ACTIVITY

PASS THE PHONE

Staff Connection Game

A quick, lighthearted activity for building connection and laughter with your team.

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Connection & Laughter

Sometimes the best team-building moments are the simplest ones.

"Pass the Phone" is a fast, playful activity that invites staff members to recognize the strengths, personalities, and little quirks that make their team special. Inspired by a popular social media trend, this version is adapted for school teams to keep the focus on **positivity**, **appreciation**, and **shared laughter**.

The goal isn't to put anyone on the spot or embarrass anyone. Instead, it's about noticing the great things your colleagues bring to the team — the **humor**, the **dedication**, the **creativity**, and the **everyday moments** that make working together meaningful.

In just a few minutes, this activity can create a lot of smiles.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

Here are the steps to try out this activity with your team.

Materials Needed

- A phone or small object to represent "the phone"
- A group of staff members (6–20 works well)
- Optional: a printed list of prompts for inspiration

Time Needed

Most groups can complete this activity in 5–10 minutes, making it perfect for a quick staff meeting opener or team-building moment.

Goal

The goal is simple: share appreciation, spark laughter, and celebrate the people who make your school community great.

When This Activity Works Best

This activity works best as a quick energizer or connection moment. It's a fun way to open a staff meeting or professional development session with something light and positive, and it easily fits into almost any staff gathering.

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ACTIVITY STEPS

Step 1: Gather the group in a circle

The group could stand or sit, but should be in close enough proximity to pass the phone.

Step 2: Start the game.

One person begins with the phone and says:

"I'm passing the phone to..." followed by a positive or lighthearted description of someone on the team.

Step 3: Pass the phone.

The person receiving the phone accepts the compliment and then creates the next prompt.

Step 4: Keep the chain going.

Each person:

- Says "I'm passing the phone to..."
- Shares a positive or fun description
- Passes the phone to the colleague who fits that description.

If your team seems hesitant at first, start with 2 to 3 prepared prompts to get things moving. Once the first few passes happen, the ideas and laughter usually come quickly.

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Step 5: Keep it moving.

The activity works best when responses are quick and spontaneous.

Step 6: Wrap up when it feels right.

Most teams enjoy playing for 5–10 minutes.

Activity Norms (Keeping it Positive)

Before starting, set a few simple expectations:

- Keep it kind. Descriptions should be positive, appreciative, or playfully lighthearted.
- No inside jokes that exclude others.
- Avoid anything about appearance, personal life, or sensitive topics.
- Focus on strengths, habits, or fun school-related moments.
- Everyone should feel good about being chosen.

You might even say:

"If the person you pass the phone to might laugh and feel appreciated, it's probably a great choice."

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ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

Small Team Version
Play in grade-level or department teams first, then share a few highlights with the whole staff.

Speed Round
Divide into small teams and set a timer for 3 minutes. See how many passes each team can complete, and the team with the most passes wins a prize.

Mystery Prompt Bowl
Before the activity, place several "I'm passing the phone to..." prompts in a bowl or container. Each time someone receives the phone, they draw a prompt and read it aloud before passing the phone to the colleague who fits the description.

Appreciation Round
Turn the activity into a gratitude-focused round. In this version, every prompt must highlight something you appreciate about a colleague or something positive they contribute to the school community. This variation works especially well during staff appreciation weeks or team-building sessions.

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ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

The Leader Guess
In this version, the school leader listens instead of playing at first.

Staff take turns saying "I'm passing the phone to..." and describing a colleague without immediately passing the phone. The leader then tries to guess who the prompt describes before the phone is handed to that person.

This version adds a little suspense and humor while highlighting the positive things staff notice about each other.

End with Reflection
Ask 1-2 quick questions afterward:

- "What's one moment from the activity that made you smile?"
- "What's one thing you noticed or appreciated about our team during this activity?"

This small moment helps shift the activity from just fun to meaningful connection.

FACILITATOR SCRIPT

You can read this directly or paraphrase it.

"Alright everyone, we're going to start with a quick activity called **Pass the Phone: Staff Edition**.

You may have seen this trend online where someone says 'I'm passing the phone to…' and then describes someone in the group. We're going to try our own school version today.

The goal is simple — **keep it positive, light, and fun**. Think about the things your colleagues do that make our team stronger: the little habits, strengths, and everyday moments we all notice.

Here's how it works:
Someone will start with the phone and say, 'I'm passing the phone to…' followed by a description of someone on our staff. Then they pass the phone to the person who fits that description, and that person creates the next one.

A couple quick guidelines:

- Keep it **kind** and **positive**
- Focus on **strengths**, **school moments**, or **fun habits**
- Nothing that might embarrass someone

This activity works best if we keep it moving quickly and don't overthink it.

