

My Thankful Hand - Levels A & B

CREATIVE

To support students to experience gratitude through a simple, creative activity using a hand shape. Students explore positive feelings by choosing pictures, colours, or symbols that represent things they like or enjoy. Linked to the Saturn theme from The Playful Astronauts, the activity reinforces that noticing good things helps us feel calm, connected, and supported.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to experience positive feelings by noticing things they like or enjoy.

Students aim to participate in a creative activity that represents gratitude.

Students aim to respond to or show appreciation using pictures, actions, gestures, or AAC.



Success Criteria

I can take part in creating a hand picture with support.

I can choose or respond to one or more things I like or am thankful for.

I can show interest in my work by looking, touching, or responding.

I can stay with the activity for part or all of the time.



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Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Objective

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Players

Individual activity

Suitable for 3 - 16 students

Optional brief sharing with an adult or small group

What You Need

A4 paper

Pre-drawn large hand templates (or you can create these with the students)

Coloured pencils

Optional: textured stickers, shapes, stamps

AAC devices, switches, or communication boards as required

Setup

Prepare calm, accessible workspaces using tables, trays, lap desks, or floor spaces.

Ensure all materials are within easy reach.

Introduce the activity using simple, reassuring language:

“This is a hand.”

“We are going to make a thankful hand.”

“We can choose to add things we like.”

Briefly connect to the Saturn theme in accessible terms:

“Saturn reminds us to notice good things.”

Show a finished example if helpful.

Confirm AAC devices are switched on and open to basic like, happy, people, or things symbols.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Adult Modelling

The teacher models the activity.

Hold up a hand template and say:

"This is my thankful hand."

Choose one finger only and add a simple picture, sticker, or colour to it as a demonstration.

Say:

"I love my family."

or

"The beach makes me happy."

Activate or point to a matching AAC symbol while speaking.

Keep modelling brief and concrete.

Step 2: Student Creation

Invite students to explore and decorate their own Thankful Hand.

Students may participate by:

- Colouring or scribbling on their hands
- Choosing between two colours or stickers to use
- Placing one symbol or stamp on one finger
- Touching or holding materials as the teacher decorates
- Directing an adult using gesture or AAC

There is no expectation to complete all fingers.

Adults support by:

- Offering limited choices of materials
- Hand-over-hand guidance if needed
- Modelling alongside the student
- Narrating positively as the student attempts to decorate their hands

Use language such as:

"You chose this symbol or sticker."

"That is something you like to do."



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Step 3: Optional Sharing

Sharing is optional and brief.

Students may:

- Point to one finger and smile
- Show their hand to an adult or peer
- Use AAC to indicate like, happy, or finished
- Simply hold or look at their work

Adults respond with calm acknowledgement:

“Thank you for showing me.”

Hands may be kept by students, placed in folders, or displayed if appropriate.

Debrief / Reflection

Keep reflection short and concrete.

Ask one question at a time with wait time:

“Do you like your hand?”

Accept responses through eye gaze, gestures, AAC, facial expression, or movement.

Reinforce the message:

“Noticing good things helps us feel good.”

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through participation, choice-making, and engagement.

Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation, comfort, and engagement.

Adjustments may include:

Using larger hand templates with more space.

Offering textured or foam stickers for tactile input.

Working on one finger only.

Allowing frequent breaks.

Reducing visual clutter on the workspace.

AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Ensure access to symbols such as: like, happy, family, play, home, finished.

Use single-message switches if appropriate.

Model AAC Consistently

Adults activate AAC symbols when naming choices or feelings.



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Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

- Provide pre-drawn hand templates for all students.
- Ensure materials are reachable for seated or standing participation.
- Provide adaptive drawing tools if needed.
- Accept all forms of expression equally.
- Allow students to keep their work private if preferred.

Teacher Notes

“My Thankful Hand – Levels A & B” supports early gratitude awareness, choice-making, joint attention, and emotional wellbeing. The activity is not about listing multiple thankful items, but about experiencing positive feelings through noticing and choice. Linked to the Saturn theme, it reinforces that small moments of appreciation help students feel calm, connected, and supported.

