



Transformative Teaching Toolkit

Cultivating An Attitude of Gratitude in School



Breathe For Gratitude



Toolkit Overview

Breathe For Gratitude

Get excited to foster an attitude of gratitude in your school! This Breathe For Gratitude Transformative Teaching Toolkit will equip you to create a culture of appreciation in your classroom and community. Our inspiring gratitude practices will support you, your students, and staff in celebrating yourselves individually and collectively. Through integrating acknowledgment into your daily life and teaching, you and your community will build a positive culture and climate that inspires everyone to be their best selves.

This toolkit includes a Breathe For Gratitude theme overview you can share with your students, colleagues, and families, and several gratitude practices you can seamlessly integrate into all aspects of your instruction. All practices are CASEL-aligned and differentiated for primary, secondary, and adult education. Each strategy includes a step-by-step description, reflection questions, and scaffolded pedagogical pointers that you can draw on to bring the practice to life.

We are so grateful for you, and can't wait for you and your community to experience the powerful benefits of gratitude in your life!

BREATHE FOR GRATITUDE

APPRECIATING THE GIFT OF LIFE



Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity.... It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

— **Melodie Beattie**

Gratitude opens the door to... the power, the wisdom, the creativity of the Universe. You open the door through gratitude.

— **Deepak Chopra**

Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.

— **Eckhart Tolle**

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

— **William Arthur Ward**



Miracles happen all the time. We're here, aren't we?

— **Marilyn Nelson**



BREATHE FOR GRATITUDE

Taking on an attitude of gratitude can have profound benefits. Gratitude has been shown to improve social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being.¹ Practicing gratitude helps us to develop a mindset of health, joy, and abundance — and sets us up to sustain our own well-being as we learn, grow, and positively impact our community.

As we unleash our creative potential, actively taking the time to appreciate who we are and what we have invites abundance into our lives. Approaching life from a place of abundance puts ourselves in a position to make the most of opportunities because we transcend obstacles that might otherwise hold us back.

Gratitude naturally puts us in a positive state of mind, because it focuses on what is, rather than what is not. It reinforces our understanding not only of what others have to offer us, but also what we have to offer others. Gratitude gives us the strength and courage to share our gifts with others without needing anything in return, which supports them in opening up to receive from us. When we appreciate people from a genuine place, they feel seen and acknowledged, which inspires vulnerability and trust, and strengthens our relationships.

Research has shown profound results from practicing gratitude, ranging from improved mental and physical health to enhancements in sleep to increased empathy and self-esteem.² These outcomes have been widely reported, such as in Harvard Medical School's

article "In Praise of Gratitude", and Forbes' "7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude."^{3,4}

Thankfully, gratitude is extraordinarily simple to practice. Keeping a daily gratitude journal, writing thank-you letters, or mentally appreciating people throughout the day can lead to significant changes in our well-being and in our relationships. Incorporating meditations of gratitude, especially for people close to us or for people with whom we're experiencing conflict, can also be very powerful.

Gratitude inspires us to see the bigger picture and receive the gifts present in each moment. When we focus on what is working versus what's not, we are able to approach obstacles and challenges with a newfound perspective. Even in the most challenging of times, taking on an attitude of gratitude can help us break free of unhealthy habits by shifting our narrative and finding deeper meaning.

As you continue on your journey, make a commitment to approach your life and work from a place of gratitude — even when things are challenging. For, as Albert Einstein reminds us: "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." Practicing gratitude fills our lives with miracles and joy, and supports us in thinking, speaking, and acting in alignment with our intentions.

1 Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: an experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 84(2), 377.

2 Watkins, P. C., Woodward, K., Stone, T., & Kolts, R. L. (2003). Gratitude and happiness: Development of a measure of gratitude, and relationships with subjective well-being. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 31(5), 431-451.

