

Tic-Tac-Toe

This lesson focuses on caring through gratitude. Your class is in essence a giant team that must work together every day to complete group activities. Every team needs some teambuilding to boost morale and inspire collaboration and cooperation. This kinesthetic version of tic-tac-toe does just that.

Caring Sub-Concept(s)

Gratitude, Helpfulness, Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

☐ Masking Tape

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

- Highlight grateful actions and words among their peers.
- Demonstrate gratitude through verbal expression.
- Become more aware of the helpfulness others provide throughout their day.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Helpfulness: the word alone can bring both positive and negative images to mind. Are you the type to help with everything? Or are you one that avoids helping because you can't seem to find the time? Finding a balance when it comes to helpfulness is vital for self preservation in this profession.

Establishing and maintaining clear boundaries with your team, your school, and yes, even your own family, will help you better organize your time, thus allowing you to either pair down on the help you are providing or find time to actually pitch in on more occasions. Helpfulness is a terrific character trait, but can often be over-expected with teachers. Speak up when you are taxed. No one likes a grumpy helper! Need ideas on HOW to say no? Check out this resource: <http://teacherhabits.com/effective-way-teachers-say-no/>

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Have non-verbal or limited speaking students be the tic-tac-toe pieces to decrease speaking needs.
- Draw a tic-tac-toe template on the whiteboard to track moves for visual learners.
- Have students who are sitting in the outer circle react to classmates' Gratitude Greetings by shaking musical shakers/tapping knees/rubbing hands together. This will engage the classmates that are waiting their turn and help them to keep focus.
- Use picture cards to depict different examples of caring and have students in the outer circle hold them so that the teams can use them for ideas.



Share

3-5 minutes

Have students gather at the circle time/community meeting area.

- *What is your favorite classroom job?*
- *How does it show caring and helpfulness for our classroom?*
- *How can you respond with kindness when you get a job that is difficult for you or you don't really enjoy?*



Inspire

What is Gratitude?

5-7 minutes

We have been talking about how we care for others, but what about when others care for us? The feeling we have when they care for us is called Gratitude. We are grateful for their kind words and caring actions. They have helped make our day a little easier or happier and we are thankful for them. What is one thing you are grateful for at home? Did you show gratitude for these things by telling your parents thank you?

How do we show Gratitude in our classroom?

7-10 minutes

Using your classroom job chart, review ways we could show gratitude for people when they complete their class jobs.

- We can use kind words to thank them.
- We can use respectful actions to show our gratitude.
- We can tell others how helpful they are (like the teacher!)



Empower

20 minutes

Using masking tape, make a giant tic-tac-toe template on the ground. (if you have an assistant, you can have 2 games going on at a time.)

Have everyone sit in a circle around the game. Using the whiteboard, explain how to play tic-tac-toe. Practice with a quick regular game on the whiteboard as a sample.

Create teams of 5-6. One person on each team will be the Gratitude Guide and everyone else will be a game piece. If desired, you can give each team colored construction paper to tape on their backs to help players remember their moves. You can also track each move on the whiteboard so teams can see where all their human game pieces are on the board.

- In order for the first team to place a person on the tic-tac-toe board, they must exchange Gratitude Greetings with each other using the following prompt, “I am grateful for you because_____.” Once the captain and the “game piece” have answered the question for each other (no duplicates if possible!), they may decide where to place the person on the giant floor grid.
- Repeat until all the pieces are on the board. Then check for 3 in a row, tic-tac-toe.
- Repeat this game until all students have received at least one gratitude greeting. It may take 3-4 rounds of tic-tac-toe.
- People that are not part of the live game remain seated in a wide outer circle around the game board.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

- *What Gratitude did you receive during this game?*
- *How did that make you feel?*
- *What Gratitude did you express (tell others) during this game?*
- *How did it feel to use your kind words in this way?*
- *How did people show helpfulness during our game? Did anyone show gratitude for these actions?*



Extension Ideas

- Using standard tic-tac-toe templates, have families complete the same activity on paper. Each player must complete the sentence starter, “I am grateful for you because...,” prior to marking an X or O down on the game board.



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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (**CASEL**) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL’s SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL’s criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL’s highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>