



## Expanding Our Circles of Concern

This lesson leads students to explore social circles of concern and identify school community needs while connecting learnings from previous units.

### Essential Question

How can I apply the things I've learned to make a difference in my community?

### Guiding Question

What are the different circles of people I'm connected with? How can I learn more about the needs of people beyond my own friends and family?

### Objectives

- Students will learn to empathize and reach out beyond their immediate circles of concern.
- Students will begin to identify needs in their school community.
- Students will consider how to gather information about school and neighborhood community needs.

### Advance preparation

- Prepare student materials. (**Note:** Do not distribute student handouts as students enter; wait to distribute them at indicated points in the lesson.)

### Materials/Resources

- PowerPoint slideshow 5.1 (adapt as needed)
- Poster paper for “Wall of Needs” and idea sharing
- Large sticky notes and markers
- Talking piece

### Student Materials

- Paper for Do Now and team brainstorming
- “Circles of Concern” handout
- “What are my school community’s needs?” handout
- Community Observation Report handout

## Vocabulary

- Circle of Concern

## Do Now

2 min.

Slide 1: Students write about or draw the images that come to mind when they hear the phrase “making a difference.”

## Introduction (Framing/Overview)

3 min.

1. Explain that in this final unit we will build on everything we have learned, put it all together, and learn to use the skills we are learning in school to make a difference in our community and world. Today we will begin with some activities that will help us get ready to do that. Review the day’s agenda (slide 3).

## Activity 1: A Wider Circle Around You

8 min.

2. Introduce circles of concern as a focus of today’s lesson. Using the slideshow (**save the “Circles of Concern” handout until all circles in the PowerPoint have been presented**), explain to students that each of us has concerns for many people in the world. First, we are concerned for ourselves (show slide 4). Think about what concerns you have about yourself. Are you concerned about your grades and where you plan to go in life?

**Direct  
Instruction**

3. Next, we are concerned about our friends and family (show slide 5). Think about what concerns you have for your family. Are you worried for one of your siblings or friends?

4. Discuss expanding circles of concern. We could keep our Circle of Concern small, close to us, and simple. Ask students to discuss why many people may just want to focus on this small world of themselves and their immediate family and friends. Then, ask what might happen if we group everyone else as “beyond our concern” or “none of our business”?

**Whole  
Class  
Discussion**

5. Invite students to think about the people beyond their narrow circle of concern. Who would they want to include beyond just this little circle?

6. Offer students your own perspective on expanding our circles of concern. Show slide 6 and say: *I think we also need to be concerned about our school community and the neighborhoods we live in.* Slide 7: *I also think about our state and country. I think about the world we live in, and everyone on Planet Earth* (slide 8).

**Teacher  
Modeling**

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| <p>7. Ask students for reasons why it is important to be concerned about our community, other communities throughout our country, and people in other countries throughout the world.</p> <p>8. Distribute the “Circles of Concern” handout to students. Ask students to write the names of people in their personal “Family and Friends” circle, the name of their school and neighborhood in the next circle, and so on.</p> <p>9. After students have filled out their “Circles of Concern” handout, share that the rest of the day’s discussions will focus on our <b>school community</b> and move from empathy to action by identifying some of the needs we might see there (slide 9).</p> | <p><b>Whole Class Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Personal Reflection</b></p> |
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## Activity 2 : My School Community's Needs

15 min.

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| <p>10. Slide 10: Distribute the “What are my school community’s needs?” worksheet. Have students work in teams to brainstorm the school community’s needs. Students should individually fill out Column A and B in the activity sheet; explain that they will work on Columns C-E about addressing those needs in a later lesson.</p> <p>11. Slide 11: Ask students to share their ideas (Column A) and discuss who is affected by each identified need (Column B) in a class-wide discussion.</p> <p>12. Encourage students to use markers to write their ideas on large post-its and create a WALL OF NEEDS (that will be expanded in Lesson 2 with Neighborhood Community needs) and present them orally to the class as they post them. Ask if there are other ideas that have not been shared but should be included. (You can write and post these.)</p> | <p><b>Team Discussion/ Cooperative Learning</b></p> <p><b>Whole Class Discussion</b></p> |
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## Activity 3: Finding Out About Community Needs

14 min.

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| <p>14. As part of the class discussion, help students understand that we often need to gather more information as part of planning to address community needs. Ask them to share ideas about what further information might be needed and how to gather it. Write suggestions on poster paper and post it for reference in future class sessions.</p> <p>15. Advise students that in the next class session, they will expand their horizons to consider neighborhood needs. Slide 12: Ask how they might gather information on their own through an observation walk or interviews with key informants. Generate ideas as a class (list on poster paper) and then click to show suggestions about how they</p> | <p><b>Whole Class Discussion</b></p> |
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might begin this “fieldwork” of observation and information gathering as an afterschool activity, on their own or with classmates. Distribute and review the “Community Observation Report” form. Advise students that they should complete observations and write them up to submit and use during Lesson 3 of this unit (give them a date).

16. Slide 12: Introduce the notion of lifelines and advisors who can provide guidance or support. In a school community such lifelines may be teachers, counselors, coaches, mentors, or staff members who care about us and want us to succeed. Advise students that such people can also provide useful perspective as students gather information about the neighborhood and its needs.
17. Using one of the identified needs shared at the end of Activity 2 as an example, ask students to brainstorm: Who are potential lifelines and advisors who can provide support? How can they support our efforts if we get stuck?