3 In Praise of Gratitude. Harvard Health Publications. Retrieved from http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/in-praise-of-gratitude

4 Morin, A. (2014, November 23). 7 Scientifically Proven Benefits Of Gratitude That Will Motivate You To Give Thanks Year-Round. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2014/11/23/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-of-gratitude-that-will-motivate-you-to-give-thanks-year-round/>



APPRECIATION CIRCLE

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*f Component

Community Connection, Closing

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness

SEL Purpose

Builds community, fosters positivity, cultivates gratitude



DESCRIPTION

1. It's time for an Appreciation Circle! An Appreciation Circle is an opportunity for us to openly acknowledge ourselves, a peer, our community as a whole, or whoever or whatever it is that we feel grateful for right now.
2. We will do this "popcorn style"; whoever feels called to share first can take space and share, while everyone else mindfully listens. When that person is complete, someone else can step up and share. No one is required to speak; simply share your gratitude if you feel called.
3. Who feels called to share first? (Allow the Appreciation Circle to continue for as long as it feels right. Complete the circle by sharing your appreciation.)
4. To soak this in, I invite you to bring your hands to your heart. Let's take 3 collective breaths of Gratitude together. Take a deep breath in, honoring yourself, and a deep breath out. Inhale love, exhale appreciation. Breathe in gratitude for this whole community, exhale, let it go.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did the Appreciation Circle make you feel?
- What was it like to share your appreciation with others?
- What was it like to listen to others share their gratitude?
- How would you like to bring more gratitude into your life?
- How would appreciating yourself everyday impact you?
- How would expressing your gratitude to others enhance your relationships?

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Scaffold this process with young children by engaging in a conversation with them about the benefits of practicing gratitude. Model what different types of appreciations might look like (e.g., appreciations for ourselves, our friends, our community, our health, etc.), and encourage them to share their gratitude as often as possible to foster an attitude of gratitude in your classroom and community.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Engage students in a conversation about how they like to give and receive gratitude both in and outside of school. To foster inclusion, acknowledge that everyone participating in the Appreciation Circle — speakers and listeners — receives the benefits of expressing gratitude. Encourage students who prefer not to share in the whole group to express their appreciation today in whatever way feels good for them.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

The Appreciation Circle is a great practice to incorporate at the end of any staff meeting, wellness experience, or community event to foster a culture of appreciation in

your school or community. Encourage the adults you are working with to facilitate this practice in their teaching contexts.

DAILY PRACTICE

Incorporating this activity into your daily or weekly routine is a great way to foster deeper connections and strengthen relationships within your community.

INCLUSIVE VARIATIONS

Encourage students to practice both making space and taking space so that diverse voices are represented in your Appreciation Circle. You can invite students to share popcorn style, or call on students who raise their hand. Give yourself permission to try on new ways of facilitating this practice that inspire your particular group of students.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Students who experience trauma, especially in close relationships, may not be used to or feel safe expressing or receiving gratitude. Hold space for them to engage in this practice in whatever way feels supportive for them.



ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*F Component

Settle In, Breath Awareness, Focus, Relaxation

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness, Self Management

SEL Purpose

Fosters connection to self, promotes abundant mindset



DESCRIPTION

1. Taking on an attitude of gratitude can positively enhance our well-being and performance. Let's practice cultivating an attitude of gratitude by breathing and connecting to what we're grateful for.
2. To begin, I invite you to settle into a comfortable position. Bring one hand to heart, and the other over that hand, and connect to your breath.
3. As you continue to breathe, I invite you to imagine as though you have a treasure chest in your heart with the keys in your hands. I invite you to bring to mind one thing you are grateful for right now. Visualize yourself unlocking the treasure chest, and then place this treasure — this thing or person you are grateful for — and place it in the treasure chest of your heart.
4. Now, bring to mind another treasure in your life that you are grateful for. It can be anyone or anything. See this treasure in your mind's eye, and feel it in your heart. Whenever you are ready, you can place this treasure into the treasure chest of your heart.
5. For the next few minutes, continue to bring to mind treasure after treasure, and place them into the treasure chest of your heart, filling yourself up with gratitude.
6. Now, connect to one final treasure for now — something or someone you are so grateful for. Place this treasure in the treasure chest of your heart. Then, take the keys and close it for now, knowing you can always return back to the treasure chest to remind yourself of the many gifts you have in your life.
7. Let's seal this practice with an attitude of gratitude by taking 3 Collective Breaths of Gratitude together.
8. Who feels called to share a treasure that you're grateful for today?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What treasures are you grateful for right now?
- What do you love and appreciate about you?
- What are you grateful for about your community?
- How did taking on an attitude of gratitude impact you?
- How can you take on an attitude of gratitude more in your life?



