First impressions are important. They set expectations and create a context for the experiences that follow. When beginning a new class or group, the first day is always critical, and usually challenging.

To help with that first day, WhyTry has prepared a sample Day One Lesson Plan. Of course, there are many factors, including length of classes and group sizes, so this plan is just a suggestion. It is based, however, on the cumulative experience of several WhyTry facilitators over the years. Below is a rough outline of the first day, as well as four possible learning activities to help you get to know your students and put them at ease.

1. Create a comfortable setting.
How is the room set up? Is it as comfortable and inviting as possible? If the group is small enough, consider arranging the chairs in a circle. Don't strain yourself. Just give it some thought and do the best you can.

An important element of a comfortable and inviting setting is music. Play music as your students enter the room; preferably something familiar to their age group. When students walk into a room where music is playing, they immediately recognize that something different and engaging will be happening in that room.

2. Greet your students.
Stand at the door and greet the students as they enter the room. Use their names if you know them. After the students are seated, you may briefly introduce yourself or go straight into a warm-up activity.

Possible warm-ups for the beginning of class include:
- Name Warp Speed (p. 2)
- Name Circle (p. 3)
- Rope Escape (p. 4)

3. Introduce WhyTry.
Now that the students are engaged and energized, take about 15 minutes to introduce the WhyTry Program.

Start by introducing yourself. Let the students know a little about you. Share appropriate information to let them see you as a person.

Go over class expectations. Try to remove any stigma associated with the class. You might tell them that this class is intended to help them enjoy school a little more and

they will learn some ways to "work the system" better. You might also frame the class as a leadership development course, since some schools use it that way.

You may want to tell them that this class will be different than any other class; they may do things they don't get to do in other classes. Many students say that the WhyTry class is their favorite class. It is usually fun, but it is not always easy. Everyone's participation is required to make it work.

Emphasize that confidentiality is required for this class. Sometimes things will come up that should not be discussed outside of class.

You may want to set up some class rules. Have the students suggest some rules. No need to get elaborate. Typical rules may include:

- Eye contact: Class members (including the teacher) must make eye contact with the teacher and each other when they speak.
- Gratitude: Class members must express gratitude for everything they receive and every courtesy shown.
- Respect: Class members will treat one another with respect by listening when anyone in the class speaks, making eye contact, and expressing gratitude.

4. End with another activity.
The activity "Values Continuum" is a nice end of class activity because it can end at any time without impacting the activity.

5. Thank the students for coming; and play movement music as they leave.

Activity: Name Warp Speed

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required
Activity Type: Movement/group
Grades: K-12
Group size: 10 or more
Time: 5 minutes

Introduction: The objective of this activity is to get to know members of the group and do it in a fun way.

Materials:
• 1 stopwatch

Activity:
Have the group form a circle. Challenge the group to go around the circle and say their name, in order, as fast as they can. Select a starting person and an ending person. Start the timer on the starting person and let the group know the ending time. Challenge the group to beat their time on round two. On the third round, ask the group if there is anything else that they can do to shorten the time. After the group has come up with several options (like holding hands and squeezing your partner's hands as soon as you say your name, standing closer together, more focus/concentration, etc.), have them try to beat their old record. Hopefully they will improve each time. On the final round, say, "I'll bet we can do it under two seconds." Have one of the facilitators stand in the middle of the group and say, "I will spin around as fast as I can. When I point to you, say your name." Time the final round and share the results.

Processing the Experience:
• When I said that we could do it less than two seconds, how many of you thought it was impossible?
• Did we improve each time?
• What do we mean when we say to think outside the box?

Activity: Name Circle

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required
Activity Type: Group
Grades: 1-12
Group size: 2-15
Time: 10-15 minutes

Introduction: This activity is a fun way to get to know the names of everyone in your group.

Materials:
• None

Activity:
Have the group form a circle. Ask the group if anyone knows the names of each member of the group/class. Give someone a chance to share each person's name. If no one can do it, share the name game activity with the group. Tell them that it is an easy way for them to learn the names of group members. You, the facilitator, will set the stage by telling the group that, "I have a hard time remembering names, and an easy way for me to remember is by using a rhyming word." Start the activity by sharing your first name and a rhyming word with your name. The rhyming word can be a real word or a nonsense/made-up word. Example: If the facilitator's name is Devin, his rhyming name could be: seven, eleven, heaven, or a made-up word like "revin." The next person in line shares their first name and a rhyming word. If the next person in line cannot think of a rhyming word, ask for help from the group. The rules for the names are simple. The rhyming name must be positive and appropriate. If an inappropriate name comes up, have the person select a new one. The second person in line needs to repeat the rhyme and the name of the first person. The third person needs to repeat the rhyme and the name of the second person as well as the first. The process continues to the last person. When the last person finishes, ask for a volunteer to repeat all the names and nicknames in the group. If you do not get any volunteers, offer an incentive, such as a candy bar or other food. Another variation is to have everyone change seats and ask for a volunteer to name each person in the group.

Processing the Experience:
• How many of you struggle with remembering people's names?
• Did this activity help?
• Tell the group, "We will review the names the next time we meet."

Activity: Values Continuum

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required
Activity Type: Movement/group
Grades: 2-12
Group size: 10 or more
Time: 5-50 minutes (can be scaled to any time)

Introduction: The objective is for the group to get to know what each member values or is interested in.

Materials:
• A wall to line up against (optional)

Activity:
Ask the group to line up against the wall. Then ask all the people who like trucks to move to the right end of the line, with sports cars to the left end of the line, and sedans and mini-vans in the middle. Now, wherever someone is standing in the line, they are standing beside someone with similar interests. Now ask them to line up according to the kind of music they like, with music types that might include: classical, jazz, pop, top 40, country, alternative rock, classic rock, metal, hip hop.

You can keep going as long as you want, and each time, people will move around and learn something about the people around them. Here are some possible ideas to line up by:

Chocolate v. vanilla
Dogs v. cats
Number of siblings
Number of schools attended
Democrat v. Republican
Lil Wayne v. 50 cent
Macaroni & cheese v. Ramen noodles
Pie v. cake

Processing the Experience:
• What surprised you about the people at your end of the line?
• Did you have a hard time deciding?