

**say it
— now**

**We Have
Gratitude**

Kindergarten to Grade 3

Lesson 1: We Have Gratitude

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to engage students in the science and practice of gratitude.

Objectives:

- Students investigate and learn about how gratitude impacts well-being.
- Students consider how gratitude impacts their mental well-being.
- Students begin a practice of gratitude.

Skills:



CRITICAL
THINKING



REFLECTION
SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS
SKILLS



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard; Gratitude Journal, dictionaries or computers (optional)

Estimated Time:

40 minutes



Brain Bite

“What’s good for the body is good for the brain. What’s good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.”

Part 1 Introduction

(10-15 minutes)

Step 1: Mindful Start

Objective: To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Now, we're going to try a very short exercise that will help us to be mindful.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap. (Alternate: First, find a comfortable seat on the carpet. Rest your hands on your lap.)
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or the floor).
- Now, just begin by noticing any sounds that are here in this room now.
- No need to do anything but notice what you hear.
- Now, see if you can focus on your breathing. Notice that you're breathing now.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- Next, we're going to try taking slow breaths in and out...
- Now, take a slow breath in...
- And, then, slowly let your breath out through your mouth.
- Let's try that again.
- Try taking two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. See if you can notice your breath filling up your belly...
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

Optional: You may briefly debrief the mindfulness activity to get students into the habit of reflecting after a mindful moment: What did you notice? Give students the key message:

- By focusing our attention on our breathing, we can calm our mind and body. With a calm mind and body, we can make better choices.

Step 2: Experiential Learning

Overview: Invite students to consider something they are thankful for in their lives.

Note: This activity introduces the concept of gratitude experientially and anchors them to a personal touch point as the lesson moves to learning about gratitude. Use the following guiding comments to lead the activity.

- Today, we're going to begin by taking a moment to think about something that we're thankful for.
- On your own, take out a piece of paper and write down or draw one thing that you're thankful for.
- Think about a special person you are thankful for—someone who has helped you or done something nice for you. OR you can write or draw something you're thankful for in nature... maybe snow, a favorite tree or flower.
- Take a few moments to write about or draw your thankful thing.

Step 3: Introduce the Topic—What Is Gratitude?

Overview: Using the following guiding questions, lead the class in a discussion about the concept of gratitude. Invite student ideas and write them on the board.

Note: These questions help students access their previous knowledge about the subject.

- We just practiced something called gratitude. What do you think gratitude means? After collecting student thoughts, provide the following definition:
- The Oxford Dictionary describes gratitude as: The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

Alternatively, you may share this definition from kidshealth.org: Gratitude is one of many positive emotions. It's about focusing on what's good in our lives and being thankful for the things we have. Gratitude is pausing to notice and appreciate the things that we often take for granted, like having a place to live, food, clean water,

friends, family, even computer access.

Now, write the definition on the board. Next, as a class, come up with a definition that resonates with students.

- How might we define “gratitude” for ourselves?
— For example: Feeling thankful for someone or something.

Optional: Think-Pair-Share

- With a partner, share what you already know about gratitude.
— How do you show gratitude?
— Where have you heard about gratitude?
— How do you think gratitude is related to well-being?

Step 4: Share Out

As a group, invite students to share out their thoughts about gratitude. Who do we show gratitude to? When do we show gratitude? How does it feel to be grateful? Write their ideas on the board.



Brain Bite



Robert Emmons is a leading scientific expert on gratitude. He studied more than 1,000 people, ages 8 to 80, and learned that practicing gratitude gave people stronger immune systems, higher levels of positive emotions, better sleep and more energy!



Part 2 Investigate and Learn

(15 minutes)

Step 1: Sparking Gratitude

Select a story from the book list to read aloud to the class OR watch the narrative story (this video story is great for younger students).

