



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

A Month of Gatherings

Compiled by

Sara Carrero, Jillian Luft & Mariah Schwarz



A Month of Gatherings

When working with young people, it can feel like moments to build connection are precious and few. We, the Morningside Center community, are fully aware of the time constraints and curriculum mandates that, sometimes, prove obstacles to relationship nurturing. With gratitude and understanding, we offer a month of simple and effective prompts/activities to gather as a community and engage in brief but meaningful sharing, listening and/or engaged play.

You can gather to check in on feelings, to find commonalities, to celebrate one another, etc. These gathering options can be used at the start of the day, after lunch, during transitions, or any other limited block of time. We remind you that it's not how much time we have, but rather what we do with it that matters.

In this collection, you'll find 26 prompts with accompanying graphics, providing you with enough opportunities for connection and engagement for every weekday in a month (and a few extras!) These gatherings can be used in any order, though if you're just starting to build community, we recommend beginning with games and lower-stakes prompts to build trust before moving on to deeper sharing. Enjoy!

Gathering #1

Ask students: What's something that always makes you laugh? Why?



Gathering #2

Sounds of Joy

Share a song that brings you joy. Invite students to listen and then have them journal/share in response to the song. Invite students, in a go-round or popcorn-style, to then share suggestions for other songs that make them feel happy. These songs can be compiled to form a playlist for future sessions.



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Gathering #3

Describe your favorite place. Is it outside or inside? Are there people there or just you? What sights, sounds and smells make it your favorite place?



Gathering #4

Mindfulness Moment

Ask students to close their eyes and take 4 deep breaths in and out to find space and prepare for the content of the lesson.



Mindfulness Moment

**Close your eyes and take
4 deep breaths in and out
to find space and prepare
for the content of the
lesson.**

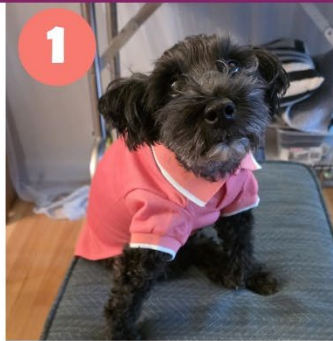
Gathering #5

How are you feeling today? Check out the photos of the dog and pick the one that shows how you're feeling! This sort of check in is both a fun way to get students talking as well as a way to gather information about how everyone is showing up for the day (allowing you to you plan accordingly)! A fun note, Morningside Center pets are starring in our Friday "how are you feeling" gatherings!



How are you feeling?

1



2



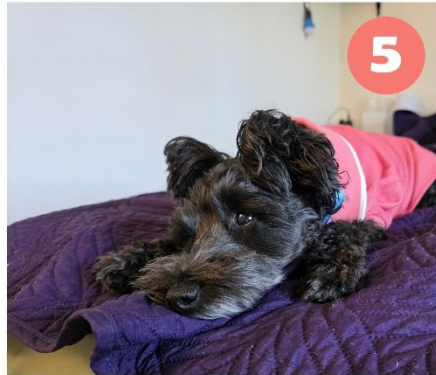
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4



5



6



7



8



Gathering #6

If you could be a character in any book, movie or TV show, who would it be?
Why?



If you could be
a character in
any book, movie
or TV show, who
would it be?
Why?

Gathering #7

What I want others to know about me is...



Gathering #8

Ask students: What's new and good today?



Gathering #9

If you could do something that you've never done before, what would it be?
Describe and/or draw it.



