

Objective

Students will express gratitude for positive things happening in their lives.

Materials

- Writing utensils
- Gratitude Journal handout, one per student

Why This Matters Now

Humans are naturally inclined to focus on the negative aspects of their lives. During this difficult time, it's likely there are a lot of negative things happening in your students' lives. Taking time to focus on the positives, like what they appreciate or are thankful for, can buffer the effects of stress and help students recover.



Bold—Teacher's script

Italics—Anticipated student responses

Activity Instructions (15 min.)

1. Introduce the activity. **During challenging, stressful times it's normal to focus more on all the negatives in our lives. Today you're going to start a Gratitude Journal to help you notice the good things happening in your lives and say thank you for them. Expressing gratitude can change your mood and help you feel more connected to others. It also trains your brain to focus on the positive.**
2. Do a short gratitude practice. **Before you start your journal, let's share one thing we're grateful for with each other right now.** Invite students to express one thing they're grateful for. It can be a person, an event, or anything that's helping them feel better these days. Model expressing gratitude yourself first. Allow students to pass if they want to.
3. Introduce Gratitude Journals. **Now that you've practiced, you're ready to practice gratitude all week.**
 - **Step 1:** Show students the Gratitude Journal handout. Tell them they'll write at least one thing they're grateful for in the left column of the handout each day. Explain that if they're having trouble thinking of something they're grateful for, they can use the list of ideas at the bottom of the handout to help them.
 - **Step 2.** Tell students they'll explain why they're grateful for that thing in the corresponding box in the right column.
 - **Step 3:** Distribute the handout to students. Give them time to explore the journal and decide how they'll record their gratitude.
4. **You can also find other creative ways to express gratitude. For example, you can write a letter or email to someone you're grateful for. Or you can draw a picture, write a song, or make a video.**
5. Reinforce. **Practicing gratitude can help you focus on the positive and feel connected to others. We'll check in to see how it's going next week.**

Remote Adaptation

- When you meet with students remotely, introduce the activity and do the gratitude practice, then introduce the Gratitude Journal. Email students a PDF of the handout. If they can't print the handout, have them create a journal based on the model in the handout on a sheet of paper. Or they can find other creative ways to express their gratitude.
- At your next remote meeting, have students discuss how it felt to practice gratitude every day.

Please Give Us Feedback

After you've tried out this activity, help us make a better product for educators by taking a quick survey. Access the survey by visiting the link, or scan the QR code with your phone's camera. <https://tinyurl.com/yyxz92fr>





Starting a Gratitude Journal

Student Activities
GRADES 4 & 5

Name: _____

Date: _____

Gratitude Journal

Instructions: Each day this week, list one thing you're grateful for. Use the ideas at the bottom of the journal to help you think of something if you get stuck. Then explain why you're grateful for that thing.

Day	What are you grateful for?	Why?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Ideas

Friends Family Food Health Body Teachers
Pets School Sunlight Doctors Books Toys