

**Morning Circle Discussions**  
***Building increasingly sophisticated student conversations***

In morning circle three levels of questioning are available to you as the facilitator.

- Literal Questions
- Personalizing Questions
- Challenging Questions

**Each day is a new day**

**Young learners comes together wondering how the day will unfold**

**Morning Circles attend to the heart of classroom community**

**HOW WILL YOUR DAY BEGIN?**

**Morning Discussions Matter**

1. Circle up first thing in the morning
2. Have established ground rules (Listen, Respect, Give, Try)
3. Share and discuss – inclusively and respectfully

Bob Norton, professor of education at University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse wrote a wonderful little book, "[The Quality Classroom Manager](#). He framed a very successful process for leading morning meeting discussions from simple to complex.

The key is to begin with Literal questioning and when it FEELS right then go to Personalize questioning and then to Challenge/complex questioning when it fits for the group and the moment. This kind of discussion facilitation mirrors the intellectual 'warmup to gymnastics' that makes up intelligent conversation.

**TWO EXAMPLES**

- **Level: Elementary**
- **Topic: Pets**
- **Ground rules:**
  - One person talks at a time (talking object) Respect
  - Listen respectfully
  - Give putups not putdowns
  - Try

**Literal Questions:**

1. What is a pet?
2. What are some things we should think about before getting a pet?
3. What is a veterinarian and what do they do?
4. What is the Humane Society?
5. What types of names are given to pets?
6. What pets can be our projects?
7. What are some strange types of pets?

8. What is a pet show or pet exhibit?

Personalize Questions:

1. What kind of pets do you have?
2. Where can you get a pet?
3. What kind of things do you do for your pets?
4. What kind of things do pets do for us?
5. Do any of our pets ever get into trouble?
6. What do you think is the best part about having a pet?
7. What is the hardest part of having a pet?
8. Can you name any famous pets?

Challenge Questions

1. What do you think our town would be like without any pets?
2. If you could design a perfect pet, what would it be?
3. If you were a pet, what would you be and why?

- **Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade**

- **Topic: Books**

- **Ground rules:**

- One person talks at a time (talking object) Respect
- Listen respectfully
- Give putups not putdowns
- Try

Literal Questions:

1. What are books?
2. Who are books for?
3. Why do we have books?
4. Who reads books?
5. What kinds of books are there?
6. Who writes books/
7. How can you get a book that you like?
8. What are some ways to read books?
9. Where do people read books?

Personalize questions:

1. What kinds of books do you like to read?
2. What is a favorite book of yours and why is it a favorite?
3. When do you enjoy reading?
4. Where is the your favorite spot to read?
5. Why do you like to read?
6. Why do you think that reading is important?
7. If you don't care to read, what could you do to enjoy it more?
8. How does your family feel about books?
9. Would you rather watch TV or read a good book. Why?

Challenge Questions

1. If you were going to write a book, what kind of book would you write?
2. How would our lives be different without books?