- My Gratitude Jar by Kristin Wiens:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TYvjh5Cwvw

Before you read the story/watch, offer the following instruction:

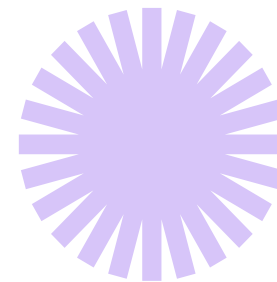
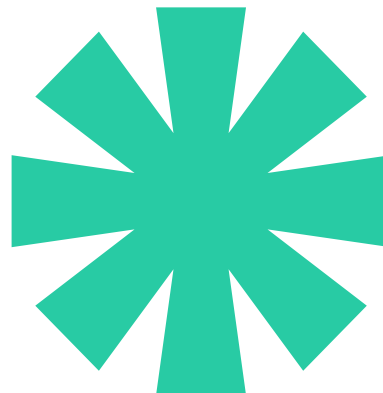
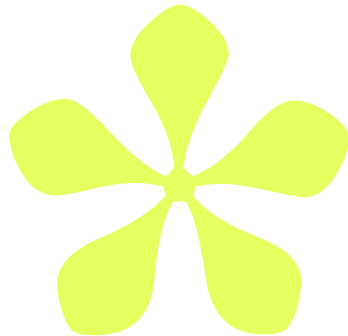
- As you listen to the story, be a gratitude detective and notice where you see examples of gratitude.
- Following the story, we will discuss what you noticed. After reading/watching the story, engage students in a short discussion.
 - Did you notice any examples of gratitude?
 - Was there a part in the story where you thought one of the characters might have been feeling gratitude?

Step 2: The Science of Gratitude

Review the following scientific findings with the class. Write them up on the board: Scientists have been investigating how gratitude improves well-being. Studies have shown that gratitude can help us to:

- Feel happier
- Sleep better
- Feel more connected to people and our community
- Feel better when we're sad
- Be kinder and help others
- Have healthier bodies (immune system)

*For more on the science of gratitude, visit <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude>



Part 3 Finding Gratitude

(time will vary)

Step 1: Action Plan

Objective: Students will make personal plans to practice gratitude for the next several days and then reflect on the effect of the practice.

Students will create their own gratitude jar or gratitude journal (see My Gratitude Jar by Kristin Wiens) for their “Finding Gratitude” activity.

A gratitude journal may be more appropriate for developing writers because they can draw pictures and get teacher support for writing a caption. Alternatively, students could make a “gratitude banner” where each student contributes one or more “flags” with a drawing or written description of something they are grateful for. The teacher can assemble all of the flags with a string and hang them as a banner in the classroom.

- Now we’re going to make a plan to add some gratitude to our lives.
- One way is to be a gratitude detective.
- To do this, you need to be a detective in your own life.
- What does a detective do?

- Invite student ideas.
- Detectives look for clues.
- You’re going to do the same!
- Be a gratitude detective for the next few days...
- When you experience something you are grateful for, remember it or tell the teacher so we can make sure it goes in your Gratitude Journal/Jar/Banner.
 - Hints: You can look for gratitude in the actions of those around you, in nature or in noticing something that you feel thankful for. You can also feel gratitude for things that went well in your day.

Optional: Depending on teacher’s preferred routine for practicing gratitude as a class (we recommend weekly at least and daily if possible). Each day, write down or draw a picture of something that you are grateful for (in your Gratitude Journal or in your Gratitude Jar).

- In a few days’ time, we will come back together to share what we’ve discovered!



Brain Bite

Exercise increases blood flow to the brain. It can even jump-start something called neurogenesis, the creation of new brain cells.

Optional Deeper Dive Activity: Gratitude Trivia

Objective: This is a simple trivia game to engage students in critical thinking about the science of gratitude. It will require them to recall any previous knowledge and apply critical thinking in order to select the correct answer!

After the game, review the correct answers to assist students' acquisition of knowledge about gratitude and well-being.

Suggestion: To make this more interactive, use Kahoot to create an online trivia game. <https://kahoot.com/>

Offer the following instructions to students:

- We are going to play a trivia game.
 - Here are the ground rules:
 - First, we're going to have fun!
 - This is not a competition.
 - Many of the questions may be new to you. I want you to think about what you already know about gratitude in order to help you in answering the question.
 - This is a simple True or False game.
 - If you think the answer to the question is TRUE, stand up.
 - If you think the answer to the question is FALSE, sit down.
 - Are you ready? (Check for student understanding.)
 - Let's play!
1. Gratitude can make you feel happier. True* or False?
 2. Gratitude takes a lot of time to practice. True or False*?
 3. Gratitude can help you sleep better. True* or False?