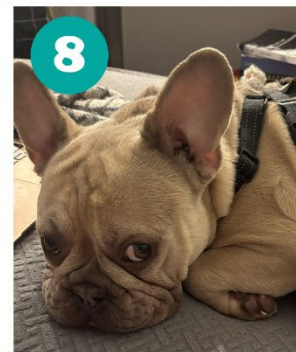
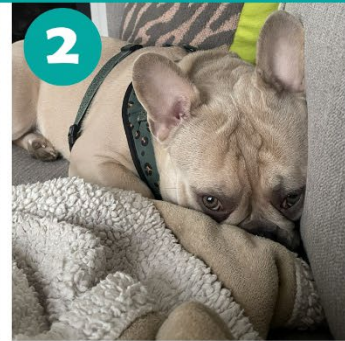
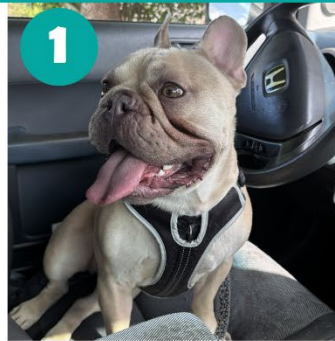
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Gathering #10

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**How
are you
feeling?**

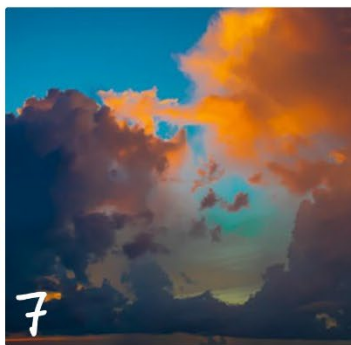
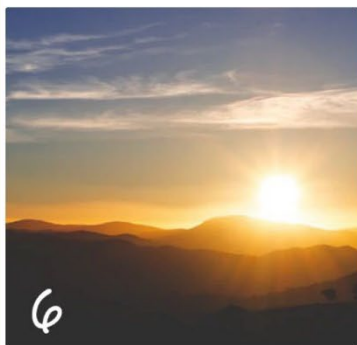
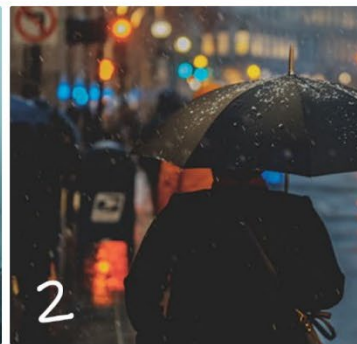


Gathering #11

How are you feeling today? Share the Emotional Weather Check-In with your students and ask them to share how they're feeling.



Emotional Weather Check-In



Gathering #12

Have students name their favorite cuisines or restaurants. Record their responses on board or chart paper. Vote on which ones are their top favorites.