## Closure

5 min.

Show slide 15: “Before you judge a person, walk a mile in their shoes.” How can this saying guide us as we prepare to walk through our school neighborhood to gather information about needs? Ask for a volunteer to begin sharing and then for others to add their thoughts.

Thank students for their participation and remind them to complete the “Community Observation Report” sometime before Lesson 3.

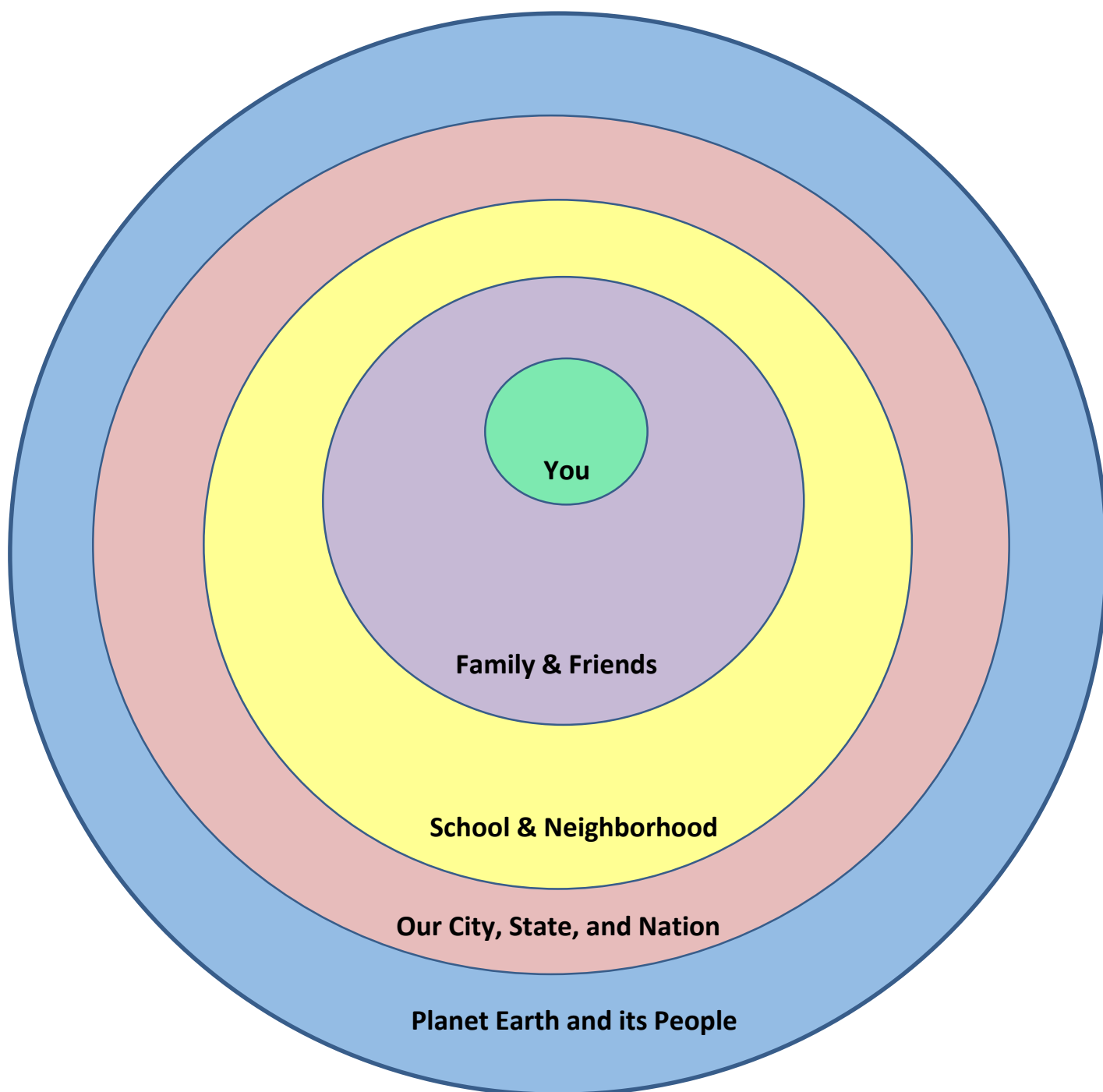
Exit Ticket: Have students turn in their “Circles of Concern” and “What are my school community’s needs?” sheets (to be returned to them in a subsequent lesson).

## Extensions

Homework for this lesson is students’ observation and information gathering in the community, along with their completed Community Observation Report.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Circles of Concern



What are my school community's needs?				
COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C	COLUMN D	COLUMN E
Needs I have identified in my school community.	How big (or small) is this issue? Who does it affect?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue now?	What can I do to help make a difference on this issue in the future?	What skills will I need to address this issue?*

**\*Note: Skills might include any of the following: stress management, mindfulness, growth mindset, time management, note-taking, active listening, working together and building consensus, and empathy**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Observation Report**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you decide to focus on the school community or a neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

What did you do to gather information about your community (take photos or video, interview community member(s), write about your observations after a walk, other)?

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What need(s) did you observe? \_\_\_\_\_

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How are people being affected by the needs you observed?

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What ideas (if any) do you have about what might be done to address these needs?

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