

Soft Stretch Circle – Levels F-3

STAY ACTIVE

To use soft movement and soothing affirmations to help students explore the life skill of vulnerability. In this activity, gentle stretching becomes a way to connect with the body, calm the mind, and practise kind self-talk. Venus, with its glowing warmth and nurturing energy, reminds us that it's okay to feel unsure and that being open with ourselves is a quiet kind of strength.



Learning Intentions

Students will practise moving their bodies gently and safely during stretching time. This encourages physical self-awareness and respect for personal space.

Students will learn to listen to calming words that remind them it's okay to feel different emotions. This nurtures emotional safety and supports healthy vulnerability.

Students will practise saying kind words about themselves while they move. This builds self-esteem and confidence through positive affirmations.



Success Criteria

I can copy simple, gentle stretches in a circle with my friends. This supports coordination, balance, and following movement instructions.

I can take slow breaths and feel calm while we stretch together. This helps students regulate their energy and tune into their bodies.

I can listen to or say kind words to myself like "I am brave" or "It's okay to feel." This builds a sense of safety and acceptance within the group.



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Objective:

To use soft movement and soothing affirmations to help students explore the life skill of vulnerability. In this activity, gentle stretching becomes a way to connect with the body, calm the mind, and practise kind self-talk. Venus, with its glowing warmth and nurturing energy, reminds us that it's okay to feel unsure and that being open with ourselves is a quiet kind of strength.

Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students in a circle or scattered safely in open space.

Materials:

- Calm background music (optional)
- Yoga mats or soft floor space (carpet is fine).
- Visual pose cards or teacher demonstration (found in the resource PDF section)
- Affirmation cards or simple sentence starters for modelling (examples found in the resource PDF section).

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Gather students in a circle, seated or standing with enough space to move arms and legs safely. Revisit the *Venus* page from *The Playful Astronauts* and talk briefly about how being soft, quiet, and open can feel scary, but it's also strong and special.

Explain that they will be doing soft stretches together while listening to kind words they can say to themselves or others.

Gameplay:

Explain the Movements:

Guide students through a series of very gentle stretches, such as:

- Reaching arms to the sky like a flower growing
- Hugging knees to the chest while sitting
- Spreading arms out wide and wrapping them into a self-hug
- Butterfly stretch (feet together, knees out, gently flapping wings)

Pair each stretch with a soft affirmation such as:

- "I am safe."
- "It's okay to feel shy."
- "I am loved."
- "I can ask for help."
- "Feelings are part of me."

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Say these affirmations aloud slowly while students move. Encourage them to repeat them softly if they feel comfortable.

Breathing Together:

In between stretches, pause and take a deep breath together:

- Breathe in slowly through the nose ("smell the flowers")
- Breathe out gently through the mouth ("blow out the candles")

Repeat a few times to promote calm and focus.

Encourage Comfort and Acceptance:

Let students know they can join in any way they like, moving or just listening. The most important thing is feeling safe and knowing they can express themselves in whatever way feels right.

Winning the Game:

There is no winner. The goal is to enjoy calm movement and explore soft confidence, just like Venus teaches us to shine gently and open up safely.

Variations:

Younger Students: Use story-based stretches (e.g., "reach up like the sun," "melt like ice cream," "curl up like a seed") to keep the activity imaginative and playful.

Affirmation Partner Version: Pair students and have them take turns saying an affirmation to each other before each stretch (e.g., "You are strong," "You are kind").

Music & Movement Version: Add gentle background music or nature sounds to deepen calm and focus.

Mindful Colour Breathing: As they breathe in, imagine breathing in their favourite calm colour; as they breathe out, imagine releasing a cloud of stress.

Class Ritual Edition: Use this activity at the end of each week as a group "reset," combining movement, breath, and reflection.



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For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Provide chair-based versions of all stretches (e.g., reaching arms overhead, side bends, shoulder rolls, neck stretches).
- Ensure circle formation accommodates all mobility aids, giving everyone equal visibility and space.
- Use upper-body movements and breathwork to engage all participants meaningfully.
- Provide sensory-friendly options (e.g., noise-reducing headphones or tactile fidgets) for students sensitive to sound or movement.
- Allow students to focus solely on affirmations and breathing if movement isn't accessible or comfortable.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Begin by modelling vulnerability yourself, demonstrate a stretch while sharing an affirmation like, "I'm feeling a bit tired today, so I'll move softly."
- Encourage all voices and participation levels, remind students that listening quietly is just as valuable as speaking.
- Reinforce that everyone's pace and ability are respected; some may move slower or simply visualise the motions.
- Use inclusive language: "We move together, in our own ways."
- End with a peaceful affirmation as a group, such as:
• *"I am calm, I am kind, I am safe, just as I am."*

Additional Notes:

"Soft Stretch Circle" blends movement and mindfulness in a way that invites quiet courage. It allows students to explore vulnerability not just through words, but through posture, breath, and self-acceptance. Venus reminds us that softness is not weakness. It's a beautiful strength that helps us grow emotionally and socially.

