STROBEL EDUCATION

Lesson Name:

Positive vs Negative Thinking

Student Objectives:

- Understand why we have negative thoughts

- Strategies for creating more positive thoughts

Educator Preparation:

- Chart paper or dry erase board

- Markers

- Positive vs Negative Thinking Graphic Organizer

Introduction:

I want to teach you about the power of positive thinking and also help you understand negative thinking. When we understand why sometimes we have bad thoughts, then we can learn how to choose better-feeling thoughts, and this helps you feel better in life.

Instruction:

Most human beings have lots of negative thoughts in a day's time. We have thoughts like, "I'm tired. I'm grouchy. I want that toy. I wish I was better at basketball. I wish I was a faster runner. I wish I was smarter. I wish I was prettier." We know that human brains are wired to think negatively. As a human being you have approximately 70,000 thoughts in a day. Not 70, not 700, not 7000, but 70,000! That's a lot of thoughts... We also know that 80 percent of most people's thoughts are negative. This means that eight out of ten thoughts you have

don't feel very good. Think back to when you woke up this morning, or when mom or dad or grandma came to your room and told you it was time to get up. What was your first thought? Was it, "I'm so excited to wake up and have my day today"? Or did you have a bunch of negative thoughts? "I'm sleepy. I didn't get enough sleep. I don't want to have to do my online learning today. I don't want to have to go to school. There's nothing good to eat in the house. Mom's being so mean." You see, we start to do this as soon as we wake up. Why do we sometimes have these bad thoughts?

Well, first of all, it's okay. That's just us being humans, but we actually have them because that's the way our brain was made from a really long time ago. Think back thousands of years ago, when people were just starting to learn about the earth and they didn't have houses to live in. They lived in caves. And they didn't know how to protect themselves, didn't have proper clothing, stoves, microwaves, ovens, or even grocery stores. And so that part of their brain is what actually protected them. It kept them safe, because their brain needed to constantly look around and say, "Where can I go for shelter? What can I do if there's a bad snowstorm? How can I stay warm? Where are we going to get our next meal? How are we going to capture the next animal so we have food to eat?"

Today, we still have part of that in our brain—it's called the reptilian brain. Our brains are just made to always be looking for everything that is wrong, versus everything that is right.

Interaction:

I want to teach you to become aware of your negative thoughts. When you find yourself having them, it's okay to have a few, because that's just normal. Or, if something really bad happens, of course, you should feel grouchy or sad. There's nothing wrong with that. But what I want you to do is catch yourself when you start having a bunch of negative thoughts, and I want you to just say, "STOP". And then think, "What is a better thought?" What's something that I can focus on that feels good?"

All the thoughts that you're having in your head—those thoughts become your beliefs. Now, what's a belief? A belief is something that you feel about yourself. Like, I have a belief that I'm a strong runner. I have a belief that I'm really organized. I have a belief that I'm a really good mom. I have a belief that I can figure things out whenever they get hard. Your beliefs that you feel about yourself, those come from the thoughts that you have. So let's say that you have a bunch of negative thoughts. Like maybe you say to yourself, "I'm not very smart. Other kids are so much much smarter than me. I'm just dumb, my brain doesn't work very well." And if

most of your thoughts are like that, then you start to believe those bad thoughts about yourself.

But what if you had other thoughts, more positive thoughts like, "I might not be good at math, but I'm really good at drawing." Then you would have a different belief—a positive belief—which is, "I'm a really good artist". Or, maybe you could have a thought like, "Hey, I'm not good at math or reading. But I'm really good at being able to build things and put things together like Legos, or maps, or directions", then you would have a more positive belief about yourself.

The thoughts that you have the most in your head are the things you believe most about yourself. You have this thing in your brain called a loop. A loop is kind of like a road. For example, if your brain is used to thinking about bad things over and over, then that's the loop that your brain is on. But when you catch yourself having a bunch of thoughts that don't feel very good, you can tell yourself, "STOP!" Then you can choose a different thought.

When you keep choosing a better thought, you change your brain and all of a sudden, you have a new path in your brain that is more positive.

Closure:

In today's lesson I taught you that it's normal behavior for humans to have negative thoughts, because it comes from *years* ago, back when people were worried about tigers chasing them, getting attacked, or finding a place to sleep. That part of our brain is still in us even today. But, we can actually rewire the brain by choosing a better thought, and that when we choose a better thought, it creates a different belief. That creates a different pathway in our brain, and that becomes the new normal. And so, you're able to look out in the world and you're able to start to see many more good things. We're actually going to show you how to do that in some of the gratitude lessons that we'll be teaching in the future. So right now, I want you just to remember that you have all of these thoughts in your mind, but that you get to choose what kind of thoughts you want to have.

Activity:

- ■ Fill out the graphic organizer and name the types of positive and negative thoughts you have.