



Week 10

Feeling Grateful

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE: **Gravity Hands**

OBJECTIVES: **Learn how to develop a gratitude practice.**
 Introduce Gravity Hands.
 Practice kindness.

PREPARE: **A bell or chime**
 Your Kindness Pals list
 Marleigh is Mindful by Linda Ryden
 Listen to the refrain of the song "Tell Me
 Something Good" by Chaka Kahn. This is for
 YOU, not the students!
 Copies of the "I am grateful for..." worksheet
 Optional: Talking Object

The purpose of this lesson is to help children develop the habit of gratitude and of noticing the little good things in life. Our brains are wired to look for trouble and to really focus on it, allowing us to learn from negative experiences so that we don't repeat them. Gratitude practice helps us balance this tendency.

*This lesson uses an old song in a new way. **Don't play the song for your class.** Instead, listen to the song "Tell Me Something Good" by Chaka Khan as you prepare the lesson. The only part you'll be using with your class is the refrain "Tell me something good." **The rest of the song is not appropriate for school**, although the kids might have heard parts of it in TV commercials. If you are not comfortable singing, you can just say the words. Or make up your own song or chant. Have fun with it!*

Mindfulness Practice

1. Introduce Gravity Hands

Gravity Hands is a very simple practice of slowly moving your hands up when you breathe in and then slowly lowering them down when you

breathe out. It's fun to think about gravity while doing this practice. Making your inhale and exhale the same length can be very soothing and calming.

Say: *Today we're going to learn another way of doing mindful breathing called Gravity Hands! Start out by stretching your arms straight out in front of you with your palms facing down. Hold them there and I'm going to count 30 seconds. (wait 30 seconds) So what are you noticing? Are your arms starting to feel heavy, do you want to put them down? Is it getting harder? Let's put our arms down now.*

Ask: *Does anybody know why our arms started to feel heavy or it was hard to hold them up? It's because of gravity! Gravity is a force that pulls things down toward the earth. It's the reason that we aren't floating around the classroom right now! When we throw a ball up in the air what happens to it? That's right, it falls back down.*

You can have kids demonstrate gravity by jumping up and noticing that they come right back down or dropping a feather and watching it fall.

Say: *Gravity is why it was hard to keep our arms outstretched - gravity wanted them to come down. Let's try it again.*

Repeat the arm activity from above reminding them to notice the pull of gravity.

Say: *Today we're going to do a mindful breathing practice called Gravity Hands. We're going to slowly bring our hands up, palms up, and then we're going to turn them over and slowly bring them down, palms down. Let's try that a few times,*

Now we're going to add breathing to it. When we slowly bring our hands up we're going to breathe in slowly and gently. When we lower our hands back down we're going to breathe out slowly and gently.

Let's try it for our Mindful Moment!

2. Practice Mindfulness with the Mindfulness Helper

Invite today's Mindfulness Helper (MH) to come to the front of the class to sit next to you on a chair (or next to you on the floor).

Say: *Let's all be happy for _____.* (sign language applause)

Prompt the MH to say: “Let’s get into our mindful bodies. Let’s close our eyes or look down. Let’s do Gravity Hands.”

You or the Mindfulness Helper can lead the class through the practice again.

Ask the MH to ring the bell when the mindful breathing is complete.

Ask the MH to return to their seat.

Read and Discuss

Marleigh is Mindful

Say: *Today let’s see who practices Gravity Hands in Marleigh is Mindful. It’s Navaneet! Let’s hear about Navaneet’s experience.*

Read the two pages on Navaneet and why he practices Gravity Hands.

Ask:

- How did Gravity Hands help Navaneet?
- How could Gravity Hands be helpful to you?

Gratitude Practice

1. Introduce the concept of gratitude.

Say: *Today we are going to be talking about gratitude. Does anybody want to guess what that word means? Gratitude means being thankful or grateful. When we are grateful, or feeling gratitude, we notice good things or people, and we feel thankful for them.*

Maybe you feel grateful because it is sunny out today. Or maybe you are grateful because it is raining and your garden will grow. Maybe you are grateful that your shoes are comfortable and not tight. Maybe you are filled with gratitude because it is almost time for recess.

2. Introduce gratitude practice and the song.

Say: *Sometimes it can be easy to forget to notice these little good things in life, so we are going to practice being grateful and mindfully noticing. And to make it even more fun, we are going to sing a little song about it.*

I'm going to ask you to think of a little good thing in your life and raise your hand. When I call on you we'll all sing "tell me something good" and then you will. I'll go first. Sing it with me, "tell me something good"! And I'll tell you that I had waffles for breakfast or [Insert your own answer here]. Now it's your turn.

Call on whomever raises their hand and **say or sing:** "[Child's Name], tell me something good..."

Try to leave enough time for everyone to share. If the kids start to head in the direction of getting things like video games, or vacations, remind them to focus on the little good things.

This is a practice that you will be repeating in subsequent lessons. You might want to vary it by asking them to share good things they noticed in nature, or kind things that they did for others or that others did for them, or good things they had to eat recently.

Be creative and have fun with it. Students really love this. If you don't feel comfortable singing - feel free to just use it as a prompt or a chant or make up your own way of doing it!

Activity: I am grateful for...

Hand out copies of the "I am grateful for..." worksheet.

Say: *Now we're going to draw a picture of something that you are grateful for. It can be a person who makes you happy, a pet, your teddy bear, or your lunch. Anything is fine.*

If you have time let the children share their drawings with the class or perhaps with their Kindness Pals.

Kindness Pals

Do the Kindness Pals activity as before.

Closing Words: *Let's have a nice quiet moment with the bell. You can close your eyes or leave them open, but let's sit quietly and listen to the bell. If you want to, you can think about your new Kindness Pal and imagine yourself doing something kind for him or her.*

Ring the bell or chime. *Thanks for a great class, everyone.*