4. Gratitude doesn't help you feel better when you're sick. True or False*?
5. Gratitude can help you feel closer to people in your life. True* or False?
6. Gratitude can stop you from getting sick as often. True* or False?
7. Gratitude can help when you're feeling sad. True* or False?
8. Gratitude can help people become more helpful to others. True* or False?
9. Gratitude can help you feel more connected to your community. True* or False?
10. Expressing thanks to others can boost your happiness. True* or False?
11. Gratitude can change your brain. True* or False?

*Indicates the correct response

Teaching to Diversity

Optional: Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

Differentiation

- Factor in more time to read/watch the material an extra time or two.
- Provide a copy of written definitions for students to reference during reflection/planning tasks.
- Instead of having students write down their ideas, have them discuss with a partner.
- Simplify trivia game questions to simplify the comparisons, e.g.: Gratitude can control the weather. True or False? Gratitude can give you X-ray vision. True or False? Gratitude can give you the power to fly. True or False?
- You may opt to merge the "draw something you are thankful for" with an art lesson to have students create a special work of art to express their gratitude.

Challengers

- Ask students to look up a definition for gratitude online or in the dictionary.
- Online research: In pairs, students can research the science of gratitude online.
- Review key search words: gratitude, research, science, well-being, happiness.
- You can invite them to visit the following resource, where they will find a lot of useful information about the science of gratitude:
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain

“Cherish others’ kindness at heart and pay back the favor.”
Chinese proverb

“I believe in prayer. I believe in gratitude and serving people.”
Kiran Bedi

“I am happy because I am grateful. I chose to be grateful. That gratitude allows me to be happy.”
Will Arnett

“One cannot show gratitude for blessings in a better way than using them to benefit others.”
Imam Ali

Gratitude Book List

Picture Books

The Thankful Book, Todd Parr (supports gratitude for ages 3-6)

Access read aloud video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVz4-uFhJs4>

Thank You, Omu, Oge Mora (supports gratitude and altruism for ages 4-8)

Access read aloud video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S628jnrp8JU>

Last Stop on Market Street, Matt de la Pena (supports gratitude for ages 3-5)

Access read aloud video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk6CWvW_5-s

Chapter Books

I Am Malala (Young Reader's Edition), Malala Yousafzai (also supports altruism, resilience and compassion/empathy for ages 10+)

Access read aloud video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwvURt32DxE>

Crenshaw, Katherine Applegate (also supports resilience, empathy and compassion for ages 8-12)

Access read aloud video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmYB-TZvxxg>

Refugee, Alan Gratz (also supports well-being and resilience for ages 9-12)

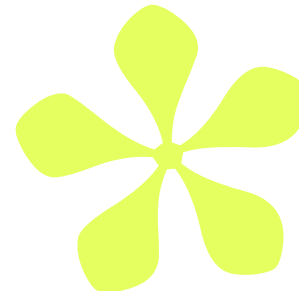
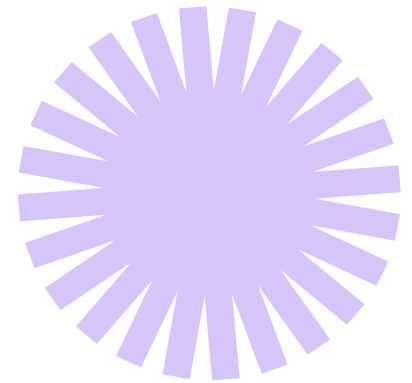
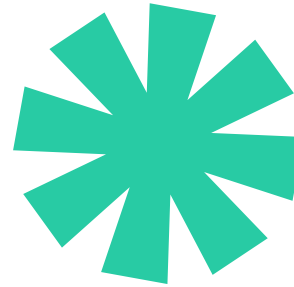
Access read aloud video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAA1jEv08h4&list=PLJTEExOd7jLQjAQYj_w-cDVPxbc3Un79Is

Rain Reign, Ann M. Martin (also supports empathy and compassion for ages 9-12)

Access read aloud video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DS0s9NC7g>

Wonder, R.J. Palacio (also supports empathy and compassion for ages 8-12)

Access read aloud video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1SxNjkhmo0&list=PLGqlrRpkMxTUsiKnK9f1DFAEtwwyIDm_C



Lesson 2: We Express Our Gratitude

Purpose:

- The purpose of this lesson is to engage students in a student-directed action to express gratitude to a member of the school community.

