

# MindUP Lesson 13

## Expressing Gratitude

Grades: K-2

**Lesson 13: *Expressing Gratitude*** is the thirteenth video in a virtual series of MindUP programming for the 2020-2021 academic year. Based in neuroscience, MindUP teaches the skills and knowledge children need to manage stress, regulate emotions and face challenges with optimism, resilience and compassion.

**Length of Lesson:** 10 minutes including worksheet

**Objectives:** In this lesson, students will learn how being thankful supports a healthy mind and a healthy body. Also, they will hear about different ways that they can practice expressing gratitude every single day.

### Materials:

- Gratitude Worksheet
- Pen or pencil
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils

**Preparation:** Have child sitting at a desk or table before starting the lesson.

### Expressing Gratitude at Home:

Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness and joy we feel in response to something we've received, whether it is tangible or intangible. Simply focusing for a minute on the experiences in our lives we're grateful for activates the parasympathetic nervous system and shifts our thinking to a calmer, more content perspective. It also releases the neurotransmitter, dopamine, which increases levels of enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy. Children who practice grateful thinking not only have a more positive attitude toward school, but their brains are also more ready to learn. Below are some activities that you can do at home to practice expressing gratitude.

- **Gratitude Tree:** Cut out construction-paper leaves and ask children to think of people that they are grateful for. Either have the children write it on the leaves themselves or do it for them. Paste the leaves on another piece of paper with tree branches drawn onto it. Focusing on expressing gratitude to a person helps children realize that happiness is not dependent on ownership and wealth.
- **Alphabet Thanks:** Have kids go through the alphabet and ask them to come up with one thing they're thankful for that starts with each letter.
- **Gratitude Drawing Prompts:** Have children express their thankfulness in drawings. This is a great way for them to learn gratitude in a fun, creative way. Following are some prompts to get you started:
  - Draw something that makes you happy
  - Draw something that you couldn't live without

- Draw something that you love to do

#### REFERENCE

- The Hawn Foundation. (2011). The MindUP Curriculum Grades Pre-K - 2: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living (pg. 102-109). New York, NY: Scholastic.
- <https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-tree-kids/>