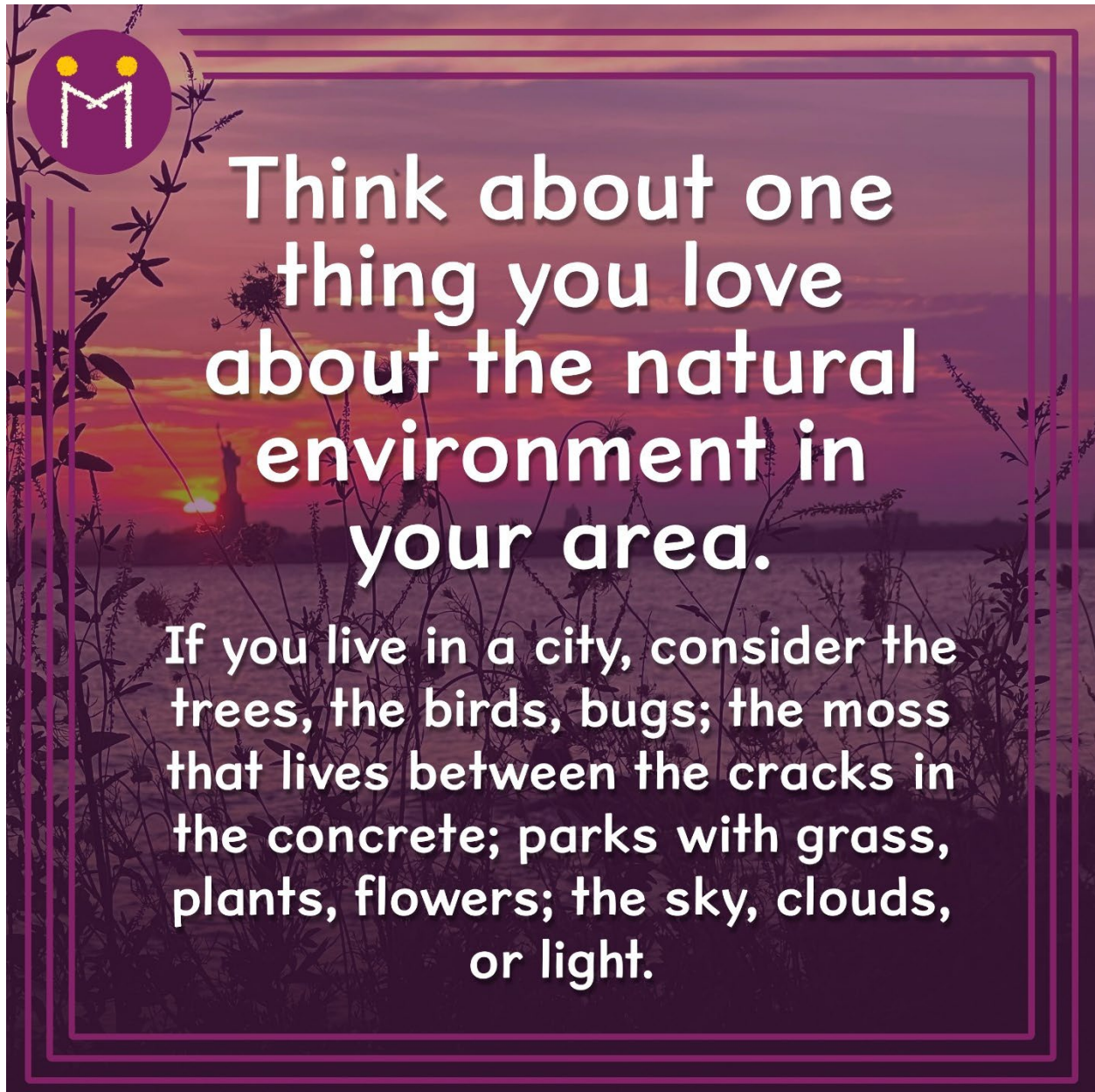
**Name your
favorite cuisines
or restaurants.**

**Record responses on
board or chart paper.
Vote on which ones are
the group's top favorites.**

Gathering #13

Invite each student in turn to think about and then share one thing they love about the natural environment in your area.

If you live in a city, think about the trees, the birds, bugs; the moss that lives between the cracks in the concrete; parks with grass, plants, flowers; the sky, clouds, or light.



Gathering #14

Ask your students: What is a word that comes to mind for them as they look ahead to the holidays? Explain that the holiday season is often associated with positive images, especially in the media. Yet for many people and for many reasons, the holidays are not necessarily joyous. In a go-round, ask all students to share a word, image or feeling—positive or not—that comes up for them as they look ahead to the holidays.



**What is a word
that comes to mind
as you look ahead
to the holidays?**

**The holiday season is often
associated with positive
images, especially in the
media. Yet for many people
and for many reasons, the
holidays are not
necessarily joyous.**

Gathering #15

How are you feeling today? Check out the photos of the cat and pick the one that shows how you're feeling! This sort of check in is both a fun way to get students talking as well as a way to gather information about how everyone is showing up for the day (allowing you to you plan accordingly)! A fun note, Morningside Center pets are starring in our Friday "how are you feeling" gatherings!



How are you feeling?



Gathering #16

Share with students that “gratitude practice”—regularly remembering all that we are thankful for –has been shown to have a multitude of benefits. It can allow us to focus on the present and turn away from negative emotions we may feel and encourage empathy.

Write down 3-5 things you’re grateful for...anything from a caring friend to a favorite food or a place in nature you love.

Ask a couple of students to share out.



Gathering #17

Quickly pair each student with the person next to them. Give each pair 2 minutes to take turns talking. Ask each student to tell their partner: What is something most people don't know about you? Let them know when the time is about half up so they can switch.