➤ — Lead with Love — ➤

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

To support young children in connecting to what they are grateful for, you can ask questions like, “What makes you happy?” or “What do you love about yourself?” or “What do you love about your family or friends?” Share what you are grateful for as an example, and ask a few students to share examples of their treasures to help everyone make connections for themselves.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

This is a great practice to use to help students transform their mindset for the better. Helping students tap into what they are grateful for can shift students’ mindsets about themselves and their lives; when students acknowledge the gifts they do have vs. focus on what they lack, their well-being and performance can transform for the better.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

Discuss the importance of taking on an attitude of gratitude, and introduce this practice as an opportunity to practice

gratitude in action. Facilitate this practice to strengthen people’s relationships to themselves and each other during meetings, discussions, or community events. After guiding the practice, facilitate opportunities for people to share what they’re grateful for with each other.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Practicing gratitude may feel uncomfortable or vulnerable for some people. Be compassionate and permissions-based as you guide people through this healing practice. Remind people that they can choose to focus on whatever treasures — big or small — that they feel called to in the moment.

VARIATIONS

You can give students the option to get in a comfortable seated position, or lie down, whatever feels most supportive to them, or whatever works best in your physical environment. Inviting students to lie down can be a great way to foster deep relaxation.



GRATEFUL FOR ME

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*f Component

Focus, Relaxation

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness

SEL Purpose

Builds confidence, cultivates self-gratitude, promotes self-acceptance

DESCRIPTION

1. It's important to take time to appreciate ourselves the way we appreciate others. That's what this Grateful For Me Practice is all about.
2. I invite you to find a comfortable position. You can sit on a chair or the floor, or lie down, whatever feels most relaxing for you. Gently soften your gaze or close your eyes, and allow your body to rest.
3. Notice your breath moving in and out of your belly. Begin to deepen your breath, and feel your body relax.
4. Continue to relax into your body. Your body is so strong. It moves in incredible ways, and allows you to do the things you love. In the spirit of gratitude, I invite you to acknowledge your body by saying to yourself, "I am grateful for my body."
5. Now, begin to relax into your mind. Your mind is amazing. You are curious, creative, and brilliant because of your mind's power. Say to yourself, "I am grateful for my mind."
6. Now, begin to relax into your heart. Your heart is kind and loving, and helps care for yourself and others. Say to yourself, "I am grateful for my heart."
7. Finally, relax into your whole Self. Think of all the things you love about yourself, and know that you are perfect just the way you are. Say to yourself, "I am grateful for me."
8. Slowly begin to wiggle your fingers and toes, and bring movement back into your body. Take a big breath in, honoring yourself, and a big breath out.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What was it like to appreciate your mind, body, and heart?

How did it feel to express gratitude for your whole Self?

Why is it important to appreciate yourself?

How would practicing more self-gratitude impact you?

How might it feel to give gratitude to yourself everyday?

» — Lead with Love — «

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Invite students to reflect on what our minds, bodies, and hearts do for us to set context prior to guiding the practice (e.g., What do our minds do for us? What do our bodies do for us? What do our hearts do for us?). During the practice, offer children the option to say the gratitude affirmations aloud or to themselves to ensure accessibility.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Discuss why it is important to give ourselves gratitude, and share how this practice has impacted you personally to foster vulnerability. Invite students to consider what they appreciate about themselves before the practice by asking questions like, "What are your greatest strengths?" or "What do other people admire about you?" This will provide a solid foundation for them to acknowledge themselves in the practice.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

As givers, many educators, leaders, and parents have a natural tendency to give

gratitude to others, but have a difficult time giving that same love and appreciation to themselves. Acknowledge this tension, and invite your community to give themselves the gift of gratitude the way they share this gift with others.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Create an inclusive space by giving those who may not feel comfortable closing their eyes or lying down the option of keeping their eyes open or sitting in a chair or on the floor or a couch.

VARIATIONS

You can use this practice as a framework to create your own gratitude affirmations (e.g., I am grateful for my health, my friends, my brilliance). Students can engage in this relaxing practice in a comfortable seated position on the floor or in a chair, or lying down. If seated, invite students to lengthen their spines, relax their shoulders down their backs, and open their hearts.



