

# Gratitude

**GRATITUDE** means being thankful for someone or something.

## LESSON 1

Read the definition of **GRATITUDE**. Read: **Gratitude is a feeling or action that grows and increases as it is expressed. Think of something or someone that you are thankful for today.** Write on the board: *What are you thankful for today?* On a blank piece of paper, ask students to write a complete sentence that answers the question. Call on students to share their sentences. As an extended activity, have them use their sentence to begin a *Gratitude Journal*. Tell students they will add to their Gratitude Journal in the future by writing another sentence with a new answer to the question: "What are you thankful for today?" Encourage students to help their gratitude grow by expressing it regularly and sincerely.

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to talk with a family member about a way they can "grow gratitude" at home.

## LESSON 2

Review the definition of **GRATITUDE**. Ask students to identify people in their school or community who have made a positive impact in their lives. Examples include: teachers, police, firefighters, etc. Write the list on the board and discuss how each person helps them in some way. Read and discuss the quote by author William Ward: *"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."* Have students write a "thank you" note to someone on the list. Remind them to use proper grammar and punctuation. Encourage students to give or send their notes to the person to whom it was written. As time allows, ask students to write a complete sentence in their *Gratitude Journal* answering the question, "What are you thankful for today?"

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to talk with a family member about the quote: *"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."*

## LESSON 3

Review the definition of **GRATITUDE**. Ask students to tell you what it means to **"Take something for granted."** Explain that it happens when people get so used to having things or people available, that they forget to be grateful. Ask: **What would change if...? 1) Your Mom got sick and couldn't do what she normally does for you? 2) The water in your community was polluted and undrinkable? 3) All the farmers quit raising food? 4) The roof on your house disappeared?** Allow time for discussion. Brainstorm with students about things or people that are sometimes "taken for granted." Examples include: friends, health, clean clothes, food, freedom, etc. Ask students to think of ways to avoid taking things for granted. As time allows, ask students to write a complete sentence in their *Gratitude Journal* answering the question, "What are you thankful for today?"

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to express their gratitude to family members for all they do.

## LESSON 4

Review the definition of **GRATITUDE**. Ask students if they agree or disagree with the statement: **Everyone has something to be grateful for.** Explain that the material things some people have (nice clothes, iPods, a fancy car) are not the most important. Read the following verse by songwriter Irving Berlin and ask students to analyze its meaning: **"When I'm worried and I can't sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep, and I fall asleep counting my blessings."** Invite students to identify non-material things (things that cannot be bought with money) and record responses to create a class list. As time allows, have students complete the following two sentences with something they appreciate that money cannot buy: **I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_. I can show that gratitude by \_\_\_\_\_.** As time allows, ask students to write a complete sentence in their *Gratitude Journal* answering the question, "What are you thankful for today?"

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to share their sentences with a family member.

## LESSON 5

Review the definition of **GRATITUDE**. Read: **What national holiday in November is set aside as a day of gratitude?** (Thanksgiving). **The Pilgrims, struggled through hardships to establish their homes in America. Following a horrible winter of death and starvation, they were able to raise food to help them survive through the next winter. They celebrated with a three-day feast. That was the beginning of Thanksgiving. Instead of focusing on what they did NOT have the Pilgrims recognized and celebrated the things they DID have.** Ask students to identify things the Pilgrims could have been grateful for. Examples include: a good harvest, friends, shelter, etc. Emphasize that we develop gratitude by being more aware of what we have versus what we don't have. As time allows, ask students to write a complete sentence in their *Gratitude Journal* answering the question, "What are you thankful for today?"

**School/Home Link** - Ask students to talk with a family member about how the Pilgrims recognized blessings and celebrated even though life was difficult.