Ask three or four volunteers to share, "popcorn style" what they said. (They should only speak for themselves, not for their partner.)



**Quickly pair each student
with the person next to them.
Give each pair 2 minutes to
take turns talking.**

**Ask each student to tell their
partner: What is something
most people don't know
about you?**

Gathering #18

A moment I'm proud of in my life is...



Gathering #19

Ask students to share what's on top—what is on their mind or how they're feeling coming into the classroom today.

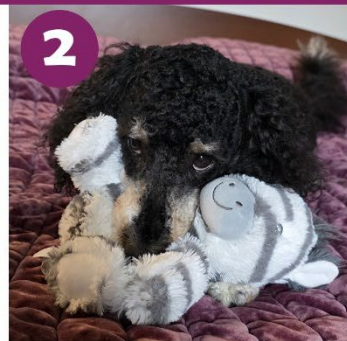


Gathering #20

How are you feeling today? Check out the photos of the dog and pick the one that shows how you're feeling! This sort of check in is both a fun way to get students talking as well as a way to gather information about how everyone is showing up for the day (allowing you to you plan accordingly)! A fun note, Morningside Center pets are starring in our Friday "how are you feeling" gatherings!



How are you feeling?



Gathering #21

Rainstorm

Perform these Rainstorm Actions in the order provided in unison as a class:

- Rub hands together
- Snap fingers
- Clap hands
- Slap thighs
- Stomp feet
- Slap thighs
- Clap hands
- Snap fingers
- Rub hands
- Silent head nod

Debrief by asking: What was this experience like for you? What effect did it have once everyone joined in making a sound?



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Gathering #22

Human Sculpture

Explain that we are going to make a human sculpture. Ask for a volunteer to lead students in this activity. Invite that student into the center of the circle to strike a pose and hold the position until all students have arranged themselves around the circle and have observed the pose. Going in a clockwise direction around the circle, invite each student to come into the center and become part of the human sculpture. When all have had the opportunity to strike their pose in the human sculpture, ask them to notice what they've created together.



Human Sculpture

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Gathering #23

Five People Standing

Explain to students that we're going to play a game. The goal is for 5 people (no more and no less) to stand at the same time. There's no strategizing or talking during the game. Now, play! After playing a few rounds, in a go-round, pass around the talking piece and invite students to share in response to the following question: What was that activity like for you? What did we have to do to achieve our goal of 5 people standing?



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The goal is for 5 people
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Now, play!**

Gathering #24

Silent Line-Up

Have students count off by 5s to form groups. Then as caller, invite them to line up according to any, or all, of the guidelines: alphabetical order by first name, alphabetical order by last name, according to birthday.

Students must be silent but can communicate using body language and gestures. Continue while interest and engagement remain high. Then debrief by inviting students to share how this activity felt for them and what helped them form their lines.



Silent Line-Up

Have students count off by 5s to form groups. Then as caller, invite them to line up according to any, or all, of the guidelines below:

- **Alphabetical order by first name**
- **Alphabetical order by last name**
- **According to birthday**

Students must be silent but can communicate using body language and gestures.

Gathering #25

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How are you feeling?



Gathering #26

Ask students what the word "community" means. Come up with a definition along the lines of "a group of people living in the same area," or "a group of people who share something in common or have similar interests or goals."



**Ask students what the word
"community" means.**

**Ask what communities the students
are a part of.**

**Next ask students to think about a
time they have helped out someone in
their community (family,
neighborhood, school, or classroom).**

**In pairs, ask students share what
happened. Who did they help out and
why?**

Ask what communities the students are a part of. Write their responses on the board or chart paper. Responses might be their families, their friends, their neighborhood, city or country, their school or classroom, their linguistic or religious community, etc.

Next ask students to think about a time they have helped out someone in their community (family, neighborhood, school, or classroom). In pairs, ask students share what happened. Who did they help out and why?

Back in the full group, ask a few volunteers to share what they discussed. Also ask what it felt like to help other people.