Alright… let's see where the phone goes first."

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PROMPT IDEAS

If the group needs help getting started, here are some examples:

Celebrating Strengths

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always has creative lesson ideas."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who is always willing to help a colleague."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes our team better every day."

Everyday School Moments

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who somehow always knows what's going on."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who keeps calm no matter how chaotic the day gets."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes staff meetings more fun."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who has the most organized classroom."

The "Hidden Talents" Category

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who has a hidden talent."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always surprises us with creative ideas."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who probably has the most interesting hobbies outside of school."

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PROMPT IDEAS

Lighthearted and Fun

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who tells the best jokes."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who probably has the most colorful classroom."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes people laugh in the staff lounge."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who students greet in the hallway like a celebrity."

The "Everyday Impact" Category

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who truly makes a difference for students."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who works incredibly hard behind the scenes."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes this school a better place."

The "Staff Lounge Moments" Category

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always brings great snacks."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes people laugh."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always brightens the room when they walk in."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes staff conversations more fun."

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PROMPT IDEAS

The "Teacher Superpowers" Category

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who can calm a chaotic classroom in seconds."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always has a creative solution."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who can turn any moment into a learning opportunity."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who makes learning fun."

The "School Day Survival" Category

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who somehow survives on coffee and determination."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always knows where the extra supplies are."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who somehow keeps everything organized."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always seems prepared for anything."

Appreciating Effort

- "I'm passing the phone to someone who works incredibly hard for their students."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who always checks in on their colleagues."
- "I'm passing the phone to someone who lifts others up."

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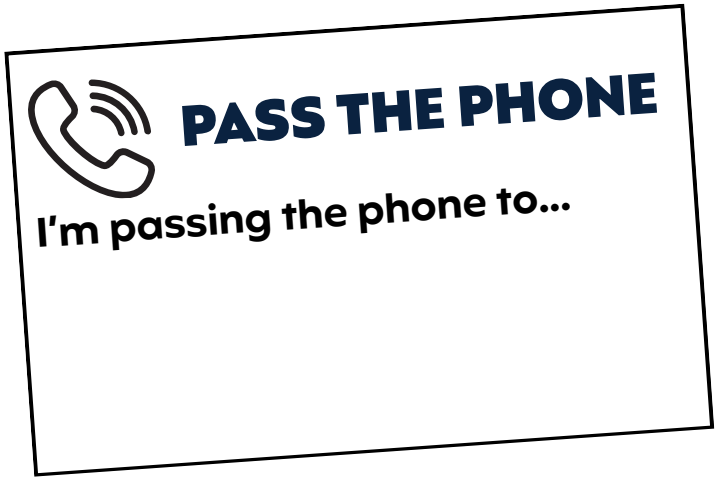
CREATE YOUR OWN!

Use the prompt cards on the next page to create "Pass the Phone" prompts that are unique to your staff, or have your team fill out prompts before the activity.



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Editable Template

Here's an editable template if you'd like to modify our designs to better fit your team!

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COLLABORATION

BUILT BY EDUCATORS, FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

This resource was created in collaboration with dedicated educators and school leaders who brought their experience, ideas, and insight to every step of the process. We're grateful for their partnership in building tools that truly make a difference in schools.

Abbey Sualy

Early Childhood School Psychologist
Omaha, NE

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Tried an activity?

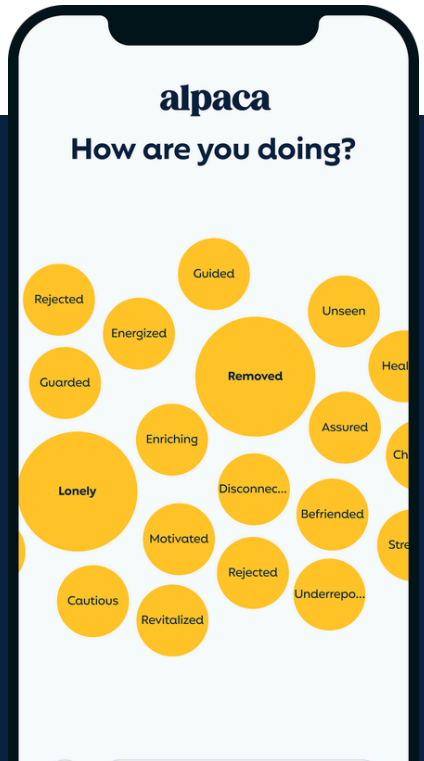
Send a photo or a staff testimonial to our team, and we'll send you a coffee on us!

Got an idea brewing?

We love co-creating with school leaders—drop us a line with any resource ideas you'd love to see next.

Explore more!

Check out our full resource library for creative, ready-to-use tools to support you and your team.



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