

Gratitude Lesson Plans

SESSION 2: Intentions

Goal of session:

- To establish an understanding that we experience gratitude when we have recognized people have helped us intentionally

Objectives:

- Define intentional behavior.
- Have students identify a personal experience of intentional behavior as it is connected to feeling grateful.

Materials:

- Chalk board or wipe board.
- Gratitude journals or paper and pencils for students.

Set it up:

(3-5 minutes)

The teacher will review the previous session.

Teacher: “Yesterday, we talked about a lot of things, but can anyone tell me what feeling we learned about?” The teacher will wait for students’ responses. If students do not respond, the teacher will prompt the students by writing the word “thankful” on the front board. If students then respond with “grateful”, the teacher will give praise to students for remembering. “That’s right! We learned about the feeling grateful which means that we are thankful for something that someone did for us. We also discussed personal experiences of feeling grateful.”

Teacher: “Let us also take a brief moment to review our Gratitude Counts! assignment. How many of you were gratitude detectives during the past day?! I’m sure that many of you were on the lookout for different things that made you feel thankful. Who can tell the group some of the different things that made you feel thankful during the past day?”

The teacher will allow for a few volunteers to read aloud their Gratitude Counts! assignment.

Talk About it:

(5-7 minutes)

Teacher: “Today we will learn more about grateful feelings, but first I have a new word I want to show you.” The teacher will write the word “intentional” on the board. “Can anyone tell me what the word intentional means?” The teacher will write down the definitions that students volunteer. This may include responses such as “something done on purpose, not an accident, and out of someone’s way.”

If students are unable to provide a definition, the teacher will prompt students by giving an example.

Teacher: “To illustrate, pretend that you were out sick from school for an entire week. Your friend knows that you have been out sick, so he goes to your house to bring you his notes and any assignments you have missed while you were out. In this example, your friend went out of his way to help you on purpose. He did not accidentally come over to your house. He thought about how you have not been to school and needed your school work, so he intentionally helped you by bringing you your assignments.”

After a clear definition is written on the board, the teacher will continue with the discussion.

Teacher: “Let’s think of a time that we all went out of our way to do something nice for someone or helped someone. Once you have thought of an example, pair up with the student next to you and share your experience.”

The teacher will assist to pair students according to the seating arrangements. The teacher will allow a few moments for students to share their experiences with their partner and then continue.

Teacher: “Can anyone volunteer an experience they had with doing something intentionally nice for someone else?” The teacher will call on a few volunteers to share their personal experience. As students give examples, the teacher will ask the following questions: “what did you do?”, “how was it on purpose or intentional?”, and “how do you think that person felt after you did something intentionally nice for him or her?”

After students recognize that they have acted intentionally to help others, the teacher will next ask them to recall a time when another person acted intentionally on their behalf.

Teacher: “Now let’s think of a time when someone else (for example a friend, parent, teacher, or coach) did something on purpose or out of their way to help us or do something nice for us. On any piece of paper you may have, quickly jot down a time that someone went out of their way to help you.” Allow a few moments for students to write an example. “Can anyone volunteer an experience in which someone did something on purpose to help them out?”

The teacher will call on a few volunteers to share their personal experience. As students give examples, the teacher will ask the following questions: “who was the person that helped you?”, “what did they do?”, “how did you know they helped you on purpose?”, “how did you feel after they helped you (or did something nice for you)?”, “how do you think they felt after doing helping you (or doing something nice for you), “what did you do after they intentionally helped you?”

Think about it:

(6-7 minutes)

The teacher will then ask students to take out their gratitude journals and open to page 3, titled, “Intentionally Helping.”

Teacher: “Next, I would like to read to you two different situations. I want you to listen very carefully to each situation because after I am finished I will have you work in groups to answer the questions at the bottom of page 3.”

The groups can be arranged according to desk groupings which may already be created. If students are not grouped together, students can work in pairs with the student next to them. The teacher will then read the following two stories.

Situation 1: “Emily was getting ready for school and forgot to pack something for afternoon snack. When she got to school she told her friend Mary that she forgot her snack. Mary accidentally packed two snacks, so she gave Emily her extra snack.”

Situation 2: “Paul’s favorite snack is Oreo cookies. Paul’s friend John knows that Paul loves Oreos, so John decided to pack an extra pack of Oreos to give to him. At lunch, John gave Paul the Oreos.”

Teacher: “In both situations, a friend did something nice for the other friend. In the first situation, Mary gave Emily a snack and in the second situation John also gave Paul a snack. Working in teams, I would like for you answer the following questions which are also located on page 2.”

After students have completed the questions, the teacher will review all the answers. Answers to the questions: John (question 1), he thought about it; he planned it out; he went out of his way (question 2), it made the friend feel grateful, thankful, happy (question 3), and the friend could say thank you, bring him something nice in return, do something nice for him, or do something nice for someone else (i.e., “pay it forward”) (bonus question). Once all the answers have been reviewed, students may return back to their desks (if necessary).

Jot it down:

(3 minutes)

Students will be instructed to turn to page 4 of their gratitude journals.

Teacher: “In your gratitude journals, I would like for you to think of a time that someone went out of their way to help you. Write about what they did. How did you know they went out of their way to help you? How did that make you feel? What did you do for that person (if anything)?”

The teacher will next instruct students to place the gratitude journals in their desk and hold on to them until next session.

Sum it up:
(2-3 minutes)

Teacher: “Ok boys and girls, to sum up we learned that intentional means to go out of your way on purpose to do something. We also learned that many times when we feel grateful it is due to someone else in our life intentionally helping us or doing something nice for us. As we heard from many examples, we have had an experience with someone intentionally helping us. For today’s Gratitude Counts! detective work, I would like for you all to take a look at page 5 of your gratitude journals. Please be on the lookout for the moments when you felt thankful because someone else went out of their way to help you. We will review it tomorrow.”

Teacher: “You all did a wonderful job today! Thank you for your hard work!”

The teacher will also allow for any further questions or comments.