



# MindUP Booster Lesson

## Lesson C: Expressing Gratitude

Grades 2 – 3

**Length of Lesson:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Objective of Lesson C:** Students gain an appreciation for special things in their lives that cultivate the social, emotional and cognitive benefits of showing gratitude.

### Summary of Unit 3 – Lessons delivered by teacher

**Objective of Unit 3:** Helping students develop skills in relating better to others and making happy memories of what they learn.

- **Lesson 10** – By looking at an event from different perspectives, students learn to mindfully consider viewpoints other than their own.
- **Lesson 12** – This lesson demonstrates how recalling happy memories can help students regulate their emotions and maintain a positive mind-set.

### Summary of Unit 4 – Lessons delivered by teacher

**Objective of Unit 4:** Express gratitude and perform acts of kindness to contribute in a meaningful way to the classroom and the world.

- **Lesson 13 – Expressing Gratitude:** Students gain an appreciation for special people and things in their lives and discover the social, emotional and cognitive benefits of showing gratitude.
- **Lesson 15 – Taking Mindful Action in the World:** Students collaboratively plan and perform a group act of kindness and reflect on the way combined efforts can make an important difference in the world and connect them to their peers and the larger community.

### Lesson Overview

1. Defining Mindfulness & Gratitude: 5 – 7 min.
2. Gratitude Meditation & Drawing: 10 – 15 min.
3. Wrap Up: 2 min.

### Lesson Materials and Preparation

#### Materials:

- Handout (1 per student)
- Crayon (1 set per student) – option to use any crayons or markers they have at their desks.

**Preparation:** Ask the teacher to have all students sitting at their desks for the lesson.

### For Parent Review: Facts from MindUP lessons 13

#### Gratitude

- **Defining Gratitude:** Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness and joy we feel in response to something we've received, whether the gift is tangible (concrete/physical) or intangible (not something you can touch), such as a smile of encouragement from a loved one or a beautiful view of the beach.
- **Physiological effects of gratitude on the brain and body:** research has shown when we think about something or someone we truly appreciate **our bodies calm themselves**, because the feelings associated with gratitude trigger the calming branch (parasympathetic system) of the autonomic nervous which tells the body to “rest and digest” and counteracts the “fight, flight, or freeze” response in the sympathetic system.



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### DEFINING MINDFULNESS & GRATITUDE (5 – 7 min.)

Hello everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and today is our last MindUP booster lesson for this year! Let's start the lesson by reviewing what mindfulness means. **Does anyone remember how we defined mindfulness?**

Yes, those are all great answers! Mindfulness can be defined as paying attention to what is going on right now, being present, knowing how you feel right now, and paying attention on purpose. **Mindfulness is about knowing what we are feeling, thinking, and what is happening in and around us.** Being mindful takes practice and the more we practice the stronger our mindfulness muscles get! **For today's lesson we will focus on gratitude** because it is important to be mindful about what we are thankful for and it helps calm down our bodies. Let's define gratitude as a class, **who can tell me what gratitude means?**

Great answers! **Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness and joy we feel in response to something we've been given**, whether the gift is something we can touch like a book (tangible/concrete/physical) or something we cannot touch (intangible), like a smile from a friend or a beautiful view of the beach.

The reason practicing gratitude is so important is because it helps **us become happier and think positively.** Gratitude also helps us become **more concerned (compassionate) for ourselves and others.** Gratitude **physically calms down our bodies** and is great to use when we are having a hard time settling down.

### GRATITUDE MEDITATION & DRAWING (10 – 15 min.)

**ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE:** Students to identify aspects about themselves and the environment they are grateful for.

**PREPARATION:** Handout (1 per student) & Writing Utensil (1 set per student) – option to use any crayons or markers students have at their desks.

#### Breathing & Passing out Supplies (2 min.)

Sitting at your desks, close your eyes if you are comfortable/look softly down at the floor/desk and take **3 mindful breaths** (*pause and allow time for mindful breathing*). **Now that we are settled, I will pass out the handout.**

**Today, we are going to mindfully draw three pictures while we practice being grateful.** We will only have a short amount of time to draw and anything you don't finish in class, you can take home to finish.

#### I Am Grateful for... Drawing (3 min.)

**Go ahead and** close our eyes or gaze softly at the desk/ floor. **Take a deep breath and think about something you are grateful for by asking yourself – what makes you happy?** Maybe this is a family member, a pet, an object or a special day (*wait 30 seconds*). **Draw one of the things you are grateful for in the box labeled "I am grateful for..."**. You will have 2 minutes to draw this section. **Would anyone like to share their drawing (allow for 1-2 students to share)?**



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### I Am Enough Drawing (3 min.)

It is time to start on our last drawing. Let's close our eyes or gaze softly at the desk/ floor and focus on ourselves for this drawing. You are enough! You are wonderful and gifted, equally important and you matter. **Silently think about what makes you feel special today?** *Is it making someone laugh/smile, is something nice someone else said/did for you, is it something you are good at, something fun/cool/unique you can do, is it something you do for others?* **Who in your life makes you feel like special?** *Is it a friend, teacher, family member?* **Wait 30 seconds.** **Draw a picture of yourself and what makes you special in the box labeled "I Am Enough" (allow for 1-2 students to share).**

### I Am Loved Drawing (3 min.)

Let's close our eyes again eyes or gaze softly at the desk/ floor and think about **someone in your life who loves you.** **How do they make you feel? Who in your life makes you feel like you are enough (wait 30 seconds)?** Now open your eyes and **draw a picture of someone who loves you in the box labeled "I am loved" (allow for 1-2 students to share).**

### Acts of Kindness (3 min.)

We are going to close our eyes or gaze softly at the desk/ floor one last time. Think about a person who loves you, and it can be multiple people. What do these people do for you that makes you feel loved? Let's silently thank these people for their love and kindness. Now, think about something you can do for these people to make them feel loved (**wait 30 seconds**). Open your eyes and on the bottom of your paper, **write something you can do for the people in your life to make them feel loved. Does anyone want to share the act of kindness they listed (allow for 1-2 students to share)?**

Excellent job everyone! Be sure to take these handouts home and share them with your families.

### WRAP UP (2 min.)

Now that we have reflected on gratitude, I hope everyone has identified something special about themselves – we can remind ourselves of this when we are feeling sad or frustrated.

Thank you for practicing gratitude with me today. I hope this week you can complete the act of kindness you wrote down and take time to remember all that we can be grateful for and share them with a friend or family member.

We look forward to seeing you next year for more MindUP lessons!

### REFERENCES

- Renegades, L. Little Renegades. Mindfulness for Kids. Retrieved from <https://littlerenegades.com/>
- The Hawn Foundation. (2011). *In The MindUP Curriculum: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living* (pp. 103–151). New York, NY: Scholastic.