

Play Pal Pass Levels F-3

GRATITUDE

To give students the chance to show appreciation for their peers by reflecting on what makes playtime enjoyable with others. Through kind words and connection, students will practise the life skill of gratitude while celebrating the power of play. Mars, our bold and playful planet, teaches us that fun is even better when it's shared.



Learning Intentions

Students will learn to think about what they enjoy when playing with a friend. This builds social awareness and emotional reflection.

Students will practise saying something kind about their play buddy. This develops gratitude, kindness, and communication skills.

Students will learn to listen to others and share appreciation during play. This supports empathy, connection, and confidence in social settings.



Success Criteria

I can choose a friend to play and share with.
This encourages social bonding and cooperative play.

I can say or show what I like about playing with my partner.
This nurtures verbal expression and gratitude.

I can listen when my friend shares something kind with me.
This promotes mutual respect and attentive communication.



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Objective:

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Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students, working in pairs.

Materials:

- Optional: heart-shaped cards or paper stars
- Coloured pencils (optional for drawing or writing compliments)
- Calm background music (optional)

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Begin the activity by revisiting the Mars page from *The Playful Astronauts* book. Talk with the class about how much fun it is to play with others, and how special it feels when someone says something nice about us.

Let students know that today they'll be partnered with a *Play Pal* and will take turns sharing something they love about playing together.

Gameplay:

Step 1 – Pair Up:

Ask students to stand in a big circle, the person to their right becomes their partner. Or use music or a playful prompt (e.g. “blast off!”) and ask students to walk around a designated space until you stop the music, the person standing closest to them becomes their partner.

Once everyone is paired, say:

“Your partner is your *Play Pal*! Let's take turns saying something kind about what we enjoy when we play with them.”

Examples:

- “I like playing blocks with you.”
- “You're fun when we run outside.”
- “I like when you laugh during games.”
- “You're good at taking turns.”



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If students feel shy, they can draw a picture of their playtime together instead or say a simple “thank you.”

Step 2 – Pass it On:

After both partners have shared, mix up the group and repeat with a new Play Pal. Do this two or three times so students connect with more peers.

Reflection and Group Gratitude:

Come back to the circle and ask:

- “How did it feel when your Play Pal said something kind?”
- “Why is it important to say thank you when others play with you?”
- “What makes a good play partner?”

You can finish by creating a “Thank You for Playing With Me” wall with drawings or photos of buddies playing together.

Winning the Game:

There is no winner. The gift is in the sharing, appreciation, and connection, just as Mars reminds us, play is powerful when it brings people together.

Variations:

Younger Students:

Focus on smiles, high-fives, or handshakes as ways of saying “thank you.” Pair verbal sharing with a physical gesture of kindness.

Creative Version:

Provide each student with a small star or heart card to decorate and gift to their Play Pal after sharing.

Leadership Edition:

Appoint one or two “Gratitude Captains” who help mix up pairs and model kind ways to express thanks.

Group Reflection Version:

After all rounds, invite students to call out kind words they heard from others and record them on the board to create a “Wall of Nice Words.”

Calm Down Extension:

End with a collective breathing exercise while saying:

“Thank you for playing with me today.”



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For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Pair students so everyone can comfortably face each other for sharing.
- For students with speech or communication challenges, provide alternative ways to express kindness:
 - Use symbol cards, drawings, or assistive technology to share appreciation.
 - Encourage gestures like waves, smiles, or thumbs-up.
- Keep open pathways for mobility and space to move freely during partner changes.
- Provide adult or peer support to facilitate pairing if needed, ensuring every student feels included and supported.
- For students with sensory sensitivities, music can be turned down or replaced with a verbal "Blast off!" cue.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Emphasise that kindness comes in many forms, words, smiles, drawings, or actions all count.
- Reinforce equal participation by ensuring everyone receives and gives at least one compliment.
- Encourage students who may be shy by modelling simple sentence starters ("I like playing tag with you").
- Celebrate diversity by reminding students that everyone brings something unique to playtime.
- End with a positive affirmation for the group:
- *"Every time we play together, we make our classroom stronger, kinder, and more fun."*

Additional Notes:

"Play Pal Pass" is a gentle yet joyful way to combine gratitude with play. It helps students recognise the value of shared experiences and builds a habit of expressing thanks for the small but meaningful moments that happen during play. Inspired by Mars, this activity reminds us that kindness, fun, and connection go hand in hand.

