



Barbara Thomason developed Joy Circles™ after an extensive career in adult training and development and community and economic development. She served as a dean with the Lone Star Community College followed by fourteen years as the president and CEO of the Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce.

Barbara previously owned and operated a Gymboree® Play Center franchise where she learned the importance of movement and music to a child's sensory-motor integration. She has been writing children's fiction and loves creating new content for Joy Circles™.

Barbara brings the best of social-emotional learning, neuroscience, and contemporary children's literature together to produce a program of impact. The beautiful combination of trained facilitators, Joy Circles music, and Joy Circles' interactive sessions will make a positive difference in the lives of our youth.



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OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR MOST PRECIOUS GIFT



Circles foster community and communication, serving social and emotional purposes. It's a place where young people feel safe, valued, and heard. When gathered in a circle, everyone is equal and engaged.





A page from Joy Circles™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

OPENING:	Movement to Music, "I'm Glad You're Here"	
REVIEW:	Last Week's Models for Life, "The Big I" & "The Sarge"	
READ:	Towers Falling by Jewell Parker Rhodes, Chapter 2	
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:	Ch. 2 1) Describe Deja's observations of her new school. 2) 2) Deja thinks she and Ben are losers. Have you ever felt like a loser? What made you feel that way?	Discuss importance of confidentiality
GROUP EXERCISE:	Create a "Kinds of Bullying" List	Flipchart
DISCUSS:	Model for Life Today: 1) Soda Straw Exercise (see below) 2) Communication Circle Exercises	1) Hand out Straws. 2) Hand out Role-plays
CLOSING:	Review, Next Session, Circle Time	

WHAT IS JOY CIRCLES™?

Joy Circles™ is a transformational program designed for 4th-6th graders that positively impacts their self-confidence, communication, reading, and self-management skills. The program combines the best of social-emotional learning (SEL) with reading skills improvement utilizing stories, models, and interactive group activities. Sessions are conducted by trained, certified facilitators and can take place in a variety of approved settings.

The program is aligned with CASEL competencies and sets forth four foundational values:

- *Kindness is my Superpower*
- *Reading Rewards*
- *Listening and Hearing*
- *Judgement-Free Zone*

BENEFITS?

- Creates a common language
- Promotes content retention
- Delivers complex concepts with models
- Explores contemporary issues in approved literature
- Increases reading skill confidence
- Creates positive self-talk

THE SODA STRAW MODEL*

We use breathing as a tool to calm and to help one focus. It can be as easy as pretending to have a soda straw in your mouth. Breathe in through your nose and out through the "soda straw" slowly about three times. Repeat the process slowly. You should feel calmer with proper breathing.

With the plan to breathe in and out 3 times, dedicate each breath to someone or something:

- 1) Let's dedicate this first breath to all of the 4th graders at this school, for the hard work they put into school each day. That includes each of you!
- 2) Let's breathe in and out now in celebration of this beautiful day.
- 3) Finally, let's take this breath for ourselves. May your days be happy and meaningful and your nights peaceful.

*adapted from the work of Kirsten Welles, Brave Thinking Institute®