



## CIRCLE TIME BASICS

Arrange a tidy circle with chairs or on the floor.

### STARTER

*Cross the circle if:*

- *you are wearing any blue*
- *you are wearing black shoes*
- *you like pizza*
- *you had breakfast this morning*
- *you usually have breakfast*
- *you like P.E.*
- *you like art*
- *you like it when people say nice things...*

### **Remind children to:**

- Not comment on other people's comments (include non-verbal stuff too, sniggers etc)
- Use positive language
- Take turns to speak

### INTRODUCTIONS

Choose someone to start. Children can volunteer by "putting their thumb in" (instead of their hand up). Ask them which way around the circle they'd like to go.

*Introduce the person to your right, then introduce yourself, then the person to your left.*

*Go around the circle until everyone has been introduced.*

This activity is great for the start of the year with a new class or when a new pupil joins the class.

### FINISH THE QUESTION

Choose another pupil to start, ask them which way round the circle they want to go.

They should finish a sentence you give them:

- *My favourite food is...*
- *My favourite TV programme is...*
- *My favourite pudding...*
- *My favourite fruit is...*
- *The place I'd most like to visit is ... because ...*
- *If I could be an animal I'd be a ... because ...*

Go around the circle and make sure all children use the same sentence starter. They can pass by saying, "*I choose to pass.*" Go back to them at the end to see if they have thought of anything. It's fine to repeat an answer that someone else has already said.

These questions are designed to be simple and to get children talking. You can make the questions more difficult as sessions go on. For example:

- *I learn best when I...*
- *I feel happy when...*
- *I feel sad when...*
- *I feel angry if...*
- *When I feel angry it helps if I...*
- *I like it when my friends ...*

It's tempting to praise good answers. Don't. By highlighting some comments, we inadvertently suggest they have greater weight and importance. Keep your input to a minimum.

### EXTRA CHAIR COMPLIMENTS

Put an extra chair in the circle. Ask for a volunteer to start and ask which way they want to go around the circle. Tell the children you are going to ask them to finish the sentence:  
"I'd like (*name of classmate*) to sit in the chair because (*something nice about their classmate*).

e.g. "I'd like Ryan to sit in the chair because he makes me laugh."

Ryan then crosses the circle to sit in the empty chair. It's then his turn to ask someone to sit in the chair and say why.

Ask the children who have been complimented to cross their arms or put their collars up. This makes it easier to spot who hasn't been complimented yet.

Include yourself. Keep going until the whole class has been complimented. Over time, classes get quicker and more specific with their compliments.

### PAIRED SHARING

Put children in pairs. Choose 2 or 3 questions and ask the children to find out their partner's answers. Go around the circle with children saying their partner's answers and not their own. This encourages active listening.

### SUBJECT-BASED FINISH THE QUESTION

- *One literacy skill I have learned this week is...*
- *One reason I'd like to have been around in Ancient Greece...*
- *One reason I would not have liked to have been around in Ancient Greece...*
- *One reason we need to predict the weather is ...*
- *One reason it's important to exercise is because ...*

### OPEN FORUM

Individual children bring an issue to the circle and ask for advice. For example, *I've fallen out with my friend* or *I'm not getting on with my mum*.

This may need to be modelled by you first. Take an issue you are having (e.g. you have trouble getting up in the morning) and ask the circle for help. Also you could give some children a scenario to read out.

Children can only offer advice by finishing one of these three sentences:

*Would it help if I...*  
*Would it help if you...*  
*Would it help if we...*

The person requesting help chooses who to ask for the advice. You won't believe how helpful they can be.

### GOOD LUCK

All these activities can be adapted for different ages. Younger children will need more time to learn how it works. Some will have trouble sitting in a circle for even short periods but practice and slowly building up the time you spend in a circle will both help. The questions here are just some suggestions to get you started. You will soon get the hang of creating your own and asking your children for help.

Comments or questions?