

Activity 1: Thanks to Who? Thanks to You!

1. Start your morning meetings with 1–2 minutes of telling students about a moment where someone did something that was helpful to you. Or tell about something that just made your day a little easier. Write this simple phrase on the board/smartboard/digital platform:

Thanks to _____ for _____. It made _____.

Make sure to give grown-up examples like these or from your own life:

- **Thanks to** Principal Dorsey **for** reading *the group plan* and helping with student drop off this morning! **It made** things move so much faster.
- **Thanks to** the whole class **for** getting their *bodies into the group*. **It made** it easy for me to teach the lesson.

Next, give kid examples too:

- **Thanks to** my Nana **for** making a *smart guess* about which cereal I liked. **It made** me feel special.
- **Thanks to** Ms. Alvarez **for** helping build my math *smarts*. **It made** me understand math better so I can help other kids too.
- **Thanks to** Riley **for** helping me understand the game instructions. **It made** me a *flexible thinker* and player.

Note: Some kids might have a harder time thinking of what to draw or write or talk about for this activity. Consider starting with pets, stuffed animals, or characters in books. For example: Thanks to my dog Amber for sitting with me during the storm. It made me feel safe.

2. Next use the free printable (or make your own) and cut into pieces.
3. Get a cardboard box with a lid or make a slit in a box and label it the GREAT GRATEFUL CRATE or THANKFUL THOUGHTS or any other catchy phrase.
4. Have each student fill a **Thanks to**____ slip by writing, drawing a picture, telling another person a story. Drop all of the slips into the box.
5. Leave a stack of **Thanks to**____ slips and encourage students to fill out a slip once a day OR set aside a few minutes for discussions about social interactions during recess. Emphasize times where students helped one another, included someone in play, took time to clean up, etc. Ask students to reflect on their experiences—what felt good, who helped them, and how they helped others to have fun.
6. Pull and read or show 5–10 **Thanks to**____ slips every Friday.
7. Make a **We Are Grateful** bulletin board or collage and then share with other classes or groups or families. Note: This can also be done digitally with online teaching or with digital tools.

Thanks to Who? Thanks to You!

Write, draw, or tell about a time when you were grateful for something someone said or did.



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Activity 2: Gratitude Challenges to Support Learning about ALL Perspectives

Rally your class to enter into a Playground or Classroom Gratitude Challenge with other classrooms or grades!

- Start by giving students concrete examples of how their words and actions can positively affect others, and make sure to emphasize the focus is on understanding others' feelings and viewpoints. In fact, understanding someone very different from you should be emphasized as part of the process.
- Give concrete examples of how words and actions can positively affect peers. For example, after a group or pair project is completed, have students think about and reflect on how their partner or peers helped. You can use the downloadable from Activity 1 as a starting point for how a person might state their gratitude.
 - Encourage students to be specific about what they appreciated. You can use the downloadable from Activity 1 as a starting point for this as well. For example, "Thanks to Oliver for asking me if I wanted to play too. It made me want to play again."
 - Note: Some kids may say they appreciated a peer for giving them space and time to think or allowed them to participate differently from the rest of the group. There is no right or wrong answer here! The point is for kids to notice and show appreciation.
- Next, organize a playground (or library or hallway) challenge that encourages students to perform purposeful (as opposed to random) acts of kindness or gratitude. Consider developing a *Helpful Heroes* checklist where classrooms can check off acts like sharing equipment, including a peer who may be anxious or reticent to participate, offering help, consoling one another, coaching each other, complimenting a peer, etc.
- Buddy systems are a great way to practice helping and receiving help. Encourage kids to think about and tell that they are grateful for each other's time, companionship, ideas, help, etc.
- **Teach advocacy!** One of the things we may forget to do is teach students that they can share what is helpful or not for them. It's never too soon to teach kids to speak up about what works for them!

Gratitude Challenge(s) Checklist example

	Playground Challenge:	Done
Kick-off	<p>Introduce the challenge to students.</p> <p>Discuss how words and actions can positively impact others and the importance of understanding different perspectives (e.g., some kids like quiet games and others like loud games; it's easy for some kids to go last and harder for others; most of us like it when someone helps us if we don't understand the rules, etc.).</p>	
Give Concrete Examples	<p>Share specific examples of actions that support others.</p> <p>Ask students to brainstorm their own ideas.</p>	
Buddy System	<p>Pair students to encourage support and gratitude for one another.</p> <p>Remember to encourage advocacy for what the buddy can do or say to support them.</p>	
Set Up	<p>Organize purposeful acts of kindness during recess, such as sharing equipment, including others, or helping classmates.</p>	
Reflect and Share	<p>After completing group projects, ask students to tell, draw, or show gratitude for someone who was helpful.</p> <p>Give time for students to share their experiences about their acts of gratitude and kindness.</p> <p>Create a gratitude wall or collage and invite other classes or students to view.</p>	
Involve Parents and Caregivers	<p>Send home information about the challenge and encourage them to support the theme of gratitude at home.</p> <p>Have kids think about and express gratitude to family members too!</p>	
	Library Challenge	
Kick-off		
Give Concrete Examples		
Buddy System		
Set Up		
Reflect and Share		
Involve Parents and Caregivers		