GRATITUDE JOURNAL

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*F Component

Creative Expression

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness

SEL Purpose

Cultivates connection, promotes positive mindset

DESCRIPTION

1. Our well-being and ability to thrive is deeply connected to our mindset. Practicing gratitude helps us focus our attention on what is working in our lives, as opposed to what's not, and has the power to shift our mindset for the better. Research shows that when we practice gratitude daily, it can improve both our mindset and well-being!
2. A great way to practice gratitude is by writing what we are grateful for in a gratitude journal. Your gratitude journal is personal to you; it's a private space for you to write whatever it is you feel grateful for in the moment.
3. I invite you to take out your gratitude journal for the next few minutes, and write or draw whatever it is you are grateful for. You can go deep and focus in on one person or thing, or you can write about multiple people or things you are grateful for in your life right now. (Give space for students to write).
4. Now that you've written in your gratitude journal, I invite you to bring your hands to your heart, connect to your breath, and notice how you feel. If you feel called, I invite you to share how you feel with the community (or with a partner).
5. (Optional) I'd love to open up space for a few of you to share what you're grateful for with our entire community. (Take a few shares).
6. I encourage you to find time everyday to write in your gratitude journal or practice gratitude in another way so that you are able to experience the benefits of the powerful practice of gratitude!



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are you grateful for in your life right now?

What did it feel like to write in your gratitude journal?

What insights did you gain from practicing gratitude?

How can you integrate this practice into your daily life?

What benefits do you hope to experience as a result?

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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Young children may not yet have the fine motor or literacy skills to write out what they are grateful for in words or sentences. You can modify this practice by having students draw what they are grateful for in their gratitude journal.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Prior to the practice, you can share the research-based benefits of gratitude to increase engagement and buy-in. Explain that practicing gratitude can enhance students' mental, physical, and emotional well-being, as well as their performance. Invite some students to share aloud what they are grateful for to inspire connection to the practice.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

This can be a great practice to introduce at the beginning of a staff meeting, professional development, or other community gathering to help people transition from where they were to where they are now. This practice invites us to pause, let go of our busy to-do-lists, and just focus on what truly matters. Inviting participants to share what they are grateful for after the journaling time can help create a culture of gratitude and build community.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Invite people to journal in whatever way feels supportive and comfortable to them. Offer examples and options for how people can engage with the practice (e.g., you can write about a person or people you're grateful for, what you're grateful for about yourself, your bed, your dog, your health, anything).



SENDING THANKS



B4C Theme

SEL*f Component

SEL Competency

SEL Purpose

Breathe For Gratitude

Community Connection, Creative Expression

Self Awareness, Relationship Skills

Strengthens relationships, fosters human connection

DESCRIPTION

1. Giving gratitude to our loved ones is a recipe for building and sustaining healthy relationships. When we share our gratitude with the people we care about, we let them know: "I see you. I appreciate you. You matter to me." A wonderful way to express our gratitude to a loved one is through writing – that's what Sending Thanks is all about.
2. Think about one person you'd like to express your gratitude to right now.
3. Once you have this person in mind, I invite you to write a letter to them, letting them know what you appreciate about who they are. Share why you are grateful for them, and the impact they've made on you. Feel free to incorporate drawing if you'd like as well.
4. (Give 10+ minutes for them to write the letter, and then give them a few minutes to bring their letter to completion).
5. When you are done writing, you can come get your envelope if you'd like here and put your letter into it. Stamps are available to those of you who want to send your letter in the mail (you can collect and send out the letters for students if the addresses are available). If you see this person regularly, I encourage you to give them the letter the next time you see them!
6. I am so excited to hear how the person you sent thanks to responds to your letter!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who did you choose to send thanks to, and why?
- What did it feel like to express your gratitude their way?
- What did this process open up for your relationship?
- What do you hope this person takes away from your letter?
- How did the person respond to your letter of thanks?

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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Young children may not yet have the fine motor or literacy skills to write out an actual letter in words. Invite them to draw a picture for the person they love to express their appreciation.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Prior to inviting students to write, you can share the research-based benefits of gratitude to help them realize the importance of this practice. Explain that practicing giving gratitude in our relationships can increase our connection and well-being. Invite some students to share aloud who they are grateful for, and why.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

This can be a great practice to introduce to build community and foster deep connection. This practice invites us to pause, and focus on relationships that truly

matter. Inviting people to express gratitude to someone their grateful for can both shift mindsets and create a culture of gratitude in your community.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Invite people to write their letter in whatever way feels supportive and comfortable to them. Offer examples and options for how people can engage with the practice (e.g., you can write about what you love about the person, why they matter to you, or what you appreciate about them).

BUILD COMMUNITY

You can have people choose to write to whoever they want, or you can be intentional and invite everyone to pick a name from a hat and write a letter of thanks to that person (so each person in the community gives and receives one letter). You can also encourage them to write to a specific type of person (e.g., someone in our school, in your family, etc.)



