



GRATITUDE MIRROR

"Let your feelings of gratitude dance in your heart and be expressed through your love and kindness."

—Debasish Mridha

OVERVIEW

Students deepen their understanding of gratitude by “embodying” it.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Anytime during the year

TIME REQUIRED

- 20-30 minutes

LEVEL

- Upper Elementary

MATERIALS

- Internet access and TV/projector
- Download or stream video: [Grateful: A Love Song to the World](#)
- Optional: Handout of Lyrics

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Deepen their understanding of gratitude by “embodying” it

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
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a moment to watch [Grateful: A Love Song to the World](#). How did you feel after watching this video? What physical movement might you make that represents gratitude? The experience of gratitude can bring about positive emotions that can be expressed both verbally and physically.

INSTRUCTIONS

THE PRACTICE

- Point out to the class that sometimes we show gratitude through actions or gestures, as well as through words. Ask students to think for a moment about a movement or gesture that conveys the feeling of gratitude.
- Have the class stand in a circle and explain that you will demonstrate the Gratitude Mirror. Name something that you are grateful for, and simultaneously make a gesture or motion that demonstrates gratitude. Ask the students to both repeat what you said and mirror back your motion.
- Once they have the idea, ask a student to continue the Gratitude Mirror by naming what she or he is grateful for and demonstrating a gesture or action. Keep the activity moving around the circle at a fairly quick pace until everyone in the class has had a chance to have their words and movement reflected back to them. End the activity with a round of applause.
- Ask:
 - *What was it like to have your motion and what you were grateful for, reflected back to you by the group?*
 - *Why did you choose the motion or gesture that you did? Does it have a special meaning for you?*
- Show the video [Grateful: A Love Song to the World](#) (length: 5 minutes. Ask students to notice the movements that the singers and dancers are making and how these express gratitude.)
- Show the video a second time. Have students sing along on the chorus (below or use the full lyrics). If space allows, they can also do their own "grateful" movements. (Remind them to look around at where others in the room are, and to be mindful of their personal space, and the space of others.)

Chorus for “Grateful: A Love Song to the World”

All that I am
All that I see,
All that I’ve been and all that I’ll ever be
Is a blessing,
It’s so amazing
And I’m grateful for it all, for it all

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on how it felt to express gratitude through their bodies. What emotions did they experience, if any?

EXTENSION

- Students can work in pairs or small groups to create a “human sculpture” or “statue” that expresses the idea of gratitude. They can take turns demonstrating the pose they come up with to the class.
- Students can create their own song or video about gratitude.

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice if students show more positive emotion and/or optimism after this practice? Are they expressing gratitude more often?

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](#).