

LESSON PLAN: Impacts of Residential School

Activity: The Community Circle for Change

Grade Level: 4–8

Overview

This activity begins with viewing video 11, where students learn about how experiences in childhood can affect families for generations. They will explore Phyllis' Survivor story and identify how love, parenting, and healing changed over time. Following the video, students will engage in a group activity where they discuss different scenarios and develop a 'plan of action' to challenge the status quo and break out of harmful patterns.

Learning Objective

Students will understand how experiences in childhood can affect families for generations by exploring a Survivor's story and identifying how love, parenting, and healing changed over time.

After understanding how lack of love influenced early motherhood, learners will reflect on ways to challenge cycles of harm and support young people in breaking harmful patterns.

- **Skill:** Willingness to challenge the status quo (in yourself as well)
- **Objective:** Learners will reflect on ways to challenge cycles of harm and support young people in breaking harmful patterns.

Materials

- Printed "Breaking the Silence, Building Love" scenario cards (6 distinct scenarios).
- Chart paper or large sticky notes (1 per small group).
- Markers (1 set per small group).
- Whiteboard or chart paper for class brainstorming.

Duration

Approximately 20-25 minutes

Learning Objectives:

After understanding how lack of love influenced early motherhood, learners will reflect on ways to challenge cycles of harm and support young people in breaking harmful patterns.

Lesson Steps:

1. Introduction & Brainstorm (5-7 minutes)

Bring the class together after the online activity.

- **Teacher Lead:** "In Phyllis's story, we heard about how the lack of affection in her childhood impacted her later in life, and how she's now working to ensure her grandchildren receive the love she didn't. This shows us the power of breaking cycles and challenging the status quo – actively working against harmful patterns."

- **Class Brainstorm:** “What are some simple, everyday ways we can show kindness, care, or support to others, especially young people, in our school or community?” (e.g., a friendly greeting, offering help, listening, including someone in a game). Write student ideas on the whiteboard/chart paper.

2. Small Group Scenario & Plan (10-12 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups (3-4 students per group).
- Provide each group with one “Breaking the Silence, Building Love” scenario card, a piece of chart paper/large sticky note, and markers.
- **Task:** “Each group has a scenario. Your task is to discuss the scenario and collaboratively develop a ‘plan of action’ – specific, kind, and respectful ways your group could ‘challenge the status quo’ in that situation and offer support. Write your plan on the chart paper.”
- **Teacher Guidance:** Circulate among groups listening to discussions, prompting deeper thinking, and ensuring all group members are contributing. Remind them to focus on positive, actionable steps.

3. Group Share & Reflection (5-7 minutes)

- Bring the class back together.
- **Task:** Ask each group to briefly share their scenario and their “plan of action” with the class.
- **Teacher Lead:** Facilitate a concluding discussion:
 - “What did you notice about the different ways we can offer support?”
 - “How does actively showing kindness and challenging harmful patterns connect to Phyllis’s journey towards healing and love?”
 - “Why is it important for us, to be aware of these ideas and to practice them in our daily lives?”

4. Teacher Wrap-up (2 minutes)

- **Teacher Lead:** “Wonderful job everyone! Today, through Phyllis’s powerful story, and through your own work in your groups, we’ve seen how childhood experiences, especially difficult ones, can echo through generations. But we’ve also discovered the immense strength in families and communities to heal and to choose a different path. You’ve brainstormed incredibly thoughtful ways to ‘break the silence’ and ‘build love’ in your everyday lives – whether it’s through a kind invitation, a respectful word, or simply being present for someone. Remember, every single one of us has the power to be a positive force, to challenge harmful patterns, and to ensure that everyone around us feels seen, valued, and loved, just as Phyllis’s grandchildren are experiencing today. Thank you for engaging with such an important topic with respect and care.”

Differentiation

- **Support:** The inclusion of hint cards provides direct support. For groups needing more, a brief check-in with the teacher after they’ve read the hint card can help.
- **Enrichment:** Ask groups to consider potential challenges they might face when implementing their plan and how they could overcome them. Encourage them to think about how their actions might have a ripple effect on others.



**Circle of
Learning**

Breaking the Silence, Building Love: Sample Scenarios & Hint Cards

Scenario Card 1:

You notice a younger student (Grade 3 or 4) always sitting alone during lunch and never talking to anyone. They often look down at their plate. How could you or your group, gently try to connect with them and show they are not alone, challenging that feeling of isolation?

