

Gratitude Spotlight Introduction



grades 6-8



30 minutes

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

Lesson Summary

Students self-assess their relationship to gratitude by considering what they are grateful for and how often they express their appreciation. Students then define gratitude and explore what it feels like and why it’s important to practice.

Students will Examine

- What gratitude means and what it feels like.
- What they are grateful for, and how often they express their gratitude.
- How does awareness relate to gratitude?

Pre-Activity Prep

- (Optional) Print and hang a ThinkGive Three poster (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#)).
- (Optional) Print the ThinkGive Journal cover template ([PDF](#)) (1/student).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share the Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (CONNECT + CLOSE section).



MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))



MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Introduction](#)
Video: [Gratitude](#) (5:22)

SHARE

Nothing for the Introduction, no actions to share yet!

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Introduce the idea of gratitude by asking students for examples of things, people, or experiences they feel grateful for. Share one or two of your own.

Step Forward

Students stand in a line or circle. Read a statement from the list below. Students step forward if the statement feels true. Pause for discussion, and then students return to their place in the line/circle. Read the following statement. Continue for as many rounds 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 that I am close to.
- I express my appreciation to 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 classmates.
- I am grateful for many things.
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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)? 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). This short film asks the audience to consider appreciation and gratitude.

Discuss:

- What was your reaction to the video?
- What is one thing you learned?
- What do you notice about how Brother Steindl-Rast approaches the world?
- How are noticing and being aware connected when it comes to gratitude? Is one possible without the other?
- Why is it sometimes challenging to practice gratitude?
- 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

ThinkGive Three (Optional)

Introduce students to the ThinkGive Three, a guide for how to take action. Revisit these ideas with every prompt so students can recall them independently. Hang a ThinkGive Three Poster (Yellow [PDF](#) | Purple [PDF](#)) in your class to serve as a reminder throughout the program.

1. **TRUE.** Be your authentic self in your actions and words.
2. **SMALL.** Small is all! Everything we do and say matters, and everything we do and say has an impact—no matter how small.
3. **BRAVE.** Step into your courage zone; challenge yourself to be brave with your actions and words.

Take Action

Explain: Before our next ThinkGive session on [give date], notice objects, people, and experiences around you. Choose at least one object, person, or experience you don't typically appreciate, consider how this thing/person benefits you and/or the world, and express your gratitude in some way.

Things to Consider

- Feeling gratitude requires noticing what's around us.
- The more we practice gratitude, the more we notice and appreciate people, objects, and experiences around us.
- We get better at feeling and expressing gratitude with practice.

★ THINK.GIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: simple gifts have big impact
3. Brave: step into your courage zone

Closing Quote

Use this quote to close out the lesson. The reflective questions could serve as an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)).




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

- What does this quote mean to you?
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Reflection Questions

- What or who did you practice gratitude towards that you typically might not have noticed or appreciated?
- What did you notice about this person, object, or experience that made you feel grateful?
- How might practicing gratitude towards this person, object, or experience affect you?

Journal Questions

-  Is there a limit to what you can feel grateful for? Explain.
-  What person, object, or experience do you feel the most grateful for, and why?
-  Why do you think people should practice gratitude?