Objectives:

- Students reflect on how their recent experience with the practice of gratitude impacted their well-being.
- Together, students consider individuals or groups in their school community for whom they are grateful.
- Students make a plan and take action to express gratitude to a school community member.

Materials:

Dictionaries or computers; chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard; Gratitude Journal

Estimated Time:

Multi-part lesson; 40 minutes plus time for Part 3: Take Action.

Note: This is a multi-part lesson and time will vary for Part 3: Take Action; this lesson may take place over several days.

Skills:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



REFLECTION
SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS
SKILLS



Brain Bite

“What’s good for the body is good for the brain. What’s good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.”

Part I Reflect and Connect

(10-15 minutes)

Step 1: Mindful Start (Optional; 5 minutes)

Objective: To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap. (Alternate: First, find a comfortable seat on the carpet. Rest your hands on your lap.)
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or the floor).
- Now, begin by noticing how your body feels sitting here.
- No need to do anything but notice what you feel.
- Maybe you notice your feet on the ground or the chair supporting you as you sit here.
- Now, see if you can turn your attention to your breath. Notice that you're breathing now.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- Try taking two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. See if you can notice your breath filling up your belly...
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.

Step 2: Review Gratitude Practice (10 minutes)

Objective: Invite students to share their experience with their personal gratitude practice. Use the following guiding questions to facilitate a discussion. You may opt to have students' Gratitude Journal/Jar/Banners in front of them for reference.

- Would anyone like to share something that they were grateful for this week?
- What did you notice with your gratitude detective work?
- Was it difficult to find things you felt gratitude for?
- Was it easy to find things?
- It is normal to have different experiences and some days it may be harder to find things we feel grateful for. On those days, it can be helpful to think about something we are grateful for every day, like tasty food or a loved one or someone we see at school.

Note: Normalize for students that finding gratitude can feel more difficult when we are having a hard time (e.g., tired, sad, frustrated, etc.). When that happens, it can help to look back on past experiences of gratitude.

- How do you feel when you think about what you are grateful for?
- Invite student ideas and write them on the board.
- Any other things to share?

Part 2 Plan

(35 minutes)

Step 1: We Are Grateful to Others

Overview: As a class, invite students to consider those in their school community who they are grateful for.

Note: This activity moves students from thinking about their internal experience of gratitude toward their expression of gratitude to others. Use the following guiding comments to lead the activity.

- Today, we're going to think about people in our school community who we feel grateful for.
- Let's brainstorm as a class: Who do we see in our school community who we are thankful for? Who helps us out? Who works hard to make our school community a safe and happy place? (For example, office staff, lunch monitors, teachers, administration, buddy students, etc.)
- Think about those who have helped you or done something thoughtful...
- Maybe they make you smile, cheer you up or help you feel welcome.
- Invite students to share either one by one or by raising a hand. Record student responses on the board.
- Next, prepare students for their activity: Expressing Gratitude.
- Now, as a class, we are going to choose at least one of these individuals or groups to express our gratitude to.
- We will work together to make a plan and take action to show our gratitude and give thanks and make them feel appreciated!

Step 2: Action Plan

Objective: Together, students will make plans to express gratitude to a community member. This activity provides students with an opportunity to express gratitude and also serves as a community-building opportunity by having students work together to plan and take action in an expression of gratitude. This can be done in small groups, depending upon the separation of tasks or as a whole class (recommended for younger grades).

Note: This is a good opportunity for students to practice the social-emotional skill of perspective-taking, by having students think critically to consider what the community member might appreciate (e.g., staff might like coffee).

Facilitate a brainstorming and planning session.

- Simple ideas for expressing gratitude: Make thank you cards; write and perform a class song for the person(s); bake a sweet treat for someone; help with the individuals' tasks. Provide students with guidelines for collaboration. First, foreshadow the next activity and ask students what skills they might need.
- Next, we'll make a place together to express gratitude to a member of our school community. For younger grades, you may outline that plans require different steps and actions. You may make a chart to organize students' planning into what needs to be done **First, Next and Last** (you could express these segments using symbols or colors to help developing readers).
- To do this, we are going to work together. Ask students to share ideas about what actions they would need to take to work well together. Thoughts may include listening to each other's ideas, being patient, helping and agreeing on something that works for everyone. Invite student ideas and write them on the board.

