

1 Guide students through a discussion on gratitude

Who can tell me what it means to them to feel grateful?

Think of three things or people in your life you are grateful for.

[Sometimes this can be challenging for students, so you might offer some examples for them to think of: family members, friends, teachers, or other people that they see each day; their home, games, toys, the earth, their hands, or sense of smell.]

Who would like to share something that they thought of?

2 Guide students through a reflection

[Pause briefly after each statement. With younger students, pause for a few seconds; with older students, you might give them 30 seconds to a minute to reflect on each statement.]

Let your eyes close, or look down, or find something in the classroom that you appreciate looking at.

Now imagine all of those things and people that you just thought of.

If you thought of a person, imagine that person is here with you right now.

If you thought of an object, imagine you have it here to look at, or hold, or play with.

If you thought of a place, imagine yourself being there right now.

3 Invite students to notice how it feels to practice gratitude

I'm curious how it felt to do that. Give me a thumbs up if it felt good to do that. Give me a thumbs sideways or down if that felt difficult or even uncomfortable to do. Remember, however it felt for you is okay.

What did you notice in your body when you thought about the things you are thankful for surrounding you? What emotions did you notice?

Take a moment and think about three other things you can be grateful for, and then share them with someone next to you.

4 Invite students to write Gratitude Letters

Students may write a gratitude letter to a person or draw a picture of an object (the earth, breath, their body) expressing what they appreciate about it or them.

Invite students to reflect on how it felt to express gratitude in this way. Did they notice anything different about their emotions or thoughts? Did it feel difficult or easy to express their gratitude?

Important Considerations:

Some students may find it difficult to practice being grateful, as it could remind them of what they may lack or long for in comparison to others. You can hold space for all responses to the exercise. For young people who may struggle with gratitude, you can also model gratitude for things that are immediately accessible: our breath and bodies, our classroom, our school. Normalize all reports of any feelings that gratitude may bring up. Allowing strong emotions to be felt rather than forcing unnatural feelings of gratitude meets children where they are.



Watch students
read their letters

