

Feeling Grateful - Gratitude

EXPLANATION:

A Gratitude Journal contains a record of the things that you are grateful for and appreciate in your life. In this activity, with the help of Bert and Ernie, students explore what gratitude is and what they are personally grateful for. Creating a journal will help students to acknowledge their gratitude and perhaps to see the world in a positive way.

GRADE LEVELS: 1–3

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group discussion and individual journal writing

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 45 minutes to introduce the activity and approx. 15 minutes each day for a school week—best to start activity on a Monday

CASEL CORE COMPETENCY: *SOCIAL AWARENESS*

- Showing concern for the feelings of others
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- You can learn more about the CASEL framework [here](#)



SCOPE OF TASK:

Gratitude is the emotion one feels when they are thankful for something good that has happened. People are often grateful for family, friends, the environment, and pets. Specific examples of things that young children identify as being thankful for include good friends, the sunshine, a good book, music, families, and sports. People might also feel grateful when they remember times when others were kind to them or provided them with help and support.

1. As a whole group, discuss with students the concept of gratitude. Ask students questions to prompt their thinking:
 - What is gratitude?
 - What are other words that describe gratitude?
 - Can you think of people or things that you are grateful for? Who or what are they?
2. Inform the students that you are going to share with them a short video about gratitude. Instruct them to think about what Bert and Ernie are trying to do and why they are trying to do it.



[“Sesame Street: Bert and Ernie Exchange Gifts” - YouTube](#)

3. After watching the video, ask the students to reflect on Bert and Ernie’s actions and feelings:
 - What was happening in the video?
 - What were Bert and Ernie trying to do?
 - Why were they trying so hard to arrange special gifts for each other?
 - Were they trying to express their gratitude for each other? Why or why not?

4. Bert and Ernie were obviously very grateful for each other and for their friendship. Ask students to think about people and things they are grateful and thankful for. Members of the group can share things that they are thankful for and why they are thankful for them. Some examples might include:
 - I am grateful for the playground at our school because I love to play games and climb on it.
 - I am grateful for my dog Harvey because he keeps me company.
 - I am grateful for sunshine and the warmth it brings to make things grow.
 - I am grateful for music because listening makes me feel happy.
 - I am grateful for my family and the fun we have on weekends together.
5. Tell the students that they are each going to create a “Gratitude Journal” for the school week. As they complete their journals each day during school time, they will need to think about:
 - What is the thing or person that they are grateful for today?
 - Why are they grateful—what did the person or thing give them or do for them?
6. Provide each student with a Gratitude Journal worksheet (attached below), or students can make their own. Ask them to think about one thing that they are grateful for today and why they are grateful for it. Students should record their responses on the appropriate day of the week on the worksheet. Give the students 10–15 minutes to complete their one journal entry.
7. When the students have completed the first entry, bring the group back together. Students who are comfortable sharing can read their entries to their classmates.
8. Set aside a time each day—on arrival to school or after lunch, for example—for the rest of the week so students can complete their Gratitude Journals. It will be important that students have a little quiet time to think and reflect on what they are grateful for before they write on their worksheets.
9. At the end of the week, students can share their five entries; this can occur in small groups or even in one-on-one conversations with another classmate. **Note:** Make sure that students understand that they are not required to share but may do so as they feel comfortable.
10. Encourage students to take their Gratitude Journals home and share with their families.

Reminder: Students have different personal life experiences and contexts, which can be influenced by culture, race, socioeconomic status, and religious background. These factors may lead students to express and practice gratitude (e.g. gestures, acts of kindness, verbal expressions, etc.) in differing ways. Discussing these differences will deepen students’ understanding of gratitude and build perspective.

RESOURCES:

- Template for worksheet attached below
- Online video: “Sesame Street: Bert and Ernie Exchange Gifts,” Sesame Street, <https://youtu.be/cExeSvmSXMA>

My gratitude journal

ON MONDAY I AM
grateful
FOR

Because...

ON TUESDAY I AM
grateful
FOR

Because...

ON WEDNESDAY I
AM
grateful
FOR

Because...

ON THURSDAY I AM
grateful
FOR

Because...

ON FRIDAY I AM
grateful
FOR

Because...