

Caring

This week we focus on gratitude, which is being thankful and appreciating what you have and those around you. The class will explore gratitude as it relates to their personal life, focusing on positivity and kindness as tools towards increasing caring and gratitude.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



School Gratitude

This week we focus on gratitude which is being thankful and appreciating what you have and those around you. The class will explore gratitude as it relates to their personal life, focusing on positivity and kindness as tools towards increasing caring and gratitude. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Gratitude for Country

Divide the class into groups of 6-8 and have each group discuss why they are grateful for their country. Empathize that, depending on the current climate, it may be difficult to come up with something, but at times it is important to be creative with our gratitude to maintain our kind focus even when others are not!

For Partners
15 minutes



Thank You Cards

Divide the class into random partners. Have each pair write a thank you note to one adult in the school that they are most grateful for. Encourage them to be specific with their gratitude!

For Individuals
15 minutes



Stretching Your Gratitude

Journal: How do you express gratitude towards the people you live with? Identify the person you struggle with the most and brainstorm 3 different ways to show them gratitude this week.

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Technological Help

How does technology help you with your schoolwork? Share 1-2 gratitudes around this topic with a partner. If time allows, discuss your answers with the class as a whole.

School Gratitude

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Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- Large butcher paper
- Basic art supplies
- Tape

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explore how they currently demonstrate gratitude for what they have and those around them.
- Expand their ability to provide unsolicited gratitude throughout their day.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Science shows that gratitude can improve our mental focus, reduce our stress, and improve our self-esteem and relationships with others. But having an “attitude of gratitude” can be easier said than done. This week, as you teach students about the benefits of gratitude, remember to engage in gratitude yourself. What is going well in your class right now? What is going well in your personal life? What are the small mundane things that you usually take for granted that, in reality, would make a huge impact if they were gone? Be grateful for them. Put this into practice by writing down at least five things you are grateful for each morning before you begin your school day. Post these where you can reflect on them throughout the day and where students can see (if you are comfortable sharing your list). Having students see you practicing gratitude will make it easier for them to do it themselves.

**Share**

2-3 minutes

Think back to our self-care topic. What is one way you were able to increase your self-care at home? Invite student responses.



Inspire

3-5 minutes

Last week we explored the necessity to care for ourselves through the use of positive self talk and the consequences when we don't. This week our focus shifts to that of gratitude for others and for what we have. For this unit, we will be basing our understanding off of the definition that gratitude is, "Being thankful for and appreciating what you have and those around you." Often times we forget to show gratitude towards what we have and what we are provided because we have come to simply expect these items and places.

Gratitude is easy when you receive something obvious or huge that brings you joy or helps you out immensely. This might be a surprise from a loved one or something new and helpful from your teacher that makes your school day less complicated. Think back on a time when you were very appreciative of something you received as a gift or that really helped you during a difficult time. (Invite student responses.)

The big gifts are terrific and are much easier to identify and be thankful for. However, as we continue to grow and mature in our ability to show gratitude and kindness to others, we need to make a conscious effort to embed this concept into our everyday thinking.

Stop and think back to all the things and places that you have and utilize today. Your clothes, your school supplies, the food you have, the ability to come to school, etc. Do you acknowledge these daily gifts with some form of gratitude? Obviously these things and places cannot "receive" gratitude in the traditional sense. However, your actions and how you treat them demonstrates your gratitude. Do you keep your room clean and free of old food dishes and dirty laundry? Do you help to keep the school clean through your actions? Do you take pride in how you treat your clothes, school supplies, etc.? All of these actions demonstrate gratitude for the daily things and places in our lives.

It's this type of intentional thinking that can really shift your outlook on life from one of "making it through each day" to one of positivity and gratitude. It all depends on what you are on the lookout for!

The choice is yours.



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now practice the act of intentional gratitude as it relates to our school by creating a School Gratitude banner to hang in the entrance of the school. It can be easy to notice all the deficits within our school. Maybe there are things that need to be fixed, or the walls aren't as "pretty" and decorated as we think they ought to be. Today we are focusing on all the POSITIVES within our school. Many, many teens around the world do not have a physical building to go to for school. Many of them do not even have the opportunity to get an education! Let's focus on what we are grateful within our school. If we, as the leaders of the school, set the tone, the 6th and 7th graders will follow suit.

Guidelines:

- Roll out a large piece of butcher paper big enough to allow each student a location to write/draw their gratitude. (Note: if this is not possible, you can make posters instead.)
- Each student must write and/or draw one gratitude they have for the school.
- Prior to adding to the banner, each student must announce their gratitude. Any silly or negative answers will not be accepted. Emphasize the importance of taking this project seriously so others can feel proud of our school like we do.
- Invite the students to find a section of the banner.
- Allow 10 minutes for students to finish their section.
- Hang the banner in the front of the school. If space allows, invite the rest of the school to add to the banner as a show of gratitude for their school.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Being grateful for the daily people, things, and places in your life is a conscious choice. If you do not choose to focus on the good, you may not realize just how many positive things are occurring in your life. Today, choose to look for the good. Challenge yourself to find gratitude in situations that seem routine or boring.

As you dismiss from class, ask each student: "What is one thing you are grateful for today?"