



Social Awareness and Gratitude

One of the five main SEL competencies, **Social Awareness**, is defined by CASEL as **the ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others**, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures and contexts.

We can develop our social awareness through some very simple practices to help us understand different perspectives, express gratitude and feel compassion for our classmates, family, neighbors and friends.

In the **Social Emotional Learning Through the Arts** video, Destiny speaks about the importance of gratitude and the many things she is grateful for in her life.

You can help your students develop a habit of expressing gratitude through the activity below.

Gratitude Jar

The Gratitude Jar is a simple exercise that can help improve your students' well-being and outlook. It only requires a few supplies: a jar (or a box), ribbon, stickers, glitter, paint, or whatever else your students would like to use to decorate. Your students will need paper and a pen for writing their gratitude notes and, of course, gratitude!

Decorate: Each student decorates a jar (or box) in whatever way they wish. They can tie a ribbon around the jar's neck, put stickers on the sides, use clear glue and glitter to make it sparkle, paint it, use markers, or do whatever else they can think of to make it fun.



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Reflect: Have students think of two or three things throughout the day that they are grateful for, write them down on slips of paper and place them in their Gratitude Jar. It can be something as simple as the breakfast they ate or as grand as the love of their parents, siblings, or a dear friend. You might have them do this daily or weekly – whatever works well for your class schedule.

Share: When appropriate for your class, have students share their “gratitudes” with the class as a way to cultivate a practice of expressing thanks and to feel compassion for their classmates. Also, remind students when they are feeling down to look through their jar and be reminded of all the things they are grateful for.

For this and other gratitude activities, visit:

<https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/>

