



## SHARING GRATITUDE STORIES

*"Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude."*

— A.A. Milne

### OVERVIEW

Pairs of students tell each other about a time they each felt grateful.

### PLANNING FOR IT

#### WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Anytime during the year

#### TIME REQUIRED

- 15-20 minutes

#### LEVEL

- Pre-K & Lower Elementary

#### MATERIALS

- Whiteboard and markers
- Drawing/writing materials

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Practice speaking about a time they felt grateful, and listening to someone else's experience of gratitude

## SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

## HOW TO DO IT

### REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

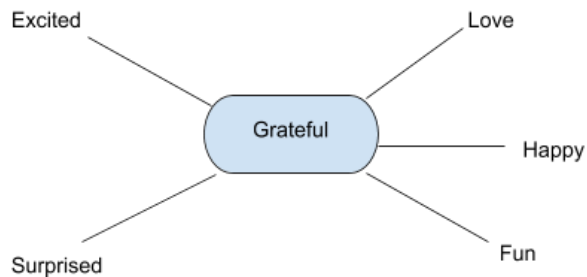
- Consider that "gratitude" requires the ability to notice the caring actions of others. By intentionally noticing and naming those actions, we develop our capacity to feel gratitude.
- Pause for a moment, take a deep breath, and reflect on a time when someone did something kind for you. Try to relive the experience in your mind. Who was there? What did the person do? How did this person's action make you feel? Open your eyes. How do you feel now?

## INSTRUCTIONS

### THE PRACTICE

- Explain to the class that they are going to talk to a partner about a time that they felt grateful, and listen to their partner share an experience as well.
- First, have the class close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. Say:
  - *Think of a time when someone did something kind for you. Maybe that person gave you something...or showed you that they cared for you...or helped you in some way...Try to see a picture in your mind of that person...and what that person did...and how you felt...When you have that picture in your mind, open your eyes.*
- Have students form pairs. Put two or three questions on the board for the listeners to ask. Have students decide who will ask the questions, and who will answer them.
  - When did someone do something kind for you?
  - What did you feel?
  - (For older students) How did you show that person what you felt?
- After the first person has had a chance to answer the questions, have students reverse roles.
- When pairs have finished their questions, ask:
  - *What were some of the feelings that you talked about?*

- Record the feelings mentioned in a web:



- Point out that when someone does something kind or caring for us, we may have lots of different feelings, including feeling grateful.
- If the students discussed how they showed their feelings toward the person who was kind or caring to them, ask for examples of what they said or did. Responses may include:
  - I said “thank you.”
  - I gave her a hug.
  - I smiled.
  - I wrote a note.
- Point out that there may be many ways to show you are grateful.

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## CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on how it felt to think of someone who was kind to them. Where did they feel these emotions in their bodies?

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## EXTENSIONS

- Have students draw a picture of what they discussed.
- Have students write a few sentences or a short paragraph about what they visualized, how they felt, and how they may have responded.

## REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice whether students are kinder to each other? Are they expressing gratitude or talking about acts of kindness more often?

## THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

### EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

One study discovered that mainly affluent white students who were [taught to think gratefully](#) by considering the costs, benefits, and intentions behind a kind act were found, in comparison to a control group, to be happier and more grateful, and to show more grateful thinking. They also were more likely to write gratitude letters to PTA members.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Reflecting on a kind act that someone did for them can help boost [students' self-esteem](#)--because it shows that they matter to that person. When, in particular, they focus on someone at school, it may increase students' [sense of belonging](#)--a key factor to students' academic success and overall well-being.

## SOURCE

"[Nurturing Gratitude From the Inside Out: 30 Activities for Grades K–8](#)" was originally developed by [The Inner Resilience Program](#), in partnership with the Greater Good Science Center and the John Templeton Foundation.

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