



BEAUTY EVERYWHERE

"Gratitude is the language of our souls singing out to the rest of the universe."

—Mike Medaglia

OVERVIEW

Students use singing as a way to express gratitude.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- During music class
- Anytime during the year

TIME REQUIRED

- 20-30 minutes

LEVEL

- Pre-K & Lower Elementary

MATERIALS

- Internet access and TV/projector
- Whiteboard and marker
- [What a Wonderful World](#) by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele
- Download or stream video: [Louis Armstrong: "What a Wonderful World"](#)
- Download or stream video: ["What a Wonderful World:" Playing for Change](#)
- Drawing/writing materials

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Use singing as a way to express gratitude

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a moment to breathe deeply, close your eyes, and listen to Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World.” How do you feel after listening to this song?

INSTRUCTIONS

READING THE BOOK

- About the book:
 - This is an illustrated version of the song “What a Wonderful World,” made famous by singer and jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong. The activity can be done with or without the book.
- Tell the class that you are going to teach them a song called “What a Wonderful World.”
- Ask:
 - *From the title of the song, what do you think it might be about?*

WATCHING THE VIDEOS

- Then, show the video Louis Armstrong: “What a Wonderful World.” This has the original version of the song, sung by Louis Armstrong, along with beautiful images that relate to the words (length 2:25). Write the lyrics on the board first so that students may read the words. Encourage the class to sing along!
- A second video, “What a Wonderful World:” Playing for Change features the same song, sung by children’s choirs in Uganda, France, and the United States (length 3:40).

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITIES

- Ask students:
 - *Who would like to share their thoughts about the videos?*
 - *What words or pictures would you use, if you were writing a song called "What a Wonderful World"?*
- Ask students to close their eyes for a minute and see what "wonderful world" ideas come to their minds. Have a few volunteers share.
- For younger students: Ask them to draw a picture of something they think is wonderful in their world, and write a caption beginning with the words "I see..."
- For older students: Have them try writing their own verse to the song. Rhyming is optional! This may be done individually, in pairs or small groups, or as a whole class. Encourage students to illustrate the song they create.

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on how it feels to sing their gratitude to the world. What could they do to encourage others to see the wonderful things about our world?

EXTENSIONS

- Make a video of the class singing "What a Wonderful World," either the original Louis Armstrong version, or a version they write themselves. Share the video with parents as a way to let them know that the class has been learning about gratitude.
- Find an occasion for students to perform their "wonderful world" songs -- for example, at an assembly or a parent meeting.
- Make a visit to a nursing home and perform the song(s) for an audience there. Ask the audience what they would put in a song about our wonderful world. Notice any expressions of gratitude!

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice whether students are seeing beauty in their surroundings more often after engaging in this practice?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

In addition to its [benefits for adults](#), research suggests that gratitude is also [good for youth](#), going hand in hand with greater hope and optimism, higher satisfaction with life, and fewer health complaints.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Students who experience [greater positive emotions](#) may put in more effort to overcome obstacles, [engage](#) in classroom activities more, and be [less stressed at school](#). In addition, [positive mental health in childhood](#) is linked to educational achievement and professional success later in life.

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](#).