

### QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”**

**—Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

### Resources Required

- A deck of cards
- Any puzzle with 25 to 100 pieces

### Teacher Self-Reflection

Reflect on your experiences in school, both when you felt like you belonged and when you felt like you didn't belong. What made the difference in those experiences? Hold the intention that every child will feel like they belong in your class.

## Week 1<sup>d</sup>

# Focus of the Day: Building a Sense of Belonging

## Background Knowledge

Human beings have a deep need to belong to a group and to be a valued part of that group. Human brains are wired to be social, and they need to be in contact with other humans. Preteens and teens have an especially strong need to be part of a group. Every student in your class wants to be accepted and valued by you and by the whole class. A class is like a team. When students feel they are valued members of the team, their self-esteem and confidence go up. They feel safe and calm. This is the point at which they can be good, efficient learners.

## Activity for the Day

1. (Get a deck of cards and hand them all out to the students, so each has one or two cards.)
2. **Today we are going to focus on belonging.**
3. **You each have one or more cards. Your cards represent you in this class. What if I removed these cards** (take back cards from a student) **and also these cards** (take back cards from another student)? **What would happen to the deck of cards?** (Pause for students to comment.)
4. **Yes, if we remove cards from the deck, it would be difficult to play any card games. It wouldn't be the same deck. Each card is important.**
5. **What do you think the point of this lesson is, and how does it connect to our classroom?** (Take a few ideas from the students.)
6. **Remember that each one of you is an important and valuable part of our classroom. If you were missing, it wouldn't be the same without you.**
7. (For another activity, allow the students to assemble a puzzle with 25 to 100 pieces, passing out all the pieces so each student has one or more to work with. After the puzzle is assembled, remove several pieces. Then discuss how the missing pieces affect the overall puzzle picture. Link the discussion to the importance of each student in the classroom.)

