

## Circle Time

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As each new school year starts, teachers around the world brainstorm to find ways to turn a diverse set of personalities into a cohesive whole. Christian teachers work both to help the student body become a unified body and to bring a concrete realization to students that Jesus is their friend and Savior. We pray for unity, spiritual community, and a way to let all our students, as well as their parents, know how much we value each person entrusted to our care. We struggle to balance the caring and educating aspects of our mission.

This year at Okanagan Adventist Academy we no longer have a chaplain, so could not rely on someone else to plan the assemblies and worships which account for a lot of the sense of community we try to foster. Out of necessity, we chose to try something new to us. We thought back to several years ago when Pastor Erroll Palipane used to meet with students around our flagpole for Morning Prayer. Janice Harford, our principal, came up with a variation on this. Each morning after worship the staff head to the foyer outside the main office. We sing a chorus led by Darrell Corbel on guitar. The acoustics in this place are wonderful, so we end up singing better than we would otherwise. The music seems to draw students and parents into our circle, so we can listen to a scripture selected by Janice, who then leads us in prayer. The scripture verses are placed on a “tree” wall, Janice says “Have a great day, everybody!” and we continue to the rest of our day. It is particularly heartwarming that some students carefully read the Bible verses printed on the “leaves” of our tree, or ask for clarification about a particular verse.



This simple little activity, which takes only three or four minutes, is proving to be a real blessing to students, staff, parents, and community members.