Appreciate Your Memories

grades 7-8 | 45 minutes

Heart of the Lesson

- How can your memories help you understand who you've become?
- What kinds of windows and mirrors do you want your stories to show, and what experiences might help you create them?
- How does remembering happy memories make you feel?

Lesson Summary

- Students appreciate the experiences that have shaped who they are.
- They reflect on a joyful memory from their life and consider how it can support them in the present.
- They then explore how memories can act as both a window into their past and a mirror of who they are.

Pre-Lesson Prep

- (Offline programs) Print the Reflection Questions: Appreciate Your Self (PDF) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- (Option A) Print the Worksheet: This One Time... (PDF) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).
- (Option B) Prepare chart papers with the headings: What did you SEE? | What did you HEAR? | What did you FEEL? | WHO was there? (THINK.GIVE section).
- (Digging Deeper) Print the Worksheet: Personal Identity Mirrors (PDF) (1/student) (THINK.GIVE section).

MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals | Guide (PDF)
Warm-up Activities (PDF)
Reflection Questions: Appreciate Your Self (PDF)
Quote Image (PDF)
Worksheet: This One Time... (PDF)
(Digging Deeper) Worksheet: Personal Identity Mirrors (PDF)

MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: Appreciate Your Memories | Slide Notes (PDF)

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Same and Different

Invite students to spread out around the room. Play music while students walk or dance. When the music stops, choose one student to share something they like (e.g., a favorite food, activity, or TV show). After the student shares, have others move closer if they agree or share that interest, and farther away if they do not. Restart the music and repeat with a new student.

TEACHER TIP

Start each lesson with a Warm-Up Activity to help your students connect, especially if new participants are joining during the program.

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SHARE

SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES

Take a few minutes for students to reflect on and share the action they've taken since the last lesson.

IF USING THE ONLINE PORTAL
Students log in to post their action and respond to the reflection questions. Invite a few students to share with the group.

IF WORKING OFFLINE
Use the Reflection Questions: Appreciate Your Self (PDF). After completing the worksheet, students post their response to Question #1 on the Windows + Mirrors Bulletin Board. Invite a few students to share with the group.

TEACHER TIP

If students feel dissatisfied with their actions or haven't acted yet, remind them that character grows through small, consistent actions (ThinkGive Three). Encourage them to keep trying.

OPEN

SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES

Quote/Image
Display the Quote Image (PDF) and/or read the quote or invite a volunteer to read it (see slides): "When you show up authentic, you create the space for others to do the same. Walk in your truth." – Anonymous

ASK: What does this image/quote mean to you?

THINK · GIVE

SUGGESTED TIME: 30 MINUTES

Activity: Appreciate a Joyful Memory
Explain: Think of a moment from your life that makes you feel happy—a quick 5-second snapshot you can picture clearly. It doesn't have to be a big or important moment. It could be something like "I remember when my mom brought home our puppy," or "I remember scoring a goal at recess," or "I remember eating pizza with my friends after a rainstorm." Write down as many details as you can remember from that moment—what you saw, heard, felt, or who was there.

OPTION A: Worksheet Option
Hand out the Worksheet: This One Time... (PDF) (1/student). Give students time to complete the worksheet. Explain that they can just write lists instead

of full sentences. Invite volunteers to share specific sensory memories. When another student shares a similar smell, sound, sight, taste, or touch memory, invite them to acknowledge the connection with a high-five, fist bump, bow, or another simple gesture. As the activity continues, feel free to introduce additional ways for students to recognize shared experiences. NOTE: Do this without the worksheet by guiding students through the prompts aloud.

OPTION B: Memory Walk

Post four signs around the room:

- What did you SEE?
- What did you HEAR?
- What did you THINK?
- What did you FEEL?

Students rotate through the stations, writing down details from a happy memory at each stop. Encourage them to pause and picture the memory before moving on. If they see a sensory memory they've also had, they can put a checkmark next to it. After visiting all four stations, bring the group back together and invite students to share what they remembered.

DISCUSS (AFTER OPTION A OR B)

- How did it feel to think about that memory?
- How often do you think about it?
- How has that memory influenced who you are today?
- How could you use this memory when you're having a tough day?

Digging Deeper

Activity: Personal Identity Mirrors

Hand out the Worksheet: Personal Identity Mirrors (PDF) (1/student). Students complete both sides, reflecting on different parts of who they are, then discuss their responses as a group.

DISCUSS

- What is one new thing you learned about yourself?
- Did anything surprise you? Why?
- What do you appreciate about how you've grown or changed?
- What is one new way you can better understand or care for yourself?

CONNECT + CLOSE

SUGGESTED TIME: 5 MINUTES

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [given date], journal about a memory. Include as many details as you can remember. How does the

past version of yourself that you were in the memory offer you a window or a mirror?

Things to Consider

- Memories can act as a window, helping you understand how you've become who you are.
- Joyful memories can bring you back to a place of calm.
- Stories can act as mirrors, helping you see yourself in others through shared thoughts and feelings.

Brainstorm Actions

Here are some action ideas for inspiration. Brainstorm more together if needed to build confidence in taking true, small, and brave actions.

- I journaled about something that happened at school this week.
- I journaled about what it was like moving to a new town.
- I journaled about something my friend said that I thought was funny.

Closing Quote/Image

Use this Quote and/or Image (PDF) to close the lesson. "When you show up authentic, you create the space for others to do the same. Walk in your truth." – Anonymous

DISCUSS

- What does this quote/image mean to you now?
- How does this quote/image connect to the lesson?

THINKGIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: small is all
3. Brave: step into your courage zone

CONNECTION

Use journaling to deepen reflection and strengthen writing skills—students respond online or use the Journal Questions: Appreciate Your Memories (PDF) if working offline.

Student Journal Questions

- How might sharing a memory help someone else see a reflection of themselves in you?
- What feels different about sharing your own memories vs. listening to others share theirs?
- How might appreciating your memories change the way you think about your past, if at all?

Extensions

DO

SHOW AND TELL OUR STORY: USING PHOTOGRAPHS TO EXPLORE IDENTITY

Invite students to bring a photograph of themselves or a family member.

STEP 1: Students swap photos so they are reflecting on an image that is not their own. NOTE: If there are fewer photos, students can work in small groups.

STEP 2: Students respond to the following:

- What do you notice about the person in the photo?
- What might they be thinking or feeling?

- What feelings do you have when you look at the photo?

STEP 3: The student who brought the photo shares more about the person's identity (e.g., background, age, personality, hopes, or experiences).

STEP 4: Discuss

- What did you get right? What surprised you?
- What does this tell you about the importance of hearing someone's story?

QUESTIONS

Hand out the Worksheet: Great Questions (PDF) (1/student). Students choose three questions they're genuinely curious about, then pair up and take turns asking and answering, listening carefully to each other's responses. Afterward, they make a list of people in their lives they'd like to ask these questions.

DISCUSS

- How did it feel to ask and answer these questions?
- What did you notice about listening to someone's responses?

WATCH

VIDEO: MY GRANDFATHER'S SHOES (7:07)

In this Moth story, Christian Garland shares how he stole money from his grandfather to buy shoes and how he later took responsibility and worked to rebuild trust.

DISCUSS

- How did Christian change from the beginning of the story to the end?
- Did this story connect to anything in your own life? How?
- How did hearing Christian describe his feelings impact you?
- In what ways did this story act as a mirror or a window for you?