

PCK Character Coaching Connection

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Grateful Hearts Appreciate What They Have



PCK Students Are Grateful For Their Families, Friends, and School

Appreciating what we have is a key part of being content in life. Students are learning what it means to be grateful and to appreciate what they have rather than focusing on the traits, talents, and belongings of others. They also know that grateful people are more positive and fun to be around! If you notice your child expressing gratefulness, tell her you noticed and then share your story with us!

Gratefulness: Showing appreciation for what I have.

Your Student Is Learning...

Ask your students what they have been doing in Character Coaching. Each grade level learns a different application of the month's trait, so if you have more than one student at PCK make sure to hear what each child is doing in class.

In **full-day kindergarten**, students did a "My Grateful Garden" project where, after discussing things they appreciate in their lives, they wrote things they are grateful for on paper flowers. If you haven't seen this, check your student's backpack - they are adorable!

First grade students made cards for special people in their lives as a concrete way of expressing their gratitude for those who make a difference.

In **second grade** our students wrote down things for which they are most grateful. We then discussed what life would be like without these things. Most students listed family, friends, and pets, so we talked about how they can better show their appreciation to these important people/animals.

Our **third graders** played a game where they passed colored cards to the left or the right based on a story that included the words "left" and "right." After completing the challenging (and sometimes chaotic) game, we discussed the things that work smoothly in the classroom and the things that make learning more challenging. Students expressed gratitude for the things at school that work well, and talked about ways to improve things that don't.

After brainstorming a list of things they appreciate, the students in **fourth grade** made gratefulness boards with moving flaps. Each flap contains a letter from the word THANKS, and under each flap the students wrote something for which they are grateful.

In **fifth grade** students wrote down the one thing for which they are most grateful. We then charted their answers according to People, Animals, Things, and Other. In most classes the People line of the chart was by far the largest, with Animals coming in second place. The most common item in the Things category was books!

Our 6th graders considered different aspects of their personalities. We talked about public and private personas, and how the two work together to create a complete person. We want to be grateful for all of the things that make us each unique, not only the things that receive public recognition. Students made masks with details about their public personas on the front, and more private details on the back.

Gratefulness In Action

Gratefulness is an easy trait to spot in kids, but when they take things or people for granted we need to have purposeful conversations with them. In class we talked about being grateful for all parents do to help students succeed in school, including providing lunches and uniform clothing, as well as driving carpool. Is your student thanking you for these things?

Talk through these questions with your children:

When you think about gratefulness, what first comes to mind? Why?

How do you like to show your appreciation for someone/something?

When someone else has something you want, what do you do? (In class we discussed asking parents about helping around the house to earn money for special purchases, rather than asking parents to buy the items.)

Are there areas where you could/should be more grateful?

What would make it easier to show your appreciation?

How do you feel when people appreciate you?

How do you feel when people do not appreciate you?

How do you know when someone appreciates you?

If you ever have questions about what we do in Character Coaching, or about any aspect of our character education program, please contact me at ddaniels@ckcs.net. I would love to talk about the great things your students are doing.