Optional Activity: Fear of Banks – 3.0.2 (suggested time: 1.5 - 2 hours)

Many students are fearful of banks for a variety of reasons. The main reason a student may be apprehensive even to set foot in a bank is because it is an unfamiliar place they have never been before. The following options are suggested in order to help relieve the fear students may face when thinking about opening a bank account.

1) **Field Trip** — One of the best ways to help relieve fear of banks is to have a good experience with banks. Take your students on a field trip to a local bank. Call a bank in or near the neighborhood ahead of time and ask if they would be interested in helping introduce students to their bank. Many banks will be open to this because students may be new customers. Ask the bank if they would be able to show the students the "behind-the-scenes" workings of the bank, such as the back of an ATM machine, the vault, or safety deposit boxes. Some banks may have stricter privacy policies, but many banks are so well protected that they won't mind showing a class the less viewed places of a bank. Students often feel very privileged to see these places, and it will help them learn more about banking or open an account.

2) **Personal Introduction** — Introduce individuals or small groups of students to the banking institution you use and trust. The curriculum is set up to help the teacher build deep, trustworthy relationships with students. Students may not trust banks simply because no one they trust has used a bank. If you are a trustworthy adult in these students' lives, it can be extremely helpful to have someone they know go into the bank with them for the first time and help them start an account. Make sure you do not start accounts for students, but that you help them understand the steps they are taking and get their questions answered, so they will continue to use the bank themselves in the future. Explain terms to them as they go, and help them ask their questions of the teller or account manager.