



THE OJAI FOUNDATION'S
Council in Schools

Inspiring engaged, compassionate school communities

Fortune-Telling Game and Council
Grades 7-12 (can be modified for elementary grades)

Summary

This council uses a visualization exercise and a fortune-telling game to foster self-reflection and intention-setting in connection with the start of the new year, while building community within the circle.

Objectives

- To foster self-discovery, personal responsibility, and connection.
- To help students identify existing character strengths, as well as areas for growth.
- To mark the new year with a fun game and intention-setting.

Materials

- Hershey's Kisses and circular stickers that fit on bottom – one for each participant, including the facilitator. The Kisses and labels need to be prepared in advance. On each label write a one word positive character quality, such as: love, trust, perseverance, empathy, courage, understanding, strength, friendship, patience, compassion, balance, boldness, gentleness, discipline, will, clarity, vitality, leadership, playfulness, self-expression, humor, adventure, sweetness, joy, passion, humility, hope... Stick a label on the bottom of each Kiss and put all of the Kisses in a special container to present for the council.

Open council

Set context for council

- Tell the circle: At the start of a new year, people in cultures around the world use rituals to look at the year ahead and to state intentions for how they want to grow in the coming year. Today we are going to play a fortune-telling game to envision our personal growth in the year ahead and to set intentions for ourselves.

Breath and Visualization

- Tell the circle: Before we play the game, let's become aware of our breath and clear our minds. To make it easier to focus on your breath, close your eyes, take a deep slow deep breath in...and as you let it out let your mind become clear and still. Do that again, another deep inhalation...and as you exhale your breath let it cleanse your mind. One more time, a deep breath in...and exhale all the air out of your lungs along with all the thoughts and ideas that might be in your mind. Now, with a clear mind, allow yourself to consider what personal quality of character you might need at this time to make your life work better for you. It might be a quality you already have and want more of...or it might be something you feel you haven't developed yet and want to bring in. Take a minute and just see what pops into your mind.

Fortune-Telling Game and Council

- After allowing about a minute for participants to see what qualities of character come to mind, say: Now open your eyes. Stay in silence. I'm going to pass this box [or basket or whatever it is that holds the Hershey's Kisses] around the circle. When it comes to you, close your eyes, reach inside, and take out one of the Hershey's Kisses. On the bottom of each Kiss is written a one-word quality of character. The word on your Kiss is your gift – a quality for you. When the box [or whatever it is] has gotten all the way around the circle and everyone has gotten a Kiss [this includes the facilitator], we will go around and share what we got. Do not open the Kiss or eat it until everyone has spoken.
- Send the box around the circle. After everyone has a Kiss, do a round of everyone sharing the word on the bottom of their Kiss. In addition to reading the word, everyone is encouraged to comment on the word – how does it relate to the quality of character they had in mind when they closed their eyes and thought about what they need to make their life work better. Does the word on their Kiss suit them? Is it something they need? Do they have it already? Or do they have too much of it? After going around the circle, if time allows, invite any PS's – anything someone wants to add to what they previously shared.
- After the sharing is complete, have everyone unwrap and eat their Kisses and imagine, as the chocolate melts in their mouth, that they are taking this quality into themselves. (If someone gets a quality they really don't want – which rarely occurs – you might suggest that they could swap it with someone who wants that quality. If anyone is absent, you can set aside a Kiss for them.)
- If time allows, do a witness round for comments on what participants noticed within themselves as they ate their Kiss.

Close Council

We encourage you to use, enjoy, and amend this plan in any ways that feel natural to you!

Contributed by Shelly Kessler