

Giving Thanks and Gratitude



#SilaandtheLand
Activity
Grade Level: 1-6

About This Activity

Learners will explore what giving thanks and showing gratitude means to them, and what it can mean for others.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this activity, learners will:

- Develop an awareness of people and things that make life meaningful
- Describe the benefits of demonstrating gratitude to others
- Explain the concept of giving thanks in a contemporary society and in a traditional Indigenous culture
- Understand the importance of showing respect to all, and one's belongings
- Practice giving thanks, and showing gratitude

Curriculum Connections

Ontario

Grade 1 Social Studies: Heritage and Identity: Our Changing Roles and Responsibilities (A1.1, A1.3, A1.4, A2.1, A2.6, A3.4, A3.5)

Grade 2 Social Studies: Heritage and Identity: Changing Family and Community Traditions (A1.2, A1.3, A2.6, A3.4)

Grade 3 Social Studies: People and Environments: Living and Working In Ontario (B2.2, B3.5)

Grade 4 Social Studies: Heritage and Identity: Early Societies To 1500 CE (A1.3, A1.4, A2.1, A2.5, A2.6, A3.3)

Grade 6 Social Studies: Heritage and Identity: Communities in Canada, Past and Present (A3.8)

Length of Activity

60 - 90 minutes

Materials List

Internet-enabled device

Chart paper

Markers

Step 1

Introduce the concept and open a discussion on manners by posing these questions to the class at large, or via Jamboard:

- a. Why do people say “please” and “thank you”?
- b. Which kinds of occasions call for people to say these words?
- c. What happens when you use these words when speaking to people?
 - i. How is this different from when you don't?

Step 2

Using the teachings from the Caribou, from the book titled *Sila and the Land* ask the class what Sila learned from the Caribou.

- a. Explain that Indigenous Peoples have traditional teachings on giving thanks. They have a practice of giving thanks to all the people and things that make life possible.
- b. Ask the class, “Why didn't Sila pick all the berries and flowers?”
 - i. The Caribou taught her two main things that should be addressed to the class including: to take only what you need,

- and to be grateful for where those things come from. Learners may address these things in their responses to the question.
- ii. Take only what you need: Sila didn't take all the berries and flowers because the Caribou taught her that there would be none left for others, and that the flowers/berries will still be there for tomorrow and the days to follow. Ask the class again, "If Sila were to walk into the mall and buy all the newest clothes without thinking, do you think the Caribou would be upset?" This can lead to discussions around impulse buying, and how the teachings of the Caribou can still translate to our modern society consumption.
 - iii. Shift the discussion to address how to show gratitude. Ask the class, "How did Sila show her gratitude towards the Caribou?". Answers may vary but discussing the differences between being thankful and being grateful is key as one is a feeling and the other is an action. Sila was taught to be grateful for the animals' selflessness when we hunt and provide food for our families. Showing this gratefulness can come from using all parts of an animal's carcass, so nothing goes to waste!
 - c. Further discussion around gratitude by asking the class:
 - i. In what ways do people show their thanks to others?
 - ii. How do they show their respect for things?
 - iii. How do people celebrate thanks?

Step 3: Get the class to work in groups of about 4-6

Using chart paper and markers, get the learners to list as many things and people as possible that contribute to their lives (i.e., things that make them happy, things that keep them safe, things that nourish them and keep them warm etc.).

- a. To further this, allow them to think of things

- that they have that others less fortunate may not have.
- b. For each item on the list, get learners to think of some way that they can show their gratitude. Some ideas include:
 - i. Learners could make thank you cards for people they love and tell them why they love them.
 - ii. Learners could put their toys away after playing with them so that they don't get broken or lost.
 - iii. Learners could say "please" and "thank you" at dinner time when they want someone to pass a plate of food, etc.

Step 4: Conclusion

Allow learners to select an idea from their created list that they want to do to show their gratitude towards. If it is thank you cards, provide the means for them to create one. If it is something such as helping out more around the house (i.e., cleaning up after myself, chores etc.), then allow learners to make statements on personal gratitude cards to bring home and get guardians to sign off that they are doing what was stated on their cards. Such as:

- a. "To show my gratitude towards the house I live in, I will help my family more when it comes to cleaning dishes after dinner is done".

Extension Ideas

1. Make a class collage of things to be thankful for. Use paint and other objects for illustrations.
2. Role-play scenarios in which manners are used properly and when they are not. Discuss the outcomes of the situations (i.e., How did you feel when the person took your gift and walked away without saying anything?).