



MindUP Booster Lesson

Lesson C: Expressing Gratitude

Grades TK – 1

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 11** – Students explore the meaning of optimism and pessimism and discover how these two attitudes affect our relationships and ability to learn.
- **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 14 – Performing Acts of Kindness:** As students perform small acts of kindness for friends, classmates, teachers and family, they learn how these positive actions can increase their optimism and brain power.

Lesson Overview

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

Lesson Materials and Preparation

Materials:

- Handout (1 per student)
- Writing Utensil (1 set per student) – option to use any crayons or markers students 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 lesson 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.

GRATEFUL DRAWING (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 four pictures and 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.

Thankful Sun Drawing (3 min.)

First, let's think about the sun and what the sun gives us every day. Who has an idea (allow for 2 answers)? It gives us light and warmth, allows plants and animals to grow, each morning it tells us that a new day has come, and it makes the sky beautiful. **We will draw how the sun makes us feel in the box labeled "Thankful Sun."** You will have 2 minutes to draw. **Would anyone like to share their drawing (allow for 1-2 students to share)?**

I am grateful for... Drawing (3 min.)

For this drawing, let's think about something we are grateful for by asking yourself – what makes you happy? Maybe this is a family member, a pet, an object or a special day. **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 can share... Drawing (3 min.)

The drawings are looking great! It is time to start on the next drawing. Imagine a big tree giving life to animals, plants, bugs and people, offering shade, giving fruit, giving off oxygen and providing a home for lots of living things – This is a giving tree. We can also be giving to others by being generous and sharing what we have. **What is something that you have that you would like to share with others (allow for 2 answers)? Let's draw what you would like to share in the box labeled "I can share..."**. You have about 2 minutes to draw (*allow for 1-2 students to share*).

I Am Enough Drawing (3 min.)

It is time to start on our last drawing. We will be focusing on ourselves for this drawing. You are enough! You are wonderful and gifted, equally important and you matter. **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? Draw a picture of yourself and what makes you special in the box labeled "I Am Enough" (allow for 1-2 students to share).**

Share with your neighbor (3 min.)

All your drawings look great! You are all very important and can make a big difference in the world. **Turn to your neighbor and talk about one of your pictures and make sure to compliment your neighbor's drawing!**

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 you take time this week to remember all the simple things, like the sun, 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.