

Gratitude Spotlight

Introduction



grades 6–8



45 minutes

“The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see.”
– Mary Davis

Lesson Summary

Students reflect on their relationship to gratitude by noticing what they appreciate and how they share that appreciation with others. They then explore how awareness strengthens gratitude and why practicing gratitude matters.

NOTES:

- Consider starting each lesson with a Warm-Up Activity to help students connect. For ideas, see the ThinkGive Warm-Up Activities ([PDF](#)).
- Consider providing students with a dedicated notebook/journal for use throughout the program. See the Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#)) for suggestions on incorporating a journal in lessons.



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Three Posters (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#))
ThinkGive Journals | Guide ([PDF](#))
Journal Cover Template ([PDF](#))
Participant Profile Template ([PDF](#))
Sample Participant Profile ([PDF](#))
Quote Image ([PDF](#))

Students will Examine

- What gratitude means and how it feels, both emotionally and physically.
- What they are grateful for and how often they express it.
- How awareness of people, moments, and surroundings can deepen the practice of gratitude.

MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#) | Slide Notes ([PDF](#))
Video: [Gratitude](#) (5:22)

Pre-Activity Prep

- Print and hang a ThinkGive Three poster (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#)).
- (Offline programs) Print the Participant Profile Template ([PDF](#)) (1/student) (SHARE section).
- (Offline programs) Print or display the Sample Participant Profile ([PDF](#)) to guide students (SHARE section).

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Set Up Student Profiles

If using the online portal (optional: can complete during Web Training):

Students log in to their My Page to set up their User Profile. They can choose a color, upload an image, and write about themselves in the “About Me” section.

If working offline:

Hand out the Participant Profile Template ([PDF](#)) (1/student). Students create their profiles. When finished, post them on the wall or bulletin board designated for displaying student actions throughout the program. For inspiration, show the Sample Participant Profile ([PDF](#)).

★ TEACHER TIP

Having students create and display a user profile helps build a sense of ownership and belonging. It’s a simple way to start building trust, connection, and community.

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): “The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see.” – Mary Davis

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

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Introduce Gratitude

Begin by asking students to share examples of things, people, or experiences they feel grateful for. Model vulnerability by sharing one or two of your own.

Activity: Step Forward

Students stand in a line or circle. Read a statement from the list below. If the statement feels true for them, they step forward. Pause briefly for discussion, then students return to their spots. Continue with the following statement, repeating as time allows.

Statements:

- I feel grateful for something every day.
- I sometimes take people or things for granted.
- I express my **gratitude** often.
- I sometimes forget to say “thank you.”
- I am grateful for the people I am close to.
- I express my appreciation to the people I am close to.
- I sometimes pause to consider what I am grateful for.
- I am grateful to myself.
- I express gratitude to myself.
- I am thankful for nature.
- I am grateful for school.
- I am grateful for my possessions.
- I am thankful for my peers.
- I am grateful for many things.

Discuss:

- What did you notice during this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Did you hesitate to step forward for any of these statements? Which one(s), and what were you considering while deciding?



GRATITUDE

noun; the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

REFLECT

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Cultivate Gratitude

Watch: [Gratitude](#) (5:22).

Discuss:

- What was your reaction to the video?
- What is one thing you learned or noticed?
- How does Brother Steindl-Rast approach the world?
- How are noticing and awareness connected to gratitude? Can one exist without the other?
- Why is it sometimes challenging to practice gratitude? What could help in those moments?
- What is the value of practicing gratitude? How might our world look different if everyone made gratitude a regular habit?
- Is gratitude a skill we can develop? If so, how?

DIGGING DEEPER

Discuss:

- What does Brother Steindl-Rast mean when he suggests approaching each day “as if it were the first day in your life and the very last day”?



TEACHER TIP

Model the importance of gratitude by sharing examples of what you are grateful for or how a gratitude mindset has benefited you.

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], pay attention to the things, people, and experiences around you. Choose at least one that you don't usually appreciate, reflect on how it benefits you and/or the world, and find a way to express your gratitude.

Things to Consider

- Gratitude begins with noticing what's around us.
- The more we practice gratitude, the more we recognize and value people, objects, and experiences in our lives.
- Like any skill, gratitude grows stronger with practice.

Brainstorm Actions

N/A

Closing Quote

Use this [Quote and/or Image \(PDF\)](#) to close the lesson.

"The more grateful I am, the more beauty I see." – Mary Davis

Discuss:

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

★ THINK.GIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: simple gifts have big impact
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: Introduction ([PDF](#)) if offline.

★ CONNECTION

Mary Davis (1954–present) is an Irish social entrepreneur and long-term activist for the rights and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. She is the CEO of Special Olympics International.

Reflection Questions

- Who or what did you appreciate?
- What did you observe about this person, object, or experience that made you feel grateful?
- How did the action you took to show gratitude help you appreciate this person, object, or experience more fully?

Journal Questions

- Do you think there's a limit to what someone can feel grateful for? Why or why not?
- What person, object, or experience are you most grateful for, and why?
- Why is it important to practice gratitude?