APPRECIATION WEB



B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*F Component

Community Connection, Closing

SEL Competency

Relationship Skills, Social Awareness

SEL Purpose

Builds community, develops empathy, promotes appreciation

Materials

Ball of Yarn

DESCRIPTION

1. Let's create an Appreciation Web to express our gratitude to each other! To begin, I invite you to find a comfortable seated position in a community circle.
2. Each person in our community will get a turn receiving an appreciation from one classmate, and then giving an appreciation to another classmate. You can acknowledge a friend for something nice they did for you today, for the way they've shown up for you, for an accomplishment they made that deserves celebration, or for anything else you feel called to appreciate.
3. We are going to give and receive our appreciation by passing around a ball of yarn. The first person will hold the ball of yarn, call the name of the person they want to appreciate, and say "I want to appreciate you because _____."
4. After their acknowledgement, the appreciator will hold onto one end of the string, and roll the ball of yarn over to the person they just appreciated. Then, it's that person's turn to give an appreciation and send the rest of the ball of yarn to someone new!
5. We will continue this process until everyone has had the chance to give and receive an acknowledgment! When the ball of yarn comes to you, it is your turn to look around the circle and give an appreciation to someone who is not yet holding onto the web!
6. I will start the web by appreciating one of you! "[Name] I appreciate you because _____" (roll yarn to that person). (Continue until everyone around the circle has had a chance to say an appreciation and the whole web has been formed.)
7. Now that we have completed making our Appreciation Web, let's take 3 breaths of gratitude together!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How did you feel when you received an appreciation?

How did you feel when you gave an appreciation?

Why is it important to express our appreciation to each other?

What would it be like to express more appreciation everyday?

How can we practice more gratitude in our community?



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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Young children tend to acknowledge physical (external) qualities of others before acknowledging emotional (internal) qualities. Scaffold this practice by initially inviting students to appreciate something their friends are good at (e.g., “I like how you sing,” “You are a good painter,” “I like the buildings you make with blocks”). Deepen students’ social-emotional skills from here by modeling appreciations of the kind words a student said, the talents a student has been contributing to the community, etc.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Encourage students to move beyond sharing surface-level appreciations (e.g., “I like your hair”) by acknowledging specifically what they value about the person they choose. Invite them to name a quality they appreciate about the person, or a specific action the person recently took that made a positive impact.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

You can lead this practice as a community builder at staff meetings, after courageous

group discussions, or as a way to powerfully close a collaborative experience. Invite participants to consider how they might integrate this practice into their life and teaching.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Expressing gratitude is not always easy for people, especially those who have experienced mistrust in their relationships. Encourage students to participate and share their gratitude in whatever way feels comfortable and supportive for them, and if they want to opt out of sharing their gratitude aloud, they can pass.

GRATITUDE INTEGRATION

Promote an attitude of gratitude by encouraging students to consider what they appreciate about themselves and their community throughout the day. When you witness students engaging in positive behaviors and interactions, remind them that they can celebrate that act in the next Appreciation Web.



THANKFUL THOUGHTS

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*f Component

Focus

SEL Competency

Self Awareness, Social Awareness

SEL Purpose

Fosters appreciation, increases focus, enhances mind-body connection



DESCRIPTION

1. Find a comfortable seat and settle in.
2. Gently focus your eyes on a point in front of you or close them completely, whichever feels more comfortable for you. Take a few collective breaths in and out.
3. As you continue to breathe, bring to mind one person in your life that you are really grateful for right now. Picture their face smiling at you. On the next exhale, send this person your smile. Take a deep breath of gratitude in, and exhale, sending this person a silent "thank you."
4. Now, bring to mind another person in your life you are really grateful for right now. Picture their face smiling at you. Exhale, send this person your smile. Take a deep breath of gratitude in, and exhale, sending this person a silent "thank you."
5. Now, bring your attention to as many people as you wish that you are grateful for right now. Picture all their faces smiling at you. Exhale, send these people your smile. Take a deep breath of gratitude in, and exhale, sending all these people a silent "thank you."
6. To close, let's take 3 collective breaths of gratitude together. Inhale; exhale. Breathe in; breathe out. Most appreciative breath of the day; exhale all your love out.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



What did it feel like to appreciate the people you love?

Who did you send thankful thoughts to and why?

How do you feel after sending silent thank yous?

Why is it important to be thankful for ourselves?

Why is it important to be thankful for others?

