

Lesson Name:

Attitude of Gratitude

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to define gratitude and discuss how having an attitude of gratitude can positively impact their happiness level.
- Students will begin to notice positives instead of negatives.

Educator Preparation:

- Be familiar with the following lesson.
- Be prepared to discuss something that you are grateful for, but had taken for granted in the past.
- Gather a writing utensil and Challenge Prompts, and be prepared to answer those questions and discuss with your students.

Introduction:

Hello! My name is Miss Emery! I am so excited to teach you about gratitude today, and why having an attitude of gratitude can completely change your life. We know that when you can practice gratitude it actually increases your happiness levels!

Instruction:

What is gratitude? We hear the word “grateful” all of the time, especially around Thanksgiving, but do we *really* know what it means?

Allow students time to discuss what they think gratitude means.

The formal definition of gratitude is “the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness”. I’m sure that we all know it’s important to say

thank you, especially to our parents and our friends, but did you know that having a consistent attitude of gratitude can increase your level of happiness?

Allow students to give their thoughts/ask “I wonder...” questions if necessary.

Seriously! You have learned in other lessons that we are responsible for 40% of our own happiness! 50% is genetic, and the other 10% comes from the world around us, but we can impact how happy we are by 40%, and one of the ways to do that is through practicing an attitude of gratitude.

Here’s the cool part about gratitude: if you look up vibrational frequencies of different emotions (love, hate, laughter, etc.), you’ll find that gratitude has one of the highest vibrational frequencies! So what exactly does that mean for us? We know that if we really want to increase our happiness level, based on long-term research, learning to have an attitude of gratitude is one of the easiest ways to make that happen. We know that feelings become our beliefs, beliefs become our thoughts, and thoughts become our actions. So, if we want our life to become one that just exudes happiness, we need to express positive feelings— ones like gratitude!

Some of us are just wired to be negative—that does **not** make us any less of a person or a bad person. There are just some people whose brain is wired to look for negative things. They are constantly scanning their environment for things to be worried or sad about. I’m going to be honest here—I am one of those people! Or, I should really say, I *was* one of those people. I have lived with anxious feelings all my life, and I’m certainly not perfect, but by having an attitude of gratitude, I have been able to retrain my brain to scan for positives instead of negatives. Here’s some examples (*feel free to use your own examples; these are just Miss Emery’s*):

- Instead of seeing a pile of papers on my desk and thinking how horrible it will be to grade all of them, I am thankful to be able to see growth in my students.
- Instead of seeing the leaves turn brown on the trees and be annoyed about having to deal with the winter cold, I am thankful that in the springtime I will get to see the beautiful colors again, bright and brand new.
- Instead of seeing my mom’s name pop up on my phone checking in on me and being frustrated that she is always checking in on me, I am thankful to have a mom that loves me enough to call me whenever she thinks about me, cares for me, and wants what’s best for me.

Asks students to give examples of something they may feel negative about, and then ask them to reframe it to a gratitude statement.

Interaction:

In the next couple of lessons, I will teach you how to start a consistent gratitude practice, but for now I want to give you some time to reflect on what level your attitude of gratitude is at. Is it a trait that you feel is strong, or is it something you can work on? I want you to think about someone or something in your life that you are so, **so** grateful to have. Have you told that person or expressed out loud why you are so grateful for that person/thing? How can you make a conscious effort to express gratitude for that person/thing more often?

Here is where you can discuss with your students someone or something that you are thankful for, but maybe you haven't said out loud or really reflected on why that person/thing is important to you. This is a good time to make a personal connection with your students by using a story of your own, but if you prefer, here is Miss Emery's example you may share.

I am so grateful for daily, in-person interactions that I get to have with my students and coworkers. It sounds so simple, because normally, we run into a lot of people everyday at school or work or sports practice or church or wherever, but as I am writing this, our country is facing a mass stay-at-home order. I live alone. Other than making essential runs to the grocery store, I don't interact with anyone face-to-face. That's okay, there are still positive things that I can get out of this time alone, but it has brought me to realize how much I miss being able to talk to people in person!

I didn't even consider that being something to be grateful for before. So, here's how I'm going to use my attitude of gratitude to make this into a positive, learning experience! When all of this is over, and we get to go back to school, I am going to make a point to write down some of the small, fun conversations I have with people, and then send them a text or an email or a little note, saying "I loved talking with you today. Thank you for telling me about... Please keep me updated!" It will not only remind me that I have something to be grateful for, but it will probably make that person feel loved as well!

In the video, Miss Emery sent a text to her friend thanking her for calling and checking in on her. If you have an example of someone you can send a similar text to live, now would be a great time to do it!

Ask students to share something that they have to be grateful for, maybe something that they hadn't considered before. Then ask them how they feel they can be more proactive in expressing their gratitude.

Closure:

Today, we learned all about how to live in an attitude of gratitude and why it is important! Take some time to fill out the Challenge Prompts so that you can remember your thoughts and feelings about today's lesson!

Activity:

Fill out the Challenge Prompts with your students! Discuss answers (if they are comfortable). If students are shy about sharing, fear not! In the next couple of lessons, we will reinforce the importance of putting gratitude out into the world, instead of keeping in it to ourselves.