Hint Card 1:

- *Consider:* How can you invite someone without making them feel pressured? What simple gestures can show you care?
 - *Ideas:* Offer a friendly smile, say hello, invite them to join a game, or simply sit nearby initially.
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Scenario Card 2:

You overhear some classmates making a comment about a child being “too sensitive” when they show big emotions like sadness or frustration. How could you respectfully challenge this idea and promote understanding of feelings, similar to how Phyllis struggled with expressing love but is now learning?

Hint Card 2:

- *Consider:* How can you show empathy for the child who is feeling big emotions? How can you gently remind others that all feelings are okay?
 - *Ideas:* State that it’s okay to feel sad, suggest everyone expresses emotions differently, or point out that it’s brave to show feelings.
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Scenario Card 3:

A friend in your class seems withdrawn and quieter than usual for several days. They aren’t participating in games and seem a bit sad. How could you offer support and show them they are cared for, without prying or pressuring them to talk?

Hint Card 3:

- *Consider:* What are subtle ways to show you’re there for someone? What if they don’t want to talk right away?
 - *Ideas:* Offer a quiet word of kindness, invite them to a low-pressure activity, remind them you’re there if they need anything, or share something positive to brighten their day.
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Scenario Card 4:

You see a new student in your class who seems shy and unsure of where to go or what to do during transitions (e.g., going to the gym, finding their locker). How could you or your group make them feel welcome and included, helping to break any feelings of being an outsider?

Hint Card 4:

- *Consider:* How can you make someone feel comfortable in a new environment? What information might they need?
- *Ideas:* Offer to walk with them, show them where something is, introduce them to other classmates, or explain a classroom routine.

Scenario Card 5:

You notice a classmate is often left out when teams are being picked for games in gym class, and they look disappointed. How could you or your group take action to ensure everyone feels included and valued, challenging the idea that only certain people get to play?

Hint Card 5:

- *Consider:* What is fair in a game? How can you include everyone in a natural way?
- *Ideas:* Make sure teams are balanced, invite them directly to your team, suggest a game where everyone can participate, or talk to the teacher about fair team selection.

Scenario Card 6:

- Someone in your family or community seems to struggle with showing affection or saying “I love you,” similar to Phyllis’s experience. How could you, in a gentle and respectful way, model positive ways of showing care and appreciation to them, without making them uncomfortable?

Hint Card 6:

- *Consider:* What are different ways to show love besides words? How can you be authentic without forcing it?
- *Ideas:* Offer a helping hand, share a thoughtful gift or drawing, give a hug (if appropriate and welcomed), spend quality time with them, or write a card expressing appreciation.

Sample Plan of Action: Scenario Card 1

Scenario Card 1: You notice a younger student (Grade 3 or 4) always sitting alone during lunch and never talking to anyone. They often look down at their plate. How could you or your group gently try to connect with them and show they are not alone, challenging that feeling of isolation?

Our Group's Plan of Action:

Goal: To gently connect with the younger student and make them feel seen and less alone during lunch.

Steps:

1. Observe (Initial - Day 1):

- One or two members of our group will casually sit at a table nearby, not directly next to them, but close enough to be noticed.
- We will observe if they seem open to interaction (e.g., glance up, don't seem completely withdrawn).
- *Why:* This helps us approach them in a way that feels comfortable, not overwhelming.

2. Friendly Non-Verbal Greeting (Day 1 or 2):

- If they look up, one of us will offer a small, friendly smile and a subtle nod.
- *Why:* A simple gesture can show we are friendly without needing words right away.

3. Gentle Invitation (Day 2 or 3):

- If the student seems okay with our presence, on another day, one of us will approach their table (briefly, not hovering) and say something simple and open-ended.
- *Possible phrases:* "Hi there. Is this seat taken?" (even if it's clearly empty, just to start a very brief conversation) or "We're heading to the field to play soccer, do you want to join?"
- *Why:* This offers an invitation without pressure. They can say no, and it's okay.

4. Offer a Shared Activity (Ongoing):

- If they seem interested, we might offer to share something, like showing them a drawing, or asking about their lunch if they seem comfortable.
- If they join us for an activity, we will make sure to include them and ask their opinion (e.g., "What do you think, should we pass the ball here?").
- *Why:* Shared activities can build connections without needing a lot of direct conversation at first.

5. Continue Being Present (Long-term):

- Even if they don't join us right away, we will continue to offer friendly smiles or small waves when we see them.
- *Why:* Consistency shows we genuinely care and aren't just doing it once.

Challenging the Status Quo: By actively reaching out and trying to include this student, we are challenging the idea that lonely students should just be left alone. We are building connection and showing that everyone in our school community matters and deserves to feel included.