

My Thankful Hand – Levels F-3

CREATIVE

To support the life skill of gratitude through a creative and reflective activity where students trace their hand and decorate each finger with a thankful thought. Saturn, with its strong and elegant rings, reminds us that many small things, like our fingers, can come together to make something beautiful and powerful.



Learning Intentions

Students will learn to recognise and think about the things in their life they are grateful for. This builds appreciation and emotional awareness.

Students will practise drawing or writing their thankful thoughts in a creative way. This supports expressive language and creativity.

Students will learn to share their thankful hand with others to spread kindness. This encourages connection and builds confidence in sharing personal ideas.



Success Criteria

I can trace my hand carefully on paper.
This supports fine motor skills and self-awareness.



I can draw or write one thing I'm thankful for on each finger.
This encourages reflection and gratitude practice.

I can choose to share my hand and explain my choices.
This promotes communication and social confidence.



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Objective:

To support the life skill of gratitude through a creative and reflective activity where students trace their hand and decorate each finger with a thankful thought. Saturn, with its strong and elegant rings, reminds us that many small things, like our fingers, can come together to make something beautiful and powerful.

Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students working individually, with optional group sharing.

Materials:

- A4 paper (plain or coloured)
- Optional but recommended is A4 paper with a larger handprint on it. If you are going to use the students handprints the fingers can be quite small to adequately have space to draw within.
- Coloured pencils
- Optional: heart stickers, glitter, scissors for cutting out hands

Time Required:

15–20 minutes

Setup:

Begin by reading the Saturn page from *The Playful Astronauts* and talking about what it means to feel thankful. Ask students:

- “What are some things that make you feel happy inside?”
- “Who do you love spending time with?”
- “What do you enjoy in your day?”

Let them know they'll be using their hands to show their thanks today.

Gameplay:

Step 1 – Trace the Hand:

Give each student a blank sheet of paper. Show them how to place one hand on the paper and carefully trace around it with a pencil or hand out the pre prepared A4 paper with a larger handprint on it.



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Step 2 – Decorate with Gratitude:

Invite students to write (with support) or draw one thing they're grateful for on each finger. These could include:

- Family
- Friends
- Pets
- Favourite foods
- Places they love
- Toys or games
- Nature (e.g. sunshine, trees)

Let students decorate their hands with colour and creativity, making each one unique and joyful.

Step 3 – Optional Sharing Circle:

Invite students to sit in a circle and share one or two fingers from their Thankful Hand:

- "This finger says I'm thankful for my grandma."
- "I drew my cat on this one because he makes me happy."

Winning the Game:

There is no winner. The purpose is to reflect on life's good things and represent them creatively. Gratitude is the gift we give ourselves and others, just like Saturn teaches through its graceful rings.

Variations:

Younger Students:

Provide a pre-drawn hand outline and model each step slowly. Focus on drawing simple pictures (family, pets, sunshine) instead of writing.

Older Students:

Encourage students to write more detailed sentences or short reflections on each finger (e.g., "I'm thankful for my friend Ava because she always makes me laugh.").

Class Gratitude Garden:

Cut out each hand and display them on a wall or bulletin board in the shape of a tree. Title it "Our Hands of Gratitude."



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Family Extension:

Send the hands home with a note encouraging families to add their own thankful thoughts on the back or trace their own hands to make a family gratitude chain.

Art Challenge Edition:

Students can use collage materials (fabric scraps, coloured paper, tissue, foil) to decorate their hands, exploring texture and creativity.

For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Use larger hand templates or print pre-drawn outlines for students who may find tracing difficult.
- Provide tactile materials such as foam, felt, or textured paper for sensory engagement.
- If a student cannot trace their hand, they can draw or decorate a symbolic handprint using stamps, stickers, or shapes.
- Students who use assistive communication devices can share their gratitude by choosing or recording words, symbols, or photos.
- Ensure all students have table space and tools suited to their mobility or sensory needs.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Remind students that everyone *has something to be thankful for*, big or small, ordinary or extraordinary.
- Model your own Thankful Hand first, sharing a few of your own examples to inspire students.
- Use inclusive language when discussing gratitude (e.g., “Who are people who care for you?” rather than “parents”).
- Celebrate all contributions equally, whether a word, a picture, or a gesture.
- For students who feel shy or private, allow them to keep their hands personal and skip the sharing circle.
- Conclude with a group affirmation:
- “When we give thanks, we help our hearts, and our world, grow stronger and brighter, just like Saturn’s shining rings.”

Additional Notes:

“My Thankful Hand” helps students pause and notice the beauty in their lives. This simple act of tracing their own hand becomes a powerful tool for reflection, appreciation, and expression, reminding us that gratitude lives right at our fingertips.

