

Show Curiosity in Someone



grades 6–8



45 minutes

“Replace judgment with curiosity.” – Lynn Nottage

Heart of the Lesson

- The assumptions students make and why they make them.
- How assumptions can affect themselves and others.
- How curiosity can challenge assumptions and help build meaningful connections.

Lesson Summary

- Students explore how and why people make assumptions about others.
- They consider the impact assumptions can have on relationships and learn that first impressions do not always tell the whole story.
- Then they practice approaching others with curiosity, helping them better understand the people around them and build stronger connections.

Pre-Lesson Prep

- Ensure students can access the Worksheet: Circles of Care ([PDF](#)) from the Introduction (1/student) and/or display the Anchor Chart: Circles of Care ([PDF](#)) (slide #2) (SHARE and THINK.GIVE sections).
- (Offline programs) Print the Reflection Questions: Appreciate a Family Member ([PDF](#)) (12-prompt program) OR Reflection Questions: Appreciate Someone You Admire ([PDF](#)) (16-prompt program) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- Preview the four images and choose the ones that are most relevant for the group (THINK.GIVE section).
- (Option B) Chart paper for each small group (THINK.GIVE section).
- Print the Worksheet: Assumptions ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (REFLECT section).



MATERIALS

Student Journals | Guide ([PDF](#))
 Circles of Care: Worksheet ([PDF](#))
 | Anchor Chart ([PDF](#))
 Reflection Questions: Appreciate a Family Member ([PDF](#)) or
 Appreciate Someone You Admire ([PDF](#))
 Quote Image ([PDF](#))
 Chart Paper
 Worksheet: Assumptions ([PDF](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Show Curiosity in Someone](#) | Slide Notes ([PDF](#))
 Images: The Blind and the Elephant ([PDF](#)) | Neighbor Assumption ([PDF](#)) | Cupcake Shop ([PDF](#)) | Mistaken Ethnicity ([PDF](#))
 (Digging Deeper) Video: [Your Idea of Me is Stereotypical](#) (4:52)

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Have students pull out their [Worksheet: Circles of Care \(PDF\)](#) or display the [Anchor Chart: Circles of Care \(PDF\)](#) (slide #2).

If using the online portal:

Students log in to post their action and respond to the reflection questions. When they're finished, invite a few students to share their actions with the group.

If working offline:

Choose the appropriate reflection worksheet for your program:

- [Reflection Questions: Appreciate a Family Member \(PDF\)](#)—for the 12-lesson program. After completing the worksheet, students post their response to Question #1 under the Heading: Circle #2: Individuals You Feel Connected To on the Circles Bulletin Board.
- [Reflection Questions: Appreciate Someone You Admire \(PDF\)](#)—for the 16-lesson program. After completing the worksheet, students post their response to Question #1 under the Heading: Circle #3: Close Communities on the Circles Bulletin Board.

Invite a few students to share with the group.

(Optional) GRATITUDES

Students turn to the back of the [Worksheet: Circles of Care \(PDF\)](#) or to the MY GRATITUDES section in their Student Journals.

Explain: Write one specific thing you appreciate about someone in your close communities. For example: "My neighbor always stops to chat with me. I appreciate that he genuinely cares about how I'm doing," or "I have a lot of fun working with my friends in my robotics after-school club."



TEACHER TIP

If students feel dissatisfied with their actions or have yet to act, remind them that small, consistent actions help develop kindness muscles (ThinkGive Three), so keep trying!

OPEN

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Quote/Image

Display the [Quote Image \(PDF\)](#) and/or read the quote or invite a volunteer to read it (see slides): "Replace judgment with curiosity." – Lynn Nottage

Ask: What does this image/quote mean to you?

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Activity: Making Assumptions

Option A: Choose one or more images that students will connect with most (see below). Students use the guiding questions (below) and record their observations independently in their Student Journals.

Option B: Choose one or more images that students will connect with most (see below). Divide students into small groups and give each group a piece of chart paper. Using the guiding questions (below), students record their group's observations. When finished, students compare observations and notice similarities and differences. If time allows, extend the activity with a gallery walk—place different images on chart papers and have groups rotate, adding their thoughts.

Image Options:

1. [The Blind and the Elephant \(PDF\)](#). A classic illustration of a group of blind people describing different parts of the same elephant.
2. [Neighbor Assumption \(PDF\)](#). A cartoon showing how we make assumptions based on appearance.
3. [Cupcake Shop \(PDF\)](#). A comic showing how gender stereotypes can appear anywhere—even in a bakery.
4. [Mistaken Ethnicity \(PDF\)](#). A cartoon showing a character assuming someone's ethnicity based on appearance. NOTE: This image may be sensitive for some students and may require additional time for reflection. Use discretion when including it.

Guiding Questions (for each image):

- What do you notice happening in this picture?
- What assumptions are being made?
- How could these assumptions affect others?

Group Discussion (apply to any image):

- When can assumptions be neutral or even helpful?
- Have you ever made an assumption about someone you didn't know well? What happened?
- Have others made assumptions about you? How did that feel?

DIGGING DEEPER

Watch: [Your Idea of Me is Stereotypical \(4:52\)](#). Farah Abboud shares her experience moving from Lebanon to Canada and how stereotypes shaped others' perceptions of her.

Discuss:

- At the beginning, Farah talks about the "fine line between curiosity and ignorance." What do you think she means?



VOCAB

Assumption: noun; believing something is true without having all the facts or information.

