

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

This lesson introduces students to the concept of gratitude and gives them an opportunity to understand what gratitude means to them in everyday, ordinary life. The goal of this activity is to get students to be aware of the small things that they are (or, maybe, should be) grateful for and that gratitude need not be a grand gesture; we can be grateful even for ordinary things.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Compassion, Gratitude, Helpfulness, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

Scavenger hunt handout (attached)

Standards Map

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



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FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Define gratitude.
- Recognize various things they are grateful for.
- Show gratitude towards those that show helpfulness.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Helpfulness. The word alone can bring both positive and negative images to mind. Are you the type to help with everything? Or are you one that avoids helping because you can't seem to find the time? Finding a balance when it comes to helpfulness is vital for self preservation in this profession.

Establishing and maintaining clear boundaries with your team, your school, and yes, even your own family, will help you better organize your time, thus allowing you to either pair down on the help you are providing or find time to actually pitch in on more occasions. Helpfulness is a terrific character trait, but can often be over-expected with teachers. Speak up when you are taxed. No one likes a grumpy helper! Need ideas on HOW to say no?

Check out this resource:

<http://teacherhabits.com/effective-way-teachers-say-no/>

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Turn on closed captioning for the video for students with hearing limitations.
- The handout has spaces for students to draw their ideas if they aren't comfortable writing about them.
- Keep in mind the socio-economic backgrounds of students; students in poverty may have a harder time thinking of everyday things to be thankful for, so guide discussion where necessary to make sure all student contributions are valued and respected
- Keep in mind the physical limitations of students; if there are students in wheelchairs, for example, who cannot walk,

expressing gratitude for legs that can walk and run might be insensitive. See notes below.



Share

5-7 minutes

- Ask students what they think the word gratitude means. Write down key words from their definitions on the board or project on the smart board.
- Tell students you are going to write a definition of gratitude based on the keywords you wrote down. Begin the definition like this: Gratitude means: (thankful, glad, appreciative, happy for what you have).
 - Pick approximately three key elements that you can incorporate into the definition. Keep them simple so students can remember.
 - Link gratitude to attitude: feeling gratitude = positive attitude.

In this lesson, we are going to learn more about gratitude and the various things that we are grateful for, especially the little things that we don't realize we are grateful for. Sometimes we call this taking something "for granted". We just assume all the things we need and love will always be available to us, and so we stop seeing them as special. But, really, most things we have and enjoy on a daily basis are special, and we would miss them if they were gone!

What are some things that if they disappeared right now, you would miss them or feel sad?

Invite student response.

Link gratitude to caring: often the people and things we appreciate are people and things that help take care of us and our needs in some way.



Inspire

5-7 minutes

Watch Kid President's 25 Reasons to be Thankful on YouTube [3:46] - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yA5Qpt1JRE4>

This is a fun video that kids enjoy; Kid President does a good job picking out common, silly things that he is grateful for. It will get your students thinking about everyday things they can be grateful for, too.

If you don't have access to a smart board, the Internet, or other means to show the video, you can use the following list of everyday items to get your students thinking (or use student examples from their responses above):

- Water fountains at school that give us clean water to drink whenever we want.
- Sleep (Our brains need the chance to reboot! Can you imagine if you never slept?!)
- Teeth (how else would we eat?)

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- Fingers (How would life be different if you didn't have fingers?)
- Colors
- Bus drivers
- Silverware
- Favorite foods
- Weekends!

When listing physical attributes we are grateful for, be mindful of students with physical limitations, disabilities, or differences. (For example, they are in a wheelchair and so shoes may not be as important; or if there is a student with a physical deformity to his/her hands, then fingers may not be appropriate to list.) This isn't to discourage other students without these limitations to not be grateful for their abilities, but it is important to be sensitive to all learners.



Empower

10-15 minutes

The goal of this activity is to get students to be aware of the small things that they are (or, maybe, should be) grateful for.

That was a fun list from Kid President, wasn't it? We are going to go on a gratitude scavenger hunt today. Use the attached handout to take notes on small things you are grateful for here at school (or at home, if this is being done at the end of the day). Check off the item when you see or experience something you are grateful for and either write down what it was you are grateful for or draw a quick picture of it. At (closing or morning) meeting, we will share our scavenger hunt discoveries!



Reflect

5 minutes

Gratitude sounds a lot like what we studied in our last unit: RESPECT and KINDNESS. Did you know that when you feel grateful or thankful, you are happier? Scientists have shown that recognizing when we feel thankful triggers our brains to feel happy. Science shows when we do kind things for others to make them happy, when we care for them, we are also happy. These ideas are all connected! Isn't that cool?! Did you notice if you felt happier today as you were on the look-out for things that you were thankful for? What if we spent time really appreciating all the things we have or get to experience? How can we show gratitude towards others when they are helpful and kind?



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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

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Gratitude = Positive Attitude!

What are some things that you noticed today that you didn't even realize you were grateful for?

Be on the lookout today for the things below!

Notice how you feel when you think about things you are grateful for.

Something small that you are grateful for:	Something BIG that you are grateful for:	A person you are grateful for:	A room you are grateful for:	A rule you are grateful for:
A smell you are grateful for:	A school supply you are grateful for:	A food you are grateful for:	An animal you are grateful for:	A school subject you are grateful for:
An item of clothing you are grateful for:	A person at school you are grateful for:	A special place you are grateful for:	A friend you are grateful for:	A person at home you are grateful for: