON PLAN

Unit Essential Question

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Identify strategies they can use to help them manage conflict.
- Participate in a role-playing activity highlighting their strategies for managing conflict.

Standard Alignment

CASEL Competency

- **Relationship Skills:** The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

Social Justice Standard

- **Diversity 8:** Respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.

Materials and Resources

Students:

- [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#)

Mindful Minute

Attitude of Gratitude

In your [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#) or on a piece of paper, draw a heart or coloring in the provided heart. Then, write or draw one thing you are grateful for today.



Grades:

6-8

Estimated Time Needed

45 minutes

Notes

Student Connector

Mix-N-Mingle

While playing music, guide students in walking around the room when you say the word “mix.” As soon as you say “mingle,” stop the music and students will partner up to discuss the questions below. Repeat the Mix-N-Mingle process until all questions are discussed.

- *Share your favorite thing about your relationship with one person.*
- *Why is it important to have healthy relationships?*
- *Do you consider having disagreements as healthy or unhealthy? Why?*
- *Do you feel happy about the relationships you currently have? Share your favorite thing about your relationship with one person.*
- *What do you talk about with the people you have relationships with?*
- *What is it like when you don't like the same thing as someone else? Can you still have a successful relationship?*

Bring students back together as a class. Ask students to share a few things they heard from their peers.



Main Activity

Conflict Role Plays

Provide students with a couple minutes to think about a time they had a conflict with a friend, family member, or adult. Ask students to think back to how this conflict was managed and the emotions it made them feel.

Inform the class that when we have a problem with someone else or we get ad/angry/frustrated/upset with someone else, we might call this a conflict. Conflicts are part of daily life, and we can build up a lot of skills to help us deal with and manage our conflicts with other people.

Place students into groups of four and have them brainstorm five ways they can peacefully manage conflict and stressful situations on the [Strategies for Managing Conflict Worksheet](#). Some of the possible strategies to managing conflict could be:

- Stepping away from the situation to help you think clearly.
- Talking about the problem with a friend or Trusted Adult.
- Listen to understand the other's perspective.
- Setting guidelines before discussing the problem.
- Acknowledge when an apology is necessary.
- Show empathy.

Each group will develop a scenario on **Part 2** of the [Strategies for Managing Conflict Worksheet](#) that involves some sort of conflict and the implementation of the strategies they developed. If students are struggling to develop their own situations, consider sharing the [Role Plays for Conflict](#)

[Scenarios](#) document, which contains examples they can choose from. Then, they will come together to act out their scenarios in front of the class.

Possible Scenarios

- Someone took your seat at lunch. You don't know their name, but you feel upset that you need to find a new place to sit.
- Your group of friends planned to go to the movies, but you were not invited.
- You feel like you got an unfair grade on a class project, you feel like the teacher should have given you a higher grade because you worked hard on the project.
- You can't focus on reading your book because one of your classmates keeps talking and joking around. You really want to have some peace and quiet and finish your book.
- You don't get to work on a group project with the classmates you wanted to work with because another student took your spot and beat you to getting into that group.

Optimistic Closure and Promise Challenge

Thank students for being brave for participating in the dramatizations in front of the whole class. This took so much bravery, and you are proud that the classroom is a safe space for all students to participate in activities.

Promise Challenge

Next time we have a conflict, let's use the steps we learned today. We're going to make a promise to always remember to take a big breath before we make any decisions. By doing so, we can clear our minds and follow the steps we learned about today calmly.

Explore More

After the lesson, give the class time to play games that open doors for healthy social connections. Jenga, Connect Four, and Uno are a few examples.

Family Engagement

Encourage families to have a Circle Up discussion at home about how they plan to manage conflict as a family unit. Here are some guiding questions:

- *What can we do to better manage conflict?*
- *What are some strategies we can use to have these healthy discussions with one another?*



SAVE Promise Club Connection

Research the History of SAVE Promise Clubs

As students are learning about belonging through the Start With Hello program, assign students a project to research the history and mission of [SAVE Promise Club](https://www.sandyhookpromise.org), interview a current club member or the club Advisor, and write a one-page research brief on how SAVE Promise Clubs boost belonging and helps to manage conflict. Offer extra-credit opportunities for students to create a [SAVE Promise Club](https://www.sandyhookpromise.org) if your school does not currently have one.



