

Cross the Line

Empowerment Activity

Cross the Line

You can choose to facilitate the activity or participate depending on your comfort level.

- 1. Have everyone line up facing the same direction.** Draw an imaginary line about five feet in front of them. (If there's no space for this, you can have everyone stand in a circle and step in and out. Or you can have students remain at their desks and stand up/sit down.)
- 2. Explain that you're going to read a series of statements.** If the statement is true for them they should walk across the line, turn around and look at the group, and then walk back to their place.
- 3. Warn them that some questions are personal.** It's perfectly alright if someone isn't comfortable crossing the line and everyone has the option to choose when they cross the line.
- 4. The activity must be done in absolute silence.** There are no judgments of anyone for crossing or not crossing. If you know something is true for someone and they choose not to cross (or vice versa), respect their privacy and don't call them out.
- 5. Remind students of the confidentiality guideline.** *We will talk about the activity at the end, so if something makes you think or you have a question, save it until the end so we can address it.*

Statements are listed on the following page.

Cross the line if you:

- 1) Like ice cream.
- 2) Think summer is the best season.
- 3) Have a brother.
- 4) Have a sister.
- 5) Like hip-hop.
- 6) Have ever been in a fight.
- 7) Have ever been bullied.
- 8) Have ever bullied someone.
- 9) Saw someone being bullied and did nothing.
- 10) Find it hard to say "no" to your friends.
- 11) Have ever felt unsafe at school.
- 12) Have ever gotten written up.
- 13) Have ever been suspended.
- 14) Consider yourself a leader.
- 15) Do some form of creative art (drawing, writing, music, dance, theatre, etc.).
- 16) Like to play sports or do physical activity.
- 17) Math and science comes naturally to you.
- 18) English and social studies come naturally to you.
- 19) Have ever seen a family member excessively use drugs or alcohol.
- 20) Have ever used drugs or alcohol.
- 21) Have parents who are divorced or were never married.
- 22) Had an argument with your parents in the last week.
- 23) Have been spanked by a family member.*
- 24) Have gotten in a physical fight with a sibling.*
- 25) Have a family member who's died.
- 26) Have a family member who's been in jail.
- 27) Have a parent who's ever been unemployed.
- 28) Heard gun shots in your neighborhood.
- 29) Sometimes you get scared.
- 30) You cried in the last month.
- 31) You ever get mad at your teacher.
- 32) Are worried about your future.
- 33) You have two moms or two dads.
- 34) You are adopted.
- 35) You have a brother or sister who is adopted.
- 36) Feel like your family is proud of you.
- 37) You have a grown-up in your life that you really trust.
- 38) Been treated unfairly because of your:
 - (do a separate one for each category):
 - race
 - socioeconomic status
 - gender
 - sexual orientation
 - age
- 39) You know someone that is gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- 40) You think gay people should be allowed to get married.
- 41) You believe in God or spirituality.
- 42) Someone's ever called you fat.
- 43) You have a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 44) You've ever gone beyond kissing.
- 45) Stayed in a relationship that wasn't working for you.
- 46) Lied to someone you were dating.
- 47) Regretted doing something to someone you dated.
- 48) If at any point you were uncomfortable admitting to something so you didn't cross the line even though the statement was true for you.

Thank the students and ask them to return to their seats.

Facilitator's Note: Please note that this lesson can bring out many different reactions from students. The goal is to make students feel safe and connected. If an outcry occurs that needs to be reported, keep in mind that you are mandated reporter and must contact Child Protective Services. However it is imperative that you are sensitive to the child and the group dynamic. This may mean you acknowledge what was shared but wait until after class to directly speak with the student or take any action.

Discussion Questions

- *Was there anything you liked or hated about this activity?*
- *Were there things you were surprised to see how many people crossed for? Or how few?*
- *Did you learn anything about one of your friends you didn't already know?*
- *Which ones were hard to admit to for you? Which were easy?*
- *How do you feel about the group after this exercise?*

Facilitator's Note: Students may want to ask each other questions about the activity. Allow this to happen, but before doing so, let everyone know that they can decline to answer any question.

Prompts for 3rd-5th Grade

Step into the circle if:

1. You have a brother.
2. You have a sister.
3. Breakfast is your favorite meal of the day.
4. You like to build things.
5. You like to hug your friends.
6. You like your friends giving hugs to you.
7. You worry about someone in your family.
8. You like pizza.
9. You don't like school.
10. You like to come to school.
11. You live with your mom and dad.
12. You like to draw or make art.
13. You like to play sports.
14. You live with someone else in your family like a grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin.
15. You like vegetables.
16. Your mom and dad live in separate houses.
17. You ever get into arguments with your brothers or sisters.
18. Sometimes you get scared.
19. You cried in the last month.
20. You ever get mad at your teacher.
21. You have two moms or two dads.
22. You are adopted.
23. You have a brother or sister who is adopted.
24. You hit someone when you were angry.
25. You have been bullied.
26. You have bullied someone else.
27. You have seen someone being bullied and didn't do anything about it.
28. Someone in your family has died.
29. You like to listen to music.
30. You have a grown-up in your life that you really trust.
31. You ever didn't step into the circle even though something was true for you.

Questions

- *What were some of the things that we all stepped into the circle for?*
- *What were some things that were different about us? That we didn't all step into the circle for?*
- *What did it feel like when you stepped into the circle?*
- *What did it feel like when you stayed outside of the circle?*
- *Was there anything you were surprised was true or not true for so many of us? Which ones?*
- *Did you learn anything new about someone in the group?*