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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

Scaffold learning for younger children by offering suggestions for who they might want to consider thinking about. Start by having them focus solely on one person to get them used to the practice; over time, increase the time, and expand the number of people they send thanks to.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Engage students in a conversation focused on the “why” part of the discussion: Why is spending time being thankful important? How can it enhance our lives? Our relationships? Our classroom community?

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

You can use this as a settle in or community building strategy during meetings, professional development sessions, workshops, or other events. Encourage participants to share this practice with their students to foster connection and gratitude.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

You can diversify this activity by choosing different categories of people to focus the gratitude session on (e.g., a family member, a friend, a babysitter, etc.). To build community, invite students to cultivate gratitude for their classmates, classroom, school, etc. You can also extend beyond people, and invite students to think about their favorite places, experiences, etc.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Use invitational language to ensure everyone can participate in the Thankful Thoughts meditation in a way that feels comfortable to them (e.g., “I invite you to bring to mind...”). Give children the option to send their thanks silently or aloud, whatever feels more comfortable to them.



APPRECIATION STATION

B4C Theme

SEL*f Component

SEL Competency

SEL Purpose

Materials

Breathe For Gratitude

Community Connection, Creative Expression

Social Awareness, Relationship Skills

Builds community, fosters vulnerability

A paper and marker or pen for each person



DESCRIPTION

1. It's time to show our gratitude for one another by setting up our Appreciation Stations!
2. Each of you has a piece of paper (on your desk, a table, or taped on the wall). Please write your name on the top of your paper in the center so we know that this is your Appreciation Station.
3. For the next X minutes, I invite you all to walk around the room, and write notes of appreciation for as many people as possible at their Appreciation Stations. (Play music and give students time to write).
4. I invite you to finish your final appreciation, and then return back to your Appreciation Station.
5. Now that we are all back to our own Appreciation Station, take a few minutes to read through all the notes of gratitude from your friends.
6. I encourage you to take your Appreciation Station with you and post it up in a place you'll continue to return back to remind yourself of how amazing you truly are!



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What did people honor and appreciate about you?

What was it like to read what people appreciate about you?

How did it feel to share your appreciation with others?

What impact did this experience have on you?

How might you incorporate more gratitude in your life?

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PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

To make this developmentally appropriate for young children, you can invite your students to draw pictures of what they love about each person instead of writing, or give them the option to do either, depending on their literacy skills. You can also have each student focus on one appreciation station at a time, and then rotate at the same time so everyone gets the same amount of appreciations.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Encourage students to express gratitude to both people they are close to and those they are still getting to know. Remind them that there are so many ways we can express our appreciation, and ask for examples to increase engagement. Also invite them to collectively work together to ensure everyone gets appreciated.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

You can put up a paper for each staff or community member at a meeting, professional development, or other event and create space for people to acknowledge each other during the session. You can also invite specific teams of people to do the Appreciation Stations amongst their group (e.g., grade levels, teaching teams, parents, etc.)

VARIATIONS

You can do a contained version of this activity as written in the description above or keep the Appreciation Station up for an extended period of time (a full day, multiple days, weeks, etc.) to give students more space to get to everyone.



MOVING N' GRATITUDE

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*F Component

Mindful Movement

SEL Competency

Self-Awareness, Self Management

SEL Purpose

Enhances physical well-being, promotes gratitude



DESCRIPTION

1. Our bodies give us the gift of breath, movement, and so much more! It's so important that we not only take care of our bodies, but also that we appreciate everything our bodies do for us every single day. Our Moving N' Gratitude practice is an opportunity for us to move our bodies, and practice gratitude at the same time!
2. To begin, I invite you to find a comfortable seated or standing position, and roll your shoulders. We carry so much of the weight of the world on our shoulders. So, as you roll your shoulders up and back, I invite you to thank your shoulders for carrying so much for you. Switch directions, as you continue to feel the release.
3. Now, I invite you to roll your neck in a circle in one direction. As you move your neck, send this part of your body some gratitude for all it does to help keep your head strong and bright, and move through the world. Switch directions whenever you feel ready.
4. Now, I invite you to clasp your hands above your head for a full body stretch. Take a deep breath in and out, and appreciate your body for its ability to stretch and help you feel better. Whenever you feel called you can stretch to one side, and then the other, continuing to appreciate each sensation.
5. Now, I invite you to dance or move your body in whatever way feels nourishing to you in this moment. As you move, take on an attitude of gratitude, appreciating each breath, each movement.
6. Whenever you are ready, you can return back to stillness and reconnect to your breath. Bring your hands to your heart, and notice how you feel after moving in gratitude.
7. If you feel called, I invite you to share how you feel.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What do you appreciate about your body?

