

# 6-12 Character Education Lesson Plan: Connecting with Others



**Character Education Objective:** Help students understand the importance of connecting to other individuals. Develop connection strategies and provide an opportunity for students to practice connecting with others.

## **Core Alignment:**

- HS – Essential Concept and/or Skill: Communicate and work productively with others, incorporating different perspectives and cross cultural understanding, to increase innovation and the quality of work.
- HS – Essential Concept and/or Skill: Demonstrate leadership skills, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility while collaborating to achieve common goals.
- MS – Essential Concept and/or Skill: Communicate and work productively with others, considering different perspectives, and cultural views to increase the quality of work.

- MS – Essential Concept and/or Skill: Demonstrate leadership, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility in all environments.

### **Lesson:**

We often tout how well-connected our society is. Ever-improving technology allows us to contact almost anyone, almost anywhere, at almost any time via a wide-variety of methods – texting, phone calls, Snap Chat, Twitter, Facebook, Skype, and a host of other applications.

Though our methods of connection have multiplied, our ability to connect with one another at a human, person-to-person level may be diminishing. In many ways, technology limits our interaction with our wider community by allowing us to filter who we see and what we hear. Citizenship requires that we engage with our community by learning about the individuals who make up our society. It requires that we work together to build a community that is inclusive of different people, different ideas, and different experiences. To build that type of community, to be an engaged citizen, requires connection.

Ask students to watch the video below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSLJ3JDIDgY>

After the video, ask students what they saw in the video. What happened when people had to make eye contact for 1 minute? (smiled, hugged, cried, etc.)

Ask student why they think people had each of those reactions.

***Optional Activity:*** Ask students to do the experiment and look into someone's eyes for 1 minute without speaking. Ask students to analyze that experience.

There is nothing inherently wrong with connecting to people using technology, but nothing will ever replace sharing a

physical space, sharing eye contact, and engaging.

Moreover, effective citizenship requires that we not only know who makes up our community, but to understand what they think and why they think it. To achieve this level of connection we must work to know people at a substantive level. Most of our conversations happen at a surface level and that is ok. Surface level questions (like what did you do this weekend? Did you see this movie?) are efficient, safe, ice breakers. But if we really want to understand others we must engage each at a more substantive level.

The link below will take you to a list of 36 questions developed by psychologists that are proven to increase closeness between two individuals. Give students the list of questions and instruct them to take turns asking and answering each question. You may want to assign partners so that students are connecting with an individual they do not know well. You may also choose to edit the list of questions for time or content as needed.

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/want-to-be-close-to-someone-ask-these-36-questions/>

***Optional Activity:*** *Instruct students to complete a reflection after their interview. Did they find any connection points to the person they interviewed? What did you learn about this person that they didn't know before? What are the benefits of knowing this person better – for you and for them? Etc.*

### **Parent Connection:**

Send parents the link to the 36 questions and encourage them to complete the same activity with their child.

Learn more about character education.