

THE CLOSING

Ending the circle properly is as important as any other part of the process. In their closing summary, the keeper needs to choose words, use tones and inflections and set a mood that is in keeping with the circle's accomplishments.

If the circle has not reached consensus, the keeper needs to note the accomplishments of the circle to date and set the tone for the next meeting. A circle can be seen as a journey, sometimes without an end. The work of the circle is improving friendships, encouraging participation, and engaging a classroom in taking responsibility for their growth and well being are oftentimes more important than arriving at a final solution.

Circles almost always end with a formal closing. The circle members generally stand, hold hands, and close the circle until shoulders touch. Oftentimes members bow their heads and close their eyes.

The keeper, or someone the keeper designates, chooses words that capture the spirit of the circle. They are spoken from the heart and offered in a good, kind way. The keeper acknowledges the contributions of the members, and they summarize the accomplishments of the group. The closing also speaks to how the group improved its understanding, trust and respect for each other.

It cannot be said too many times and stressed in too many ways that the circle is a spiritual exercise. The keeper, therefore, needs to capture the essence of that spirit in his/her closing.