

Freire Family - Lesson I: If you really knew me...

Objective: To demonstrate to students the possibility for love and connection through full expression, and to demonstrate to students the importance of being/exposing your authentic self and being able to recognize that there is more to your peers than what is apparent on the surface.

Lesson Length: 60 minutes

Teachers: All TBtC Teaching Staff, Two teachers per room delivering lesson

I. Do Now:

Objective: Get students to begin the process of opening up to each other.

Time: 15 minutes

Put a line of tape on the floor that divides the room. Have the students stand on one side of the room and wait until a question from the list below is asked. If the answer applies to them, they have to cross the line and turn around and face the rest of the group. If the answer does not apply to them the students remain silently where they are. Students that remain where they are should be encouraged to show the sign language "I Love You" sign if they want to show solidarity with the students that crossed the line:



Students should be encouraged to show this support sign at any time during the lesson to show their empathy for others.

After each question is asked all students return to the group and wait for the next question.

The questions asked will escalate on a continuum from lighter and more general to serious and more personal. Regardless of the question students are to remain silent during the activity. Any student that breaks this rule should be given one warning. If a student breaks this rule twice the teacher(s) should send the student to the Dean's Office since it is paramount that every classroom feel emotionally safe during this lesson.

Questions for this activity (should be presented in the order below):

1. Cross the line if SEPTA has ever made you late to school.
2. Cross the line if you've ever wanted to live outside of the city.
3. Cross the line if you've ever felt misunderstood by a teacher or a friend.
4. Cross the line if you've ever had your feelings hurt by something someone said that was meant to be "a joke."
5. Cross the line if you've ever been called a racial slur.
6. Cross the line if you ever saw or heard someone being picked on, bullied, or victimized and didn't do anything about it.
7. Cross the line if you've ever teased or made fun of someone else.
8. Cross the line if you've ever felt unsafe in your neighborhood.
9. Cross the line if you know anyone that has ever been killed or was a victim of violence.
10. Cross the line if you've ever had your feelings hurt.

At this point the facilitators should open a discussion with: Why do you think we did this activity? (Anticipated answers: So that we feel safe here, to show that we are not alone and others have experienced the same things we have, to get us to open up, to demonstrate that often others are similar to us in ways that we don't know.

II. Lesson Body:

Time: 30 minutes

Students should return to seats so that the teachers can introduce the next activity.

The next activity is called "If You Really Knew Me" Students are split into groups of five or six and should not be in a group with someone they are currently close with. Each group should arrange themselves in a circle facing each other. Explain to the students that in their groups every student will be sharing something personal about themselves that shapes the outward person who their peers see at school everyday but that others don't know. BOTH teachers should model the activity by saying:

"If you really knew me you would know that..."

and then going on to share something about themselves that the students do not know but that has been influential in shaping the educator as a person and professional. The more real the teachers can be here the higher the bar will be raised for the students and the more effective the exercise will be. This is also a rare opportunity for teachers to help students see that there is so much more to the adults in this building than what they perceive. I hope you will be courageous and take advantage of this opportunity.

After the teachers share one of the teachers should read the script below that describes the ground rules for the activity. Teachers should be aware that this exercise will be fruitless unless the room feels safe. As such the teachers should send any student they feel is violating this sense of safety to the Dean's Office immediately:

If You Really Knew Me Ground Rules:

To ensure that everyone feels safe, we have several ground rules:

1. What is said in this room stays in this room and is confidential. Respect the privacy of others the way you would want your own privacy respected.
2. As educators we are required to report to the school administration whenever a student makes reference to harming themselves or another person. If you have thoughts of self harm or of harming another person please see Mr. Dave or Ms. Laura for help - do not share those thoughts here.
3. Give others space to talk - no one but the person sharing in each group should be speaking.
4. This is a safe space so do not be afraid to open up: be honest, be real, and be courageous.

The way the activity works is as follows:

Students will be provided with prompt cards that have sentence starters on them to facilitate the sharing process. Students may use one of the sentence starters if they like but they exist merely for facilitation and do not have to be used. The cards have the "I Love You" sign on the back. After sharing the student should put the prompt card face down on their desk or in the middle of their circle.

Everyone must share at least one thing. There is no order of sharing, anyone can speak as they feel comfortable and for up to 3-4 minutes. Once all prompt cards are turned over the activity is concluded. The activity is silent to everyone other than the person sharing. Students can always show the empathy sign to each other throughout the entire activity to show and display their support. The volume of the voice should be low and intimate. Teachers should keep a close eye on the clock. After the first ten minutes approximately three people per group should have shared.

III: Evaluate Understanding:

Time: 10-15 minutes

Come together as a class in one big circle.

Share out the goal of this lesson: To demonstrate to students the possibility for love and connection through full expression, and to demonstrate the importance of being/exposing your authentic self and being able to recognize that there is more to your peers than what is apparent on the surface.

Use the analogy of an iceberg to facilitate the discussion, to wit: only 10% of an iceberg shows, the other 90% is submerged and hidden from view. How are we the same as people? What do we choose to show the world and what do we choose to hide? Why? Would you treat people differently if you could see 100% of them?

As you leave this room today take a moment to think about all the people you have met over the course of the day and everything you have learned about them. Did your perception of people in your group change over the course of the day? Did you perceive that people in your group were a certain way? (based on the 10% of them that you can see) only to learn that your perceptions were not true? (based on the 90% of themselves people keep hidden).

Engage in a whole class discussion where the students share if they made a connection with anyone or if they learned something about someone that was impactful. You don't need to be specific. Teachers should model what this sharing looks like, for instance: I connected with Carli because we shared a similar experience and I thought it was really brave that she spoke up today because I know what she went through was really difficult for me as well. Once the teachers model the activity open the floor up to students.

The conclusion video for the day will endeavor to bring the activity full circle and link it to every other lesson of the day.

Needed Materials:

- Painters tape for the line on classroom floors
- 30 cards (per room) with sentence starters on front and "I Love You" sign on back.

Examples of sentence starters:

- If you really knew me you would know that something I struggle with is...
- If you really knew me you would know that I am proud of...
- If you really knew me you would know that life felt unfair when...
- If you really knew me you would know I think that the way most people see me or label is...
- If you really knew me you would know I am insecure about...
- If you really knew me you would know that it hurt me when...
- If you really knew me you would know that I've lost someone very important to me...
- If you really knew me you would know that my relationship with my family is...

BE BRAVE, GET REAL

If you really knew me you would know that something I struggle with is...

If you really knew me you would know that I am proud of...

If you really knew me you would know that life felt unfair when...

If you really knew me you would know I think that the way most people see me or label is...

If you really knew me you would know I am insecure about...

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