



GRATITUDE INTERVIEW

"The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person."

—Andy Rooney

OVERVIEW

Students interview an older person about gratitude, deepening their understanding of gratitude.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Anytime during the year

TIME REQUIRED

- 30 minutes

LEVEL

- Middle School

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard and markers
- Writing materials
- Optional: A handout with "Gratitude Interview Questions"

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Interview an older person about gratitude, gaining perspective on their own experience of 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
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a moment to ask someone older than you about their thoughts about gratitude. Did this change or deepen your perspective about gratitude? If so, how?

INSTRUCTIONS

THE PRACTICE

- Ask:
 - *Do you know what an interview is?*
 - *What are some of the things a good interviewer does?*
- Write responses on the board -- these may include things like listening, not interrupting, asking questions, paying attention, etc.
- Tell students that they are each going to interview an adult about someone that they are grateful to. Interviewing a family member can be done as homework; interviewing school employees could be done during class time, depending on schedules. Ask:
 - *Think about adults in your lives that you might be able to interview. Possibilities include parents, grandparents, caretakers, aunts, or uncles, and teachers or other school staff.*
- As a class, brainstorm possible interview questions. Alternatively, the "Gratitude Interview Questions" handout can be used.
- Have the students practice doing mock interviews with each other using their list of questions before doing the actual interview. Discuss how to make the process of taking notes during an interview go smoothly (for example, by noting some key words during an interview, and writing up more detailed notes immediately after the interview). Some students may prefer to record it. Make it clear that students should only record if the interviewee agrees to this.
- After students carry out their interview, ask them to report on:
 - What did you learn about the person you interviewed?
 - How was their story different from your own experience of gratitude?

- How was it similar?
- What did you learn about gratitude from the interview?

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on what it felt like to interview someone with life experience. What other kinds of questions might they like to ask an older person? How might they encourage others to learn from older people, as well?

EXTENSIONS

- Have students write an essay summarizing the interview, and what they learned from it.
- Interviews can be carried out in pairs if done in school.
- Be sure to have students write a note to the person they interviewed, expressing gratitude for what they learned from the process!

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice if students' attitudes toward gratitude has changed as a result of the interviews?

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 tend to 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](#).