

Adapt & Appreciate - Levels A & B

GRATITUDE

To support early gratitude and adaptability by helping students notice that some changes can feel okay or even enjoyable. Inspired by Pluto from The Playful Astronauts, this activity helps students experience that "different" does not always mean "bad," and that good feelings can come after change.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to notice when something changes.

Students aim to experience or recognise a positive feeling after a change.

Students aim to show appreciation for something that felt good.



Success Criteria

I can notice that something was different.

I can show a happy or calm feeling in my own way.

I can show something I like or appreciate.



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Duration: 5 - 10 minutes

Objective

To support early gratitude and adaptability by helping students notice that some changes can feel okay or even enjoyable. Inspired by Pluto from The Playful Astronauts, this activity helps students experience that “different” does not always mean “bad,” and that good feelings can come after change.

Players

Individual activity with optional 1:1 or small-group sharing
Suitable for 1 - 16 students at a time

What You Need

A4 or A5 paper
Coloured pencils
Optional: stickers (stars, hearts, smiley faces)
Optional: textured materials
Optional: simple visuals (same, different, happy)
AAC devices or communication boards as required

Setup

Seat students in a calm, familiar space with materials within reach.
Introduce the Pluto idea using very simple language and visuals:
“Pluto is different from the other planets.”

“Being different is okay.”

Connect to a very recent experience, such as:

- a movement game
- a routine change
- a new activity

Explain clearly:

“Something is going to be different during this activity.”

“We are finding something we like that is different.”

Confirm AAC devices are on and open to core words such as like, happy, good, again.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Notice the Change

The teacher makes and models one small change to a regular routine or activity the students are used to completing/seeing or feeling.

Support students to notice the recent change.

The teacher models and narrates the change, for example:

“The game was changed by.....”

“This part was different from normal.”

Students may respond by:

- Looking at the teacher
- Pointing to the teacher
- Showing interest in the activity and the change
- AAC
- Body movements/vocalisation about the change

No verbal response is required.

Step 2: Students show a change

Students show one thing they would like to try and change. To either a regular routine, an activity they like to do, the way the room is set up, ask the students to think about anything they would like to change.

Adults may narrate for the student:

“You want to change what is on your table.”

“You want to change the way the room is set up.”

Keep expectations very small, one response is enough.

Repeat the process as many times as you like or feel comfortable with.

Debrief / Reflection

Use one concrete prompt only:

“How did it feel to change something?”

Accept responses such as:

- Smiling/vocalisation/frowning
- Gestures
- AAC
- Calm behaviour

Reinforce with narration:

“You noticed something different.”



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Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through noticing, engagement, or calm participation.

Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation and comfort.

Adjustments may include:

- Using textured stickers or paper
- Allowing students to stand, sit, or move gently
- Providing a weighted item or fidget
- Completing the activity in under 2 minutes
- Observation-only participation

All levels of engagement are valid.

•••• AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Core words: like, happy, good, again, finished

Model AAC Use

Adults model consistently:

“Like.”

“Good.”

Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

Students may communicate without drawing.

Adults or peers may create the work on behalf of the student.

Digital alternatives are appropriate.

Sharing is never required.

Focus on feeling and experience, not explanation.

Teacher Notes

“Adapt & Appreciate – Levels A & B” introduces gratitude as a felt experience, not a reflective task. By keeping the activity short, concrete, and grounded in recent experiences, students begin to associate change with safety and occasional positive outcomes. Linked to Pluto, the activity gently reinforces that difference can bring good feelings too.

