

Gratitude Tree

Objective: Students will design and paint a seasonal tree depicting autumn colors with sayings of gratitude.

Topics & Keywords for Discussion: thankful, giving, grateful, printing, nature prints.

Materials: small leaves, paint (tempura or acrylic: autumn leaf colors), watercolor paper, paintbrushes and water.

Opening activity: Have students close their eyes and bring to mind all of the things they are grateful for: invite them to imagine the people, experiences and things in their lives that bring them joy, one at a time, hold one image in their mind for a few moments and then they can bring another to mind. You'll be guiding them through this imagination experience. After a minute or so, ask students to open their eyes, and have them share some of the things or people in their lives that they appreciate and feel gratitude. Give students pencils and paper to create a list of a few things or people they are thankful for... and share this video with them to inspire their thinking: <https://youtu.be/yA5Qpt1JRE4>



Core Activity: Students will create the word GRATITUDE in an arch at the top of their paper. Then, from the bottom of the page up to the midway point they will trace a tree trunk and branching into two limbs. Students will paint the trunk and limbs in brown paint and use autumn colors of paint to print leaves on the tree, leaving space to add a few of the items or names of people they appreciate from their gratitude lists.

Reflection: Appreciation and gratitude are powerful motivators for focusing attention and cultivating positive attitudes both for making art and working cooperatively. As students clean up and reset the space, ask them to share if thinking about the items or people they appreciate gives them a good feeling, and why or why not?