

Stretch and Say Thanks

STAY ACTIVE

To nurture gratitude and calm energy by combining simple stretches with spoken thankfulness. Saturn, the planet of reflection and balance, reminds us to slow down and appreciate the good things in our lives, even as we move and grow.



Learning Intentions

I can move my body in gentle stretches:

This supports physical development, flexibility, and calmness.

I can think of things I am thankful for:

This encourages emotional reflection and appreciation

I can say kind and grateful words while I move:

This builds confidence, mindfulness, and verbal expression.



Success Criteria

I can copy or try different stretches with my body:

This builds motor control and awareness.

I can say something I'm thankful for with each stretch:

This supports positive thinking and emotional expression.

I can stay calm and focused during the activity:

This encourages mindfulness and presence.



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Objective:

To nurture gratitude and calm energy by combining simple stretches with spoken thankfulness. Saturn, the planet of reflection and balance, reminds us to slow down and appreciate the good things in our lives, even as we move and grow.

Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students in an open space.

Materials:

- Soft mats or clear space for safe movement
- Optional: calming background music (instrumental or nature sounds)
- Optional: gratitude cue cards for inspiration (e.g., "family", "nature", "pets") (you can brainstorm a list as a class on the board)

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Begin by reading the Saturn page from *The Playful Astronauts*. Ask students:

- "How does it feel when someone says "thank you" to you?"
- "What do you feel thankful for today?"

Explain that this activity is about moving gently and saying kind, thankful words while we stretch our bodies.

Gameplay:

Step 1 – Model the Stretches:

Demonstrate 4–6 gentle stretches the students will try, such as:

- **Reach for the Stars** – stand tall and stretch arms high
- **Rainbow Arms** – lean gently from side to side
- **Toe Touches** – stretch arms down slowly
- **Butterfly Wings** – sit and flap legs or arms like wings
- **Hug Yourself** – wrap arms around chest and squeeze

Step 2 – Add the Gratitude:

With each stretch, invite students to say one thing they are thankful for. Example:

- While stretching up: "I'm thankful for my mummy."
- While touching toes: "I'm thankful for pancakes."
- While sitting in butterfly pose: "I'm thankful for my friends."

Allow students to think quietly first if needed, or offer helpful prompts.



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Step 3 – Reflection and Breath:

End with one big group stretch (arms wide open), followed by a big breath in and out.

Ask:

- “What was your favourite thankful stretch?”
- “How does your body feel now?”

Winning the Game:

There is no winner. Every student who stretches with intention and shares their gratitude has already succeeded. Just like Saturn, the focus is on calm, balance, and the joy of giving thanks.

Variation:

Have students in a circle formation, each student completes a stretch and takes note of another student who is doing the same stretch, they then cross the circle and tell that person something they admire about them or they can share something they are grateful for. Students then return to their starting position in the circle, perform a second round of a stretch (having to do a different stretch to their first one) and repeat the process of taking note of another student who did the same stretch as so on, playing for 3-5 rounds of stretches.

Additional Notes:

“Stretch and Say Thanks” gently blends movement and mindfulness, giving young learners a meaningful way to connect with their emotions and their bodies. Saturn teaches us that even in stillness, gratitude can grow, and through simple, loving stretches, students learn that thankfulness is something they can carry in every step, reach, and breath.

