

## Me and You Middle School Lesson (30 min)

### Introduction

In today's lesson we will be learning about the idea of community and interpersonal relationships from a stoic lens. Stoics believe that human beings have a natural inclination to care for others, and as a result causes people to form relationships to individuals and their communities. We will explore this idea using the circles of Hierocles invented by Hierocles, a Stoic from the second century.

### Activity

Start off the activity by talking to the students about relationships.

Questions:

1. Who here has someone they're close with? (whether that be a friend or family member)
2. Are there any other people you have a close relationship with?
3. Why do you think you're close to them?
4. What is a relationship?

After introducing the idea of relationships, students can start doing the circles of Hierocles.

The circle of Hierocles

(<https://howtobeastocic.wordpress.com/2016/01/12/hierocles-a-conservative-stoic/>)

is the idea of us being in the center of a series of circles. Then we can start with small circles, with people that are closest to us, whether that be our family or friends. Then we add another circle with classmates, or teachers, etc. Then the next step up might be people in our neighborhood or community. This process can continue up until any point. Now the focus is to reduce the circles, giving each circle as much emotional importance as the other ones. This activity helps us see how we see our closer inner relationships in comparison to our relationship with our community and overall world.

At each point, it may be helpful to ask the students about who is in the circle in discussion and why they placed them there.

### Reflection

What sort of relationship does the individual have with their community? World?

What does it mean to be close to someone or something?

When does your circle begin to include your friends as opposed to your family? Why?

Are we all a part of one community?