**Gratitude: A Virtue-Building Lesson Plan**



**By Annie Reneau**

**Materials Needed:**  
Book: *The Most Thankful Thing*, by Lisa McCourt (or another story about gratitude)  
CD: Red Grammer’s *BeBop Your Best*  
CD player  
“Thanks” flags (Index cards with “thanks” written in different languages, glued to popsicle sticks. One for each student.)  
Two puppets (optional)  
Glasses frame cut from tagboard or heavy cardstock (search for “paper glasses template” online, or design your own)  
Cellophane (yellow and/or pink) for glasses lenses  
Glue sticks  
Scissors  
Markers or crayons

**Introduction: What Is Gratitude?**  
A big part of gratitude is saying thank you. When someone does something nice or gives you something, you say thanks. It’s also saying thank you to God for this amazing, beautiful world He has given us. Let’s think of some things—big or small— that we are grateful for that start with each of these letters: T-H-A-N-K-S (invite kids to respond).

Gratitude is more than just saying thank you, though. It’s also looking at the good side of things, noticing the beauty around us, and expecting the best. And it’s about choosing to be happy about what we DO have or CAN do, rather than unhappy about what we DON’T have or CAN’T do.

**Game/Activity: Grumbles to Gratitude Role Play/Puppet Play**  
Give examples of a grumbling response vs. a grateful response using puppets (I usually use two puppets and name them Grumbly Gertrude and Grateful Gabby). If you don’t have puppets, you can just role-play it with kids in the class. Give kids a scenario and show a grumbling response with one puppet. Then ask kids to give examples of grateful responses and act them out with the other puppet:

* I don’t like what’s for dinner: “I don’t want that!” or “Yuck!”
* I’m at the store and I want something: “But \_\_\_\_ has one!”
* I’m leaving a friend’s house: “I didn’t get to stay very long!”
* I can’t do something as well as someone else: “I can’t do it as well as \_\_\_\_\_!”
* Someone else gets to do something that I want to do: “\_\_\_’s mom lets her do it!”

**Story: *The Most Thankful Thing*, by Lisa McCourt**  
This story is about a mom exploring the things she’s most grateful for. It highlights the truth that, while we may be thankful for things and experiences, it’s the people we love who fill us with the most gratitude.

**Music: “Gratitude,” by Red Grammer**  
Give each kid a “Thanks” flag from another language, and explain that people practice gratitude all over the world. Each language has its own words for saying “Thanks.” Have kids dance to the song. Each time they hear the words “Thank You” in the song, have them raise their flags.

**Craft: Gratitude Glasses**  
Make sunny or rose-colored glasses as a reminder to look at the good things in life, and that you can find things to be thankful for when you look for them.

* Have kids cut out the glasses templates (or cut them out yourself beforehand—cutting out the lens part can be tricky).
* Have kids color or decorate them with markers or crayons.
* Cut out two cellophane pieces (yellow for “sunny” glasses, pink for “rose-colored” glasses) and glue them onto back of glasses as lenses.
* Remind students to look at the world through glasses of gratitude!