



# Restorative Discipline Circle Guide Book

Dean Leaman Junior High School  
*LCISD*

This resource guide is designed to help teachers, administrators, students, and parents incorporate the practice of the Circle into the everyday life of the school community. The Circle is an intentional space designed to promote connection, understanding, and dialogue in a group.

What is practiced in the Circle:

- Respect
- Equality
- Empathy
- Problem solving
- Responsibility
- Self-regulation
- Shared leadership

## Essential Elements

*Organize the interaction within the CIRCLE  
with the following elements:*

- 1) **Seating-** seating all participants in a circle (without tables)
- 2) **Mindfulness moment-** ringing a bell or making a sound tone with instructions to listen for the very last vibration and then to raise a hand creates a stillness
- 3) **Opening ceremony** – use a breathing technique, silence, or short inspirational reading to release energy before beginning the Circle
- 4) **Centerpiece-** a centerpiece to create a focal point for speaking



- 5) **Talking piece-** only the person holding the piece may speak
- 6) **Identifying values-** allow students to name the values they want for the Circle
- 7) **Generating guidelines-** make a list of behavioral expectations for the participants in the Circle
- 8) **Guiding questions-** use a prompting question or theme at the beginning of each round to stimulate conversation or reflection
- 9) **Agreements-** decisions in the Circle are made by consensus
- 10) **Closing ceremony-** prepare students to return to the ordinary space of their lives ex. a simple reading or moment of quiet breathing.



## Essential Elements of the Circle

**Exploring Values:**

What is your passion?

What gives you hope?

What is something you value about yourself?

What is something that you are thankful for?

**Getting Acquainted:**

Share a happy childhood memory.

I like to collect...

Describe your favorite vacation.

If you could change anything about yourself, what would it be?

Who are some of your heroes?

**Storytelling From Our Lives:**

A time when you were outside your comfort zone.

A time that was one of your most difficult challenges.

Something that scares you. How do you deal with it?

**Taking Responsibility:**

What is the most important lesson in life you have ever learned?

Name one thing about yourself that you would like to change.

What do you think other people see as a quality you need to work on?

**Toward the End of a Circle:**

What have you learned?

Is there anything you came in with that you would like to leave behind?

How will these insights help you in the next week?

**Prompting Questions/Topics for Circles**

## Introducing Circles in Schools

**Teacher:** We are going to practice a new way of being together and talking to one another. This will be our talking piece. Whoever holds the talking piece will be the only one talking. While the person holding the talking piece is speaking, everyone else in the Circle should be actively listening. Let's start with a question: What do you think it means to speak from your heart?

**ROUND:** A round is going around the circle allowing each student to have one turn speaking.

**Teacher:** Tell us about a time when you sit in a circle at home or with your friends.

**ROUND:** A round is going around the circle allowing each student to have one turn speaking.

**Teacher:** What do you notice that is special about sitting in and sharing in a Circle?

**ROUND:** A round is going around the circle allowing each student to have one turn speaking.

**Closing:** Allow students to stretch and stand before returning to classwork.

**Introducing the Circle**

## Three Minute Focus Circle

**Teacher:** We are going to sit together in a Circle. This will be our talking piece. Whoever holds the talking piece will be the only one talking. While the person holding the talking piece is speaking, everyone else in the Circle should be actively listening. I want to welcome everyone to the Circle. Please close your eyes and listen quietly to the sound and feel of your own breath for one minute. Please share on word that describes how you are feeling today.

**ROUND:** A round is going around the circle allowing each student to have one turn speaking.

**Teacher:** Let's begin class.

**Closing:** Allow students to stretch and stand before returning to classwork.