Part 3 Take Action

(time will vary)

Objective: Provide time for students to put their plan into action—expressing gratitude to a community member. You may opt to divide students into small groups or carry out the action steps together as a class.

Note: Part 3 may take place on a day/time that is suitable. If students are struggling to complete the assignment, here are suggestions for ways to scaffold their thinking to reach the goal.

- Use prompting questions:
 - “What should you do first, next, last?”
 - “It looks like you’re stuck. Can you identify the problem? Is it a time issue? A material issue?”
 - “It sounds like you’ve identified the problem. What element can you change to try and find a solution?”
- Encourage students to use their prior knowledge: “Have you done an activity like this before? Can you remember any issues that came up that could be avoided by doing something differently?”

- Guide students to manage their resources.
 - Time reminders
 - Flexibility about materials
 - Task assignment reminders
- Support disagreements by providing resolution centered language:
 - Offer communication repair prompts such as “I hear you saying _____. Is that correct?”
 - Encourage children to identify how they’re feeling so they can name it and move on. (E.g., “I see that your arms are crossed and your body is turned away. It looks to me like you’re frustrated. Is that right?”)

Last but not least, have students carry out their action plan!

Important Note: Document student action by taking pictures or video to show students during their reflection and celebration.



Brain Bite

“The amygdala is the part of the brain that responds to stressful or scary scenarios. The tricky thing is that same system gets turned on no matter how big or small the problem. Just thinking about something scary can activate the “fight or flight” response!”

Lesson 3: We Reflect on and Celebrate Gratitude

Purpose:

- Together, students reflect on their work expressing gratitude within the school community.

Objectives:

- Students engage in self-reflection.
- Students listen to one another's reflections on their shared experience expressing gratitude within the school community.

Materials:

Chart paper, markers, whiteboard/chalkboard or SMARTboard; copies of Gratitude Reflection sheet (found at the end of this lesson); Gratitude Journal

Estimated Time:

40 minutes

Skills:



CRITICAL
THINKING



COMMUNICATION
SKILLS



REFLECTION
SKILLS



SELF-AWARENESS
SKILLS



Brain Bite

“What’s good for the body is good for the brain. What’s good for the brain is good for the body! Throughout the lessons you will find brain icons with actions and facts about the brain. It is important for students to understand the importance of the brain and how it impacts our well-being.”

Part I Reflect and Connect

(5 minutes)

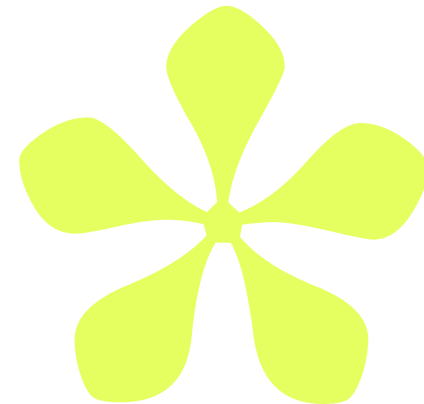
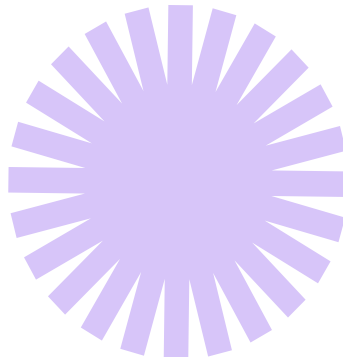
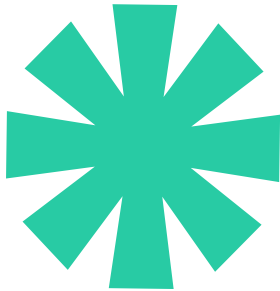
Mindful Start (Optional)

Objective: To prepare students for learning; to review lessons on mindful breathing and setting intentions.

Invite students to take a short mindful break.

- Let's begin by taking a short mindful moment.
- First, find a comfortable seat in your chair. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your lap. (Alternate: First, find a comfortable seat on the carpet. Rest your hands on your lap.)
- If it feels comfortable, you can close your eyes. If not, just look softly down toward your desk (or the floor).
- Now, begin by noticing how your body feels sitting here.
- No need to do anything but notice what you feel.

