



Get started with Along

Teacher guide

We've heard from educators that having a suggested plan for launching Along with students would be helpful. **We made this guide that includes a selection of questions, support resources, and classroom resources to use for the first six to eight weeks.** The questions and resources were curated specifically to help you establish Along as a regular part of your routine and set you on the path to a relationship-centered classroom.

Consider this guide an introduction to Along – to help you use all of Along's great content – rather than a prescriptive plan.

STEP 1:

Introduce Along to your students.



We've heard from students that they appreciate learning about Along before receiving their first reflection question. It's important for them to understand what Along is, how it works, and why their teacher wants to use it. Knowing this makes students more likely to engage on Along.

Customize [this presentation](#), designed to introduce Along to your students, and help them get started.



To prompt students to sign into Along, send your first reflection question. Simply record and share your answer to the question with students via email or your preferred communication tool by using your personal invite link. [Here's a quick video](#) of how to send a question to students.



We've included some light talking points to help you decide what to share in your own reflection. Look for them to the right of the screen when you are recording under the "Reflect on" heading.



Click a card to link right to the question or resource!

Tell me about your name. Do you know where it came from? Is there a story behind it?

What is something that you really value? Why do you value it?

What is something, or who is someone, in your life that you are grateful for?

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Write your own question

STEP 2:

Build a strong foundation.

Starting anything new takes time and diligence. Using Along to cultivate relationships is no different.

- **Routines are key.** Establishing norms from the beginning ensures you and your students know what to expect and increases your likelihood of success. You can use this [customizable calendar](#) to plan your first few weeks.
- **Relationships are a two-way street.** Encourage students to open up by sharing your own response to each new reflection you send. Let students know how excited you are to view their responses and get to know them. Keep in mind that some students may take longer than others to open up.
- **Picking the right question is important.** This is especially true in the first few weeks. Start with questions like the ones below that help build attachment and establish trust.



The content in Along's Library is organized around each of the five elements of the Search Institute's applied research on developmental relationships: **Express Care**, **Provide Support**, **Challenge Growth**, **Share Power**, and **Expand Possibilities**. Learn more about developmental relationships in this resource: [An Introduction to Developmental Relationships](#).



Express Care

What's something, or someone, that made you laugh recently? Why?

What is a date that has meaning to you? Why?

If you could spend the day anywhere, where would it be? Why would you choose that place?



Share Power

What do you wish adults would give you more responsibility to do? It can be something you do at school or outside of school.

If the zombie apocalypse were coming tomorrow, what skills would you bring to your survival group?

Think of a time when you had an idea and others disagreed (in school, etc.). How did that make you feel?



Provide Support

When you feel stressed out, what helps?

What activities reenergize you when you need a break after a long or tiring activity?

Who supports you and really advocates for you in your life?



Reinforce the "why." Consider using one of the classroom activities below in addition to a weekly reflection question. This helps students see that relationships aren't built just through Along.



Caring Goes Both Ways



Identify Your Core Values



Empower Students in the Classroom



Make a Strengths Chain



Express Care to Motivate Students



Nurture Relationships for Learning and Life



STEP 3:

Support students to grow and thrive.

Don't stop now! As you gain insights about your students as individuals, and your class as a whole, use those insights when selecting upcoming questions, and choose classroom activities to respond to student needs.

- **Weave in a broader mix of questions.** The questions in Step 2 were about easing students in. Now you are ready for more. Choose questions that help you gain deeper knowledge about each student as well as questions that are on the lighter side.
- **Be patient.** Just like how all people learn in different ways, not all relationships will progress in the same way or at the same time. Expect that some students will respond differently.
- **Build a relationship-rich classroom.** Reflections are shared one-on-one — between a student and a trusted adult — so students can open up without worrying about what their peers think. On the other side, classroom activities are built for the classroom. They're a great way to support students to get to know each other and cultivate community.



Each of the elements of a developmental relationship is important on its own. But when practiced in combination, they support students to thrive. Find opportunities to choose reflection questions, classroom activities, and educator practice resources from across all 5 collections. **The selected questions, activities, and resources in this section show a model for how to incorporate all of the elements as you continue to build relationships with students.**



Express Care
and
Share Power

What do you enjoy doing with others?

Who is someone you really trust? What do they do that makes you confident you can depend on them?

What rule would you change in our school? Why and how would you want to change it?

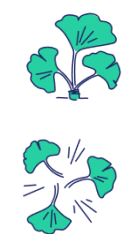


Provide Support

When was a time (or two) you felt proud of something you did? Why did this make you feel proud?

Who—friend, family, someone else—has shown up for you during a challenging situation? How do they make you feel supported?

What's a problem you're currently facing?



Challenge Growth
and
Expand Possibilities

When is the last time you made a mistake? What did you do to learn from that mistake?

Who in your family, past and present, inspires you? What inspires you about that person?

What is a long-term goal you are working towards, or would like to be working towards?



Weave a Web of Support



Participating in Colorful Conversations



Complete a Developmental Relationships Checklist



Circles of Identity



Respond to Student Behavior Empathetically



Reflect On and Promote Psychological Safety



The fun is just beginning.

The above guide gives you a plan and insights to start your Along journey. Over the next six to eight weeks, find the resources and content that fit your class and feel like a good fit. From there, you and your students are bound to get in the swing of things and the connections are sure to follow. You're well on your way. Along is here to help!



For more Educator Support resources like this one, visit along.org/resources.

