



## 3- How to hold class meetings



### Class Meetings Help Foster Responsible, Ethical Student Behavior

#### *Hold Community Circle Meetings Regularly*

One way to build a student-centered learning community is through class meetings, also known as **Community Circle**. This idea is adapted from the popular book called Tribes.



#### **Frequency and Time Required**

Consider holding class meetings weekly or biweekly, depending on your needs and preferences. Some school years, you may have a particularly delicate classroom environment that needs extra attention. Other years, getting together every other week may be enough.

Budget approximately 15-20 minutes for each class meeting session at approximately the same time on the pre-determined day; for example, schedule the meeting right before lunchtime on Fridays.

#### **The Class Meeting Agenda**

As a group, sit in a circle on the ground very certain rules, which are:



and stick to some

- Appreciation of Others (i.e. no put-downs)
- Listen Attentively
- Respect Everyone
- Right to Pass (students can pass when it's their turn)

Additionally, designate a special gesture to keep things under control. For example, when the teacher raises her hand, everyone else raises their hand and stops talking. You may want to make this gesture different from the attention signal you use during the rest of the day.

At each class meeting, announce a different prompt or format for sharing. The [Tribes](#) book offers a wealth of ideas for this purpose. For instance, it is effective to go around the circle and finish sentences, such as:

- "One thing I like about our classroom is...."
- "I'm grateful that...."
- "One good thing that happened to me recently is...."
- "I wish...."
- "I'm bigger than a \_\_\_\_\_. I'm smaller than a \_\_\_\_\_."
- "I hope that...."

## **Interview Circle**

Another idea is Interview Circle where one student sits in the middle and the other students ask him/her three autobiographical questions. For instance, they ask about brothers and sister, pets, likes and dislikes, etc. The interviewee can choose to pass on any of the questions. I model how it works by going first. The kids enjoy calling on their classmates and learning about each other.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Most importantly, if there is a problem in the classroom that needs to be addressed, the class meeting is the most appropriate place to bring it up and model problem solving with your class. Offer time for apologies and clearing the air. With your guidance, your students should be able to practice these important interpersonal skills with maturity and grace.

## **Watch It Work**

Fifteen minutes per week is a small investment to make in order to strengthen the bonds between you and your students. Students sense that their opinions, dreams, and insights are valued and treated with respect. It also gives them a chance to practice their listening, speaking, and interpersonal skills.

Try it in your classroom. See how it works for you!