- Maybe you notice your feet on the ground or the chair supporting you as you sit here.
- Now, see if you can turn your attention to your breath. Notice that you're breathing now.
- Feel the air moving in and out of your nose.
- Try taking two more deep breaths in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. See if you can notice your breath filling up your belly...
- Before we start our lesson today, reflect for a moment on our work on gratitude. You might think about something that you feel grateful for... maybe a kind action from somebody or something in nature that made you happy.
- When you are ready, you can open your eyes.



Part 2 Reflection and Celebration

(15 minutes)

Step 1: A Walk Down Memory Lane

Purpose: To provide time for students to reflect on their expression of gratitude, how the experience may have impacted their well-being and how they think it might have impacted the recipient of their gratitude.

Display the photos or videos for students to remember their work expressing gratitude within their community. This can be accomplished with a slide show, videos or photos displayed around the room for students to view as a gallery.

Instructions to students:

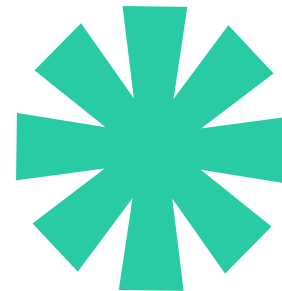
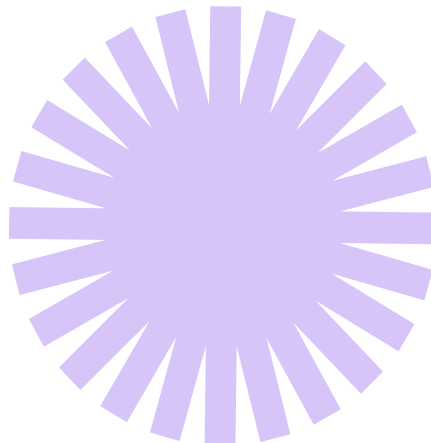
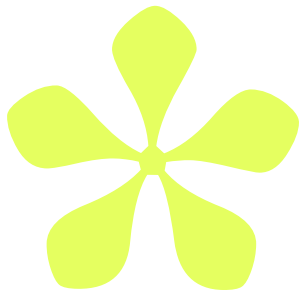
- As you look at the pictures (or video), notice how you feel as you remember about our work expressing gratitude within our community.

Step 2: Reflect with Another

In pairs or small groups, invite students to share their reflections on their experience expressing gratitude (what they did, how it felt and how they think the receiver felt).

Ask students:

- Let's talk about your gratitude action plan!
- Some ideas to get you started:
 1. Who did you choose and why are you thankful for them?
 2. What did you do?
 3. How did you feel doing it? How did the other person feel?
 4. How did the person react when you shared gratitude with them?



Part 3 Connect

(20 minutes)

Step 1: Shared Reflection

Facilitate a class discussion focused on sharing students' reflections with one another. Remind students to engage in respectful, active listening.

Instructions to students:

- Now that we have worked together to express gratitude within our community, how can we continue to show gratitude to people we are thankful for?

Note: Remind students that expressing gratitude does not have to be complicated or take a lot of time—a simple “thank you” works wonders! Facilitate student discussion and write student responses on the board.

Step 2: Personal Reflection

Invite students to document how they felt about the experience by free writing in their Gratitude Journal, by drawing a picture or through another medium like sculpting or building blocks. If appropriate, challenge students by asking them if they notice connections between some of their earlier expressions of personal gratitude and their feelings after taking action to show gratitude to someone special.

Teaching to Diversity

Optional: Use the following ideas to help you to calibrate the lesson to your particular group of students.

Differentiation

- Instead of having students write down their ideas, have them discuss with a partner.
- Provide a copy of written definitions for students to reference during reflection/planning tasks.

- Student reflections can be transcribed by a peer or student aid OR students can use a recording device to express their ideas orally.

Challengers

- Additionally, have students reflect on a way they have observed gratitude in an extended community (e.g., their town/city, their province/state, their country). What positive outcomes do you think this has?
- Have students write a magazine/blog/article about gratitude that includes:
 - An explanation of what gratitude is.
 - Why it's meaningful for the individual practicing gratitude and those around them.
 - A list of 5 to 10 ways to express gratitude.



Brain Bite

A friendly hug, a pat on the back or a gesture of kindness releases oxytocin—the hormone involved in social bonding—and reduces cortisol, the stress hormone. Try hugging your family, high fiving a friend or sharing some kind words to increase oxytocin, and notice how it feels!