



SEEING THE GOOD IN OTHERS

"The sign of a beautiful person is they always see the beauty in others."

— Omar Suleiman

OVERVIEW

Students discuss how others have "filled their buckets" -- said or done something to lift them up -- and then practice filling each others' buckets. (Gratitude for Tweens & Teens – Lesson 3)

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Anytime during the year

TIME REQUIRED

- 1 class period

LEVEL

- Middle School
- High School

MATERIALS

- [Lesson 3 PowerPoint slideshow](#)
- Post-its for every student
- [Go Out and Fill Buckets handout](#) for each student OR for Middle School [Growing Up with a Bucket Full of Happiness](#) by Carol McCloud
- Students' strengths posters from [Lesson 1](#)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Understand the importance of being specific when grateful—for example, we are thankful to someone for something
- Understand gratitude as an intentional act
- Appreciate each other for qualities or actions reflecting our character strengths

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Think about a time when someone filled your bucket (brought you joy) or when you filled someone else's. How did it make you feel?

INSTRUCTIONS

Notes:

- This lesson is part of a [series on gratitude](#); however, this lesson can be done in conjunction with [Lesson 1](#) from the series as a way to cultivate positive relationships and to acknowledge students' character strengths.
- The instructions below refer to the slides in the [Lesson Three PowerPoint slideshow](#).

SLIDE 1 – INTRODUCE THE LESSON

- Introduce the lesson.
 - Today the focus is on expressing gratitude, but let's start off with a quick review...

SLIDE 2 – EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

- If you like, ask a few volunteers to share something they wrote in their [gratitude journals](#) for homework.
- Tell students:
 - *Expressing gratitude, or saying "thank you," is critical for relationships. It helps each person recognize the other person's efforts and make the other person feel appreciated. When we express gratitude we communicate to the important people in our lives how they matter to us AND over time we get closer to these people because they help us reach significant goals in our lives. It's glue for who and what matters!*

SLIDE 3 – GRATITUDE IS A CHOICE

- Do the following quick experiment:
 - *Look around the room for 20 seconds to find all the **blue** things that you can see... (wait 20 seconds).*
 - *OK, what did you see that was green? After students point out that you said 'blue', reply: "But you looked around, right? So why can't you tell me what was green?"*
 - *This illustrates how we expand what we focus on in our minds, while everything else (the green) fades away. Our brains rewire this way!*
- Then explain to students:
 - *It's important to realize that you choose how you look at life and what focus you can take throughout the day.*
 - *You can spend all of your time and energy thinking about all the things that go wrong in life, looking at people's negative characteristics, and doing things to feel better about yourself at the expense of others.*
 - *Or you can choose to appreciate all the good things that you have in your life, recognize people's positive characteristics, and do things that make others feel better about themselves.*

SLIDE 4 – BUCKET FILLING PART 1

- Read either the [handout](#) or [McCloud book](#) on Bucket Filling.
 - *Having our buckets full not only makes us happy, it also makes us strong because it's like having a tank full of gas. With full buckets we keep trying new options to solve problems rather than quit, we can keep going rather than give up. A full bucket feels good now, but keeps us strong when we need to be, too.*
- Ask students for examples of ways people have filled their buckets. Discuss with students:
 - *These are special people who **CHOSE** to be nice to you. How do they make you feel? Do they make you feel grateful? You, too, can **CHOOSE** to appreciate these special people in your life.*

SLIDE 5 – BUCKET FILLING PART 2

- Now it's time for students to fill each other's buckets. Introduce the activity during which students will leave post-it "Thanks" that acknowledge/compliment others' character strengths on their posters.
- Teachers should first share their own strengths poster.
 - You may all know about this strength of mine, but maybe you didn't know about this one. What are ways you've noticed them? (Be sure to thank students who offer ideas.)
- Provide some examples of post-it thanks that acknowledge others' strengths:
 - Thanks for helping me carry my project into school. You showed **kindness**.
 - I appreciate your jokes yesterday. Your humor **helped** pick me up. Thanks.
 - Thanks for your help on the assignment. You showed **teamwork**.
- Challenge students to look for the good in others by acknowledging each other's strengths. (Note: To make sure that each student gets something written about them, you can have students draw names or turn to a neighbor on one side.)
 - *This helps us appreciate the gifts we all have to share and the good qualities of friends.*

- Allow students several quick occasions to fill buckets to cultivate a sense of connection to peers and to improve classroom climate.
- Introduce the homework (below), which is to write about and thank people who noticed or supported a strength or talent of yours.
 - *Write about a time when someone did NOT notice you or a talent of yours. How did that make you feel? Then write about a time someone DID notice you or a talent of yours. How did that make you feel?*
 - **Make and share a thank you card with a person who noticed you or your talent (mention *what the person does that matters personally* to you, that person's *efforts on your behalf*, and *how the person's behavior makes you better*).**

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on how it felt to have someone acknowledge their strengths and to acknowledge another person's strengths.

EXTENSION

- Students might also identify one person in their lives whose "bucket" they would like to fill sometime in the next 24 hours.

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice whether students are using their strengths more intentionally after doing this practice? Are they acknowledging other students' strengths?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

A four-year longitudinal study of mainly middle class white students found that high school students with [higher levels](#) of gratitude were better at getting along with their peers. Indeed, they were less likely to hit, tease, gang up on, threaten, or gossip about other students, and were better behaved in school, in general.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

[Strong peer relationships](#) are crucial to students' academic success and well-being, and, in turn, build [positive school climates](#). Expressing gratitude can be a powerful method for cultivating these relationships, mainly because, as a [social and moral emotion](#), gratitude shows others that they matter and also encourages people to [reciprocate kindness](#).

SOURCE

Thanks! A Strengths-Based Gratitude Curriculum for Tweens and Teens developed by Dr. Giacomo Bono and Yvonne Huffaker, in partnership with the Greater Good Science Center and the John Templeton Foundation. Slide design by Susan Mangan and Rachel Baumsteiger.

For the entire curriculum, click [here](#).