Our Ideal Community

A BELONGING LESSON PLAN

Unit Essential Question

What can we do to manage conflicts and create a safer space for learning and exploring?

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Identify characteristics of a strong, healthy, and safe community.
- Work as a group to create a visual representation of their ideal communities.

Standard Alignment

CASEL Competency

- **Social Awareness:** The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.

Social Justice Standard

- **Diversity 8:** Respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.

Materials and Resources

- [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#)
- Poster paper, colored pencils, or laptops

Mindful Minute

Breathe in and out gently and slowly for a total of three breaths.

As you inhale imagine you are breathing in calm.

As you breathe out, let the distractions from your mind gently flow out.

When you are done take a few seconds to consider your surroundings, where you are, who else is around you, the time and activity.



Grades:

6-8

Estimated Time Needed

30 minutes

Notes

Student Connector

Post the following characteristics of community on the board, project them, or guide students in opening their [Start With Hello Belonging Workbook](#) to the list of characteristics of a community. Spend a minute to review the characteristics and then move to your circle activity where the students will share their thoughts on whichever of the five questions you choose to have them discuss. If time allows, you may be able to discuss multiple questions.

Characteristics of a Community

- Has a purpose (very specific or quite broad depending on the nature of the community).
- It has rules/expectations for how members behave, treat each other and interact.
- There are different roles that are assigned or need to be filled for the community to function properly.
- There may be time, resources, or other factors that impact how a community functions.
- Some communities may only come together at certain times for their specific purpose, think classroom, club, place of worship, social group.



Main Activity

Group Activity

Start the activity by referencing back to the class Know the Signs Community Agreement.

Next, place students into groups of four and have them complete five of the discussion questions about the characteristics of a community located in [Our Ideal Community Worksheet](#).

- *What communities are you a part of?*
- *What does it mean to be part of a community?*
- *What makes a strong and healthy community?*
- *Name some things that communities do that are beneficial to the members?*
- *Name some problems that can come up from being part of a community.*
- *How can racism, stereotypes, or othering negatively impact a community?*
- *Why do we need communities?*

Then, ask students to brainstorm the top 10 things they would like to see in their ideal community by completing **Part 2** of the [worksheet](#).

Once all groups complete the brainstorming session, assign them with the task of **creating a visual representation of their ideal community**. This can be done through a virtual collage, poster, or brochure that represents the list they created.

Encourage volunteers to share out their group's ideal community with the class and share the awesome artwork with Sandy Hook Promise by tagging [@sandyhook](#) on Twitter, [@SandyHookPromise](#) on Facebook and Instagram, and use the hashtag [#StartWithHello](#).

Optimistic Closure and Promise Challenge

Thank students for working together in their groups to design their own ideal communities. If time permits, give students time to Think-Reflect-React to the following journal prompt:

Journal Time

- Why is it important to feel a sense of belonging in your community?

Promise Challenge

Challenge students to reach out and “start with hello” to one of their classmates they don’t talk to frequently.

Explore More

As an extension of this lesson, consider doing a Community Card Sort.

Community Card Sort

Give each student three to six index cards or sticky notes. Have them take a few minutes to jot down an idea on each card answering questions about ‘our classroom as a community:

- Our classroom as a community:
- Is our classroom a community?
- Apply the characteristics of a community (below) to your classroom. Do these characteristics fit?
- What is the purpose of your “class?”
- What are some of the rules and expectations of members of the class?
- What roles are there in your class? How do these roles impact the functioning of the whole class?
- Are there time or other resources-based factors that impact when and how your class functions?

Once each student has completed their cards, have the students form small groups of four and lay their cards out on a table/desk in the center of the group. The group is to work together to sort their cards into common categories. Giving each person a chance to contribute their ideas while the others listen. The groups will read all the cards and then work together to decide how they want to group them together. Remind the groups that they should be working towards allowing everyone an equal voice and to take turns moving the cards into groups. Also remind them that there may be different ideas but that there are no “wrong answers.”

Family Engagement

Encourage families to participate in a family fitness night. This is something that can be done on a weekly or monthly basis to promote a healthier, stronger, and safer community at home.



Connect with your SAVE Promise Club on creating a video showing a powerful *Start With Hello*

message that promotes a healthy community. Watch the following Burnett Middle School student-produced video and discuss how your SAVE Promise Club can produce a video with a positive message: [Burnet Middle School Start With Hello Video](#).





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