

A collage of thanks — Gratitude

EXPLANATION:

Cultivating social-emotional skills such as gratitude, empathy, and kindness is essential in early childhood. An *'Awesome Book of Thanks,'* by author and illustrator Dallas Clayton, introduces the concept of giving thanks as an action to be undertaken every day, and in every circumstance. Using the book as a stimulus, children can follow on with the building of a collage of thanks layered with hand-drawn pictures, magazine cut-outs, photos provides a wonderful visual recount for all to see!

YEAR LEVELS: Prior to school

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole session activity, parent engagement and individual contributions

ACTIVITY LENGTH: Group session and follow up creation of collage including parents/caregivers engagement

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Early Years Learning Framework:

Learning Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

- 1.1 Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- 1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- 1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

Learning Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

- 2.1 Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
- 2.3 Children become aware of fairness.
- 2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Learning Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- 3.1 Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.

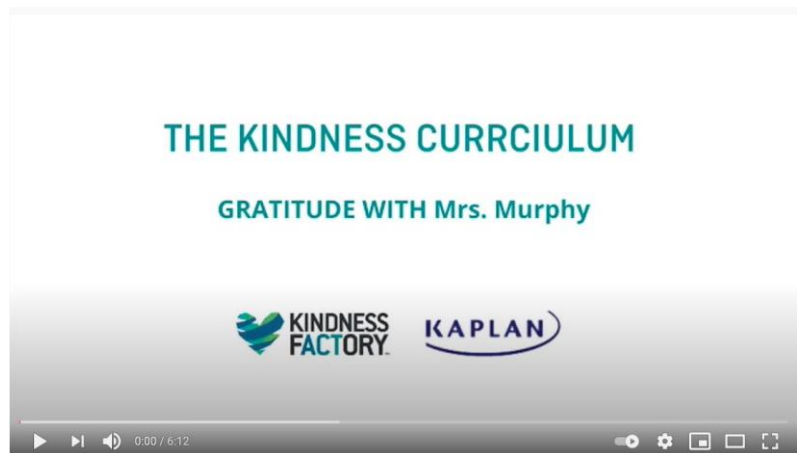
Learning Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

- 5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- 5.2 Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.
- 5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.

SCOPE OF TASK

According to the world's leading gratitude researcher Robert Emmons, gratitude is an 'affirmation of goodness where we affirm that there are good things in the world.' Gratitude also grants perspective - even in young children. Developing an understanding of thankfulness and appreciation assists young children in developing an understanding of how interdependent we all are as the things they have and the opportunities they experienced, come from someone other than themselves.

1. Gather all children into a space for story time.
2. Ask the children what it means to be 'thankful' or say, 'thank you'.
3. Introduce the book, *Awesome Book of Thanks* to the whole group of children. Explain to the children that the book is identifying things that people are thankful for, grateful for, and appreciate. Click on the link to hear the story narrated by Miss Murphy:
4. Read the story and write a list of all the things the children could remember were appreciated.
5. Ask the children what some of the things that they are thankful for and appreciate — encourage sharing time.
6. Tell the children that we are going to make a 'Thankful wall' and put pictures and photos of all the things that we are thankful for. Teacher can model the first addition to the wall. For example, a photo can be taken of the class and pinned to the wall (sentences of explanation can be added if desired).
7. Children can be asked to get the support of their parents/caregivers to print a photo or bring in anything that can be added to the all. Likewise, children's drawings or items of nature can be added.



The wall of thanks can be shared with other classrooms and parents/caregivers. If created in a foyer it can add to the daily conversations keeping parents/caregivers informed of classroom activities.

RESOURCES

- Photos, magazines, natural resources, drawings etc
- Classroom or foyer wall for display
- Letter to parents to encourage their involvement.

Clayton, D. (2010). *An Awesome Book of Thanks!*, Amazon Publishing, USA.

Online video: The Kindness Curriculum- An Awesome Book of Thanks, Read by Miss Murphy sourced from

<https://youtu.be/fxIDZGvpIFU>

