



THE OJAI FOUNDATION'S  
**Council In Schools;**

*Inspiring engaged compassionate school communities*

## **A Council on Someone You Admire**

**Grades 6–12**

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### **Summary**

This council helps develop many themes including family, relationships, transitions, character development, intention-setting, making a difference, dealing with change.

### **Objectives**

- Identify admirable qualities
- Recognize and honor acts of kindness
- Identify and appreciate a special person in each student's life

### **Materials**

- **The Grandfather** by Gary Soto from *A Summer Life*

### **Set context for a council on someone you admire**

Today we are going to think about important relationships and the people who have helped shape us along our journeys. These people may have influenced us, supported us, or inspired us by their work or their way of being.

### **Read**

**The Grandfather** by Gary Soto. Let's take a few moments and in popcorn style name some of the qualities of the grandfather that affected Soto.

*Note: We suggest this short story because even older students can appreciate a read-aloud, and reading together sets a tone of intimacy and sharing. Written stories can help students of all ages recognize their own stories and develop their appreciation of literature. Share texts either immediately before the council or in advance. These suggestions apply to any piece of text you choose to set context for your council.*

### **Popcorn**

Think about a person in your own life – a family member, teacher, friend, coach – who you admire. Who are a few examples of people we admire?

*Note: Optional. Don't let this go on so long that it limits your council time.*

### **Open Council**

## **Dedication**

### **Speed Round**

Let's begin by offering into the circle the name of a person in your family who you admire, or who has had a positive impact on you. If you would rather, you may choose someone outside your family. This person could be alive right now, or have already passed on. When the talking piece comes, say the name of the person in his or her own language.

*Note: Often students will say "my mother" or "my grandfather," omitting the name. It's very nice to hear names – in many languages. To help them remember to do this, you start: "My mother, Rene." When students forget, it's OK!*

*The talking piece can go around two or three times if it seems appropriate.*

### **Speed Round**

Tell us briefly what it is about this person that you admire. For example, it might be a great sense of humor when things are tough, patience, hard work, kindness.

*Note: If you think this may be a challenge for your students, make sure to model with your own facilitating examples.*

### **Story Round**

- Now that we've heard the names of people we admire and the qualities in them that we admire, tell a story, something the person said or did, that shows how that person demonstrates one of those qualities.
- Share a story about a time you were with this person. In telling the story please take us there. Who is this person? Where were you? How old were you? What happened? Any particular reason this memory comes to mind?
- Share a story about this person.

### **Additional Prompts**

- If this person was sitting in the circle with you today, right across from you, at this particular point in your life what piece of advice might they offer you? What would they say to you?
- What question(s) would you like to ask this person?

### **Witness**

Share something that stayed with you or something you're taking away.

### **Close Council**

**We encourage you to amend this plan in any ways that feel natural to you!**

*Contributed by many council facilitators; edited by Chris Elder and Julia Wasson.*