Stereotype: noun; a fixed belief about a person or group that assumes they all act or think the same way. These beliefs are often unfair or harmful.



TEACHER TIP

Guide students to understand that making assumptions isn't always negative. However, assumptions can be harmful to ourselves or others if we don't check whether they are accurate.



CONNECTION

Video: [Making Assumptions \(2:13\)](#). Explains why our brains naturally make assumptions and how we can check them. Discuss: Why is it helpful that our brains make assumptions? Why is it important to check our assumptions when meeting someone new?

- What stereotypes did Farah experience? Why were they hurtful?
- How could people have shown curiosity more respectfully?
- Farah suggests asking yourself: Do I want to learn more? Understand better? See a different perspective? Why are these helpful questions to ask before being curious about someone?

REFLECT

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Activity: Assumptions I Make + Others Make

Explain: Our brains naturally make assumptions. Long ago, this helped people stay safe by quickly noticing patterns and possible dangers. But today, assumptions aren't always correct. They can lead us to label people and stop us from really getting to know them. It can also feel hurtful when others make assumptions about us without taking the time to understand who we truly are.

Hand out the [Worksheet: Assumptions \(PDF\)](#) (1/student). Students complete Side 1 independently.

Discuss:

- Are any assumptions you make about others correct? How do you know? How could you find out?
- Have you ever made an assumption that hurt someone? What happened?
- When you notice you're making an assumption, what questions can you ask yourself to shift your thinking?
- What is one way you can show curiosity to learn more about someone?
- How can curiosity help build stronger connections than assumptions?

DIGGING DEEPER

Students complete Side 2 of the [Worksheet: Assumptions \(PDF\)](#).

Discuss:

- Describe a time when someone assumed something about you. How did it make you feel?
- Did that experience affect how you think about your identity?
- How do you want others to see you?
- Sometimes people hide parts of themselves to fit in or feel safe. When might that be okay, and when might it not?



VOCAB

Curiosity: noun; a desire to learn more about something or someone.



CONNECTION

Videos: [What Assumptions Do Kids Make About Each Other?](#) | [Reverse Assumptions](#) (6:02) and/or [What Judgments do you make about Teenagers?](#) | [Reverse Assumptions](#) (5:46). Youth test their assumptions to see what they miss when they think they already know someone. Discuss: What surprised you about the assumptions they made? How might some of these assumptions be harmful? How did their curiosity change after seeing the truth about each other?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], be curious about someone in your life. Question your assumptions to learn who they really are—this is a simple but powerful act of kindness!

Things to Consider

- How does it feel when others make assumptions about you versus when they show curiosity?
- Our brains naturally make assumptions, but curiosity is a kind way to check them.
- Your curiosity might spark a new friendship or a deeper connection with someone in your close communities!

Brainstorm Actions

Here are some action ideas for inspiration. Brainstorm more together if needed to build confidence in taking true, small, and brave actions.

- I showed curiosity toward someone I usually thought was annoying. I learned they were having a tough time, which explained their behavior.
- I met a girl I assumed belonged to a certain group based on her nationality. After talking to her, I discovered how much we have in common.
- I talked to a kid I usually find intimidating and realized their talkativeness is just a way of being friendly.

Closing Quote/Image

Use this Quote and/or Image ([PDF](#)) to close the lesson. “Replace judgment with curiosity.” – Lynn Nottage

Discuss:

- What does this quote/image mean to you now?
- How does this quote/image connect to the lesson?

★ THINKGIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: small is all
3. Brave: step into your courage zone

★ CONNECTION

Use journaling to deepen reflection and strengthen writing skills—students respond online or use the Journal Questions: Show Curiosity in Someone ([PDF](#)) if working offline.

★ CONNECTION

Lynn Nottage (1964–present) is an American playwright who explores working-class life and race relations. She is the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice, for *Ruined* (2009) and *Sweat* (2017).

Student Journal Questions

- Which outside factors—like media, family, or school—most influence the assumptions you make?
- Which of your assumptions are positive, negative, or neutral? Are there any you'd like to change, and how could you do that?
- How does being curious about others relate to showing compassion?

Extensions

DO

Find Me!

Hand out [Find Me! \(PDF\)](#) slips. Students fill out a slip individually (without sharing answers). Collect the slips, shuffle them, and redistribute randomly—no one should get their own. Students use the questions and answers to guess the owner of each slip.

Discuss:

- Did anything surprise you during this activity? Explain.
- Did any answers make you more curious about your peers? Why or why not?
- How, if at all, does this activity inspire you to approach people differently?
- Where else could this activity be used effectively? Explain.

WATCH

Video: [KIDS Q&A! What Does It Mean to Be CURIOUS? \(2:45\)](#). Children share their thoughts on curiosity.

Discuss:

- In your own words, what does it mean to be curious?
- At 0:49, a girl says, "When I want to be someone's friend, I ask them a lot of questions." What does this show about how curiosity helps build trust and understanding in relationships?
- Why is it important to practice curiosity when using social media or consuming content?
- How have you benefited—or how could you benefit—from being curious?

READ/LISTEN

Audio: [Ky-Antre Compton and Stuart Chittenden \(1:37\)](#). This StoryCorps segment shares the story of Ky-Antre and his Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor, Stuart Chittenden. At first, Ky-Antre thought the program would be boring, but over time, their bond grew stronger.

Discuss:

- How might curiosity have helped Ky-Antre change his mind about Stuart? How did it contribute to their growing brotherhood?
- StoryCorps collects personal stories through interviews. If you could do a StoryCorps segment, who would you interview and why?