

LESSON 6-4

An "Attitude of Gratitude"

Overview

Students participate in activities that help them pay attention to details of their everyday lives, particularly regarding things for which they are thankful. They discuss the checklist which prepares them for their interview with the Council of Elders.

Cognitive Objectives

Students will examine events in their daily lives and identify positive things that people do for them on a daily basis (often people they don't even know). They will practice expressing gratitude. They will also develop the understanding that they do not have to let their feelings control their lives.

Affective Objectives

Students will begin to develop an awareness of the many things that others do for them that they often take for granted. They will develop the skill of paying attention to what is really going on around them.

Interactive Objectives

Students will develop a deeper appreciation of what others do for them. They will reflect on the impact of this awareness on their own actions toward other people: "How can I lie, cheat, or steal from others to whom I owe a debt of gratitude?"

Preparation

Hope you've already done this

- Written your own letter of gratitude. Posted the schedule of the students' interviews with the Council of Elders in the next lesson.
- Copied the Journeywork Handout: Preparing to Meet with the Council of Elders (one per student). Organized space in the classroom to allow for the opening activity.

Note: Allow 15-20 minutes for discussion of Journeywork and Closing as they are longer than usual. Also allow time for explaining today's journeywork and for the closing activity.

Material

1. paper
2. music: something quiet and unobtrusive
3. journeywork handouts

TEACHING THE LESSON

Brief follow-up on Community Service, Personal Challenges, and steps toward a goal

Last Lesson's Passport Writing

Briefly discuss especially the second question: What did you learn about how we can use our knowledge of brain functioning to help us act within our moral standards?

Opening Activity

Students stand in a circle. Silently, they toss an imaginary ball around the circle. When they receive it, each student can change the size, weight, and shape of the imaginary ball before tossing it to someone else in the circle. The point of this activity is to sharpen attention skills—to be aware of what another person has done and to respond to it appropriately.

Introduction

Give each student a piece of paper. *Make a list on your paper of all the people who made it possible for you to have this piece of paper to write on. Trace the chain as far back as you can and include as many people as you can think of.* Possible answers: Guide, person who gave the paper to the Guide, person who delivered it to the school, person who paid the bill for the paper, person who cut out the bill, person who ordered the paper for the warehouse, trucker who delivered the paper to the warehouse, owner of the trucking company, worker at the paper mill who made the paper, owner of the paper mill, logger who cut down the tree from which the paper was made, person who planted the tree.

See who can come up with the longest list. Then generate a class list, with everyone contributing. Listing them in sequence teaches organization skills.

Imagination Activity

Play some quiet, unobtrusive background music. Ask the students to have their Passports and pencils ready.

Close your eyes or cover them so you won't be distracted. Take a few deep breaths just to get

relaxed, and quiet your mind . . . Now think back to where you were at this time yesterday . . . Remember what you were doing. Think of those next few moments in as much detail as you can . . . Where did you go next? Whom did you talk to? Did someone talk to you? Did someone say something nice to you? What did the person say? . . . Did someone do something nice for you? What did the person do?

Lead students through the 24 hours before they came to this class. Use as much detail as you can to elicit their awareness of all the things that people have done for them in those 24 hours. Encourage specific details. For example, instead of "My mother fixed supper," encourage "My mother spent an hour making supper, her meal my favorite food. We had fried chicken, stuffing, gravy, and biscuits. She also fixed peas but I didn't have to eat them." Adapt your suggestions to your class. Be aware that perhaps not all students have a home situation in which a parent would fix supper, breakfast, or lunch for them.

Go through specific activities such as what the students did for the rest of the day, after school if it was a school day, at supper time, in the evening, at bedtime, in the morning, at breakfast, before school, and so on.

Every few minutes, stop and have the students jot notes in their Passports about specific things other people did for them. Encourage them to make their lists as long as possible. No detail is too small or unimportant. That is part of the point of this activity.

In closing this activity, have students each focus on a person in their lives (parent, friend, brother, sister, other family member, teacher, coach) who does a lot for them. In their Passports, have them write that