

# Morning Meeting Amid Tragedy

Grades K–2

## Lesson Plan

When students return to school after a tragedy, it is essential to welcome students back into the classroom and allow them to sit in a space where they feel comfortable. As your students enter, observe their actions and take the opportunity to look for students who are struggling. Students who remain quiet may have a more challenging time expressing themselves.

To ensure that the conversation remains respectful, relevant, and without misinformation, the teacher or advisor should act as a facilitator throughout this Morning Meeting.

*As students enter the classroom, greet each student and direct them to read and respond to the message. Each component of this Morning Meeting will be teacher-facilitated to keep the conversations appropriate, respectful, and relevant.*

### A Greeting: “Good Morning” Greeting

Stick with a well-known greeting in your classroom with which students already feel familiar and comfortable. The important thing for this component is to ensure that every student is seen, acknowledged, and welcomed by name. If you do not have a particular greeting in mind, consider using the “Good Morning” greeting.

In this greeting, two students face each other, say “Good morning, [classmate’s name],” and then greet each other with a gesture of their choice—such as a wave, salute, bow, thumbs-up, or peace sign. Continue around the circle until all students have individually greeted each other.

### Sharing: Around-the-Circle Share

Start the sharing component by acknowledging that students might have different feelings about being at school today. Remind them they shared their feelings in response to the morning message as they entered.

Ask students to close their eyes and think of something someone has done for them when they were feeling sad that helped them to feel better. Let students know that when things are challenging, it can be helpful to find ways to be kind to one another.

Have students share around the circle using this sentence starter: “One nice thing I can do today is \_\_\_\_\_.” For younger students, it can be helpful to have this written down on the board. Offer a few examples, such as, “Pick up something they dropped,” “Let them take a turn first,” or “Give a friend a hug.”

Write the ideas students generate on the board and reference them throughout the day, especially if the mood seems low and students need a morale boost.

The *Responsive Classroom* practice of Morning Meeting provides students with a **safe and predictable environment**, which is especially important in the wake of a tragedy in the classroom or school community.

Activity: Just Like Me Variation

In the standard version of this activity, the teacher names an interest. For example, “I like to swim.” Any student who also likes to swim stands up and says, “Just like me!” then sits back down. The teacher names another interest, and those who relate to it stand up.

For this version, instead of saying “Just like me” aloud, students use silent signals to indicate whether or not the statement applies to them (i.e., standing up or sitting down, thumbs up or thumbs down, holding up a green circle or holding up a red circle). You will provide all of the examples for this activity, starting with low-risk, inclusive statements, such as:

- “I have a pet.”
- “I have a sibling.”
- “I am wearing blue.”
- “I like ice cream.”

Then invite students to close their eyes and move on to higher-risk statements, such as:

- “When I argue with a friend, I feel worried.”
- “When I hear someone yell, I feel sad.”
- “When I see someone being mean to someone else, I feel angry.”
- “When I can’t find someone to talk to, I feel stuck.”
- “When I see people fighting, I feel scared.”

Direct students to keep their eyes closed and identify how they are feeling today by providing the following prompts:

- “Today, I am feeling uncertain.”
- “Today, I am feeling nervous.”
- “Today, I am feeling calm.”
- “Today, I am feeling silly.”

Be sure to pay careful attention to the students who self-identified as having negative thoughts or feelings. Make a note to check in with them privately throughout the day.

Morning Message

Dear students,

I am glad to be in school with you. How are you feeling today? Add your name below.

				