What did it feel like to move and appreciate your body?

What insights did you gain from this practice?

How did acknowledging what your body can do impact you?

Why is it important to appreciate our body?



➤ — Lead with Love — ➤

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

To support young children in appreciating all that their bodies do for them, you can ask questions like “What do our bodies do for us everyday?” or “How do you like to move your body?” or “What do you love about your body?” Share what you are grateful for about your body as an example, and ask a few students to share what they love about their bodies too.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Draw on this practice to help students develop a healthy relationship to their breath, body, and movement. Helping students tap into what they are grateful for about their body's abilities can build confidence and strengthen their relationship with themselves. When students acknowledge the gifts they do have versus what they don't, they will more fully accept themselves.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

Discuss the importance of appreciating our bodies and all they do for us. Facilitate this practice to strengthen people's relationships to themselves and their bodies during meetings, workshops, or community events. Use this as a brain break, transition, or community building activity. Encourage participants to incorporate more moments of mindful movement into their teaching.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

People who have experienced certain types of trauma may feel unsafe or uncomfortable moving, appreciating, or accepting their bodies. Be compassionate and permissions-based as you guide people through this mindful movement practice. Remind people that they can choose to engage in whatever way feels supportive for them.



SHOWER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

B4C Theme

Breathe For Gratitude

SEL*f Component

Community Connection, Closing

SEL Competency

Self Awareness, Relationships Skills, Social Awareness

SEL Purpose

Builds confidence, inspires connection, fosters appreciation

DESCRIPTION

1. Receiving gratitude from others can be an incredible gift. The Shower of Acknowledgement is a unique opportunity for each of us to shower each other with appreciation so we can each recognize the amazing human beings that we are, and the positive impact we have on others.
2. Here is how the Shower of Acknowledgement will work: One person will go in the center of the circle. We will take 3 collective breaths in honor of this person, and then set the timer for 1 minute.
3. During this 60 seconds, everyone in the circle will shower the person in the center with acknowledgement by continuing to say words or phrases that represent who this person is (e.g., courageous, inspiring, leader, strong warrior, changemakers, etc.). The person in the center can soak in this collective appreciation with their eyes closed or open, whatever feels best for them. This is your opportunity to receive the gift of gratitude from your friends.
4. When the timer goes up, the person in the center can open their eyes if they are closed, and honor everyone in the circle in whatever way feels authentic to them. Then, take 3 Collective Breaths together to seal the experience.
5. The person in the center is then invited to rejoin the circle and choose the next person to receive their shower of acknowledgement (or whoever feels called can choose to move into the center if they feel ready).
6. Repeat this process until everyone in the group has had the opportunity to receive their Shower of Acknowledgement.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What was it like to receive your Shower of Acknowledgment?

How did others describe you? What stood out?

What did this experience make you realize about yourself?

What was it like to give Showers of Acknowledgment to others?

What insights did you gain from this experience?

How might you incorporate more acknowledgement into your life?

» — Lead with Love — «

PEDAGOGICAL POINTERS

PRIMARY DIFFERENTIATION

For younger students, you can generate a list of inspiring words or phrases that they can draw on during this activity to acknowledge or describe their friends. It may be helpful to do it as an entire class first, vs. smaller groups, so that you can model how it works. If you are not able to give everyone a shower of acknowledgement, create a structure so that everyone can receive this gift eventually (e.g., student of the week).

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

This practice can be particularly powerful with groups of about 7-12 students, so if you have larger classes, you may want to break up the whole group into smaller groups to create a more intimate environment.

ADULT DIFFERENTIATION

This can be an incredibly powerful practice for adults who've worked or collaborated together, especially as a culmination to an experience (e.g., a meeting, semester, event, school year, etc.). If you notice your community is stressed or unwell, this can bring up the spirits and foster a deep sense of human connection.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Ensure that enough people are in the group to fill the entire minute with appreciation (vs. being silent) so that the inspiring intention of the activity actualizes. Encourage students to continue sharing multiple words and phrases throughout the entire time, or adjust the 1 minute to shorter so that the space is filled. Make sure everyone has the chance to receive at some point, whether it's all at once or overtime.

