

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Students will develop positive attitudes.
- Students will learn coping skills for managing life events.
- Students will use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts that name and supply information about the topic.
- Students will interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning, develop logical interpretations through conversations, and build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one's own views while respecting diverse perspectives.

Objectives

Students will understand that an attitude is how someone feels about things.

Students will understand that having a positive attitude is a matter of choice.

Students will understand that a positive attitude helps people be healthier & more successful.

Students will understand that people with a positive attitude believe in themselves.

Materials Needed

- Water and a glass or plastic cup (“Starter”)
- A list of positive character traits (“We Do”)
- “My Favorite Things” activity sheet for each student (“You Do”)

Starter (5 minutes)

Define positive thinking for your class. (For example, “Choosing to pay attention to positive thoughts and dismissing negative ones.”) Next, fill a glass halfway with water and ask students, “Is the glass half-empty or half-full?” Once students respond, discuss how viewing the glass as “half-full” is a positive outlook and viewing the glass as “half-empty” is more of a negative outlook. Tell students, “Having a positive attitude doesn’t mean ignoring troubles. It means focusing on the good and not concentrating on the bad.”

Teacher Presented Knowledge / I Do (10 minutes)

Tell students, “I am going to describe two situations, and I want you to notice that when I look for the positive or the brighter side of each situation, I feel happier.” Describe the two situations below. (You can choose to use pictures to illustrate different situations.) Verbalize the thought process behind finding the brighter side:

- It is a rainy and gloomy day, and I was looking forward to being outside. (*Brighter side: Rain allows flowers to grow and bloom.*)
- I went to the zoo but did not get to see my favorite animal. (*Brighter side: I was able to see and enjoy the other animals.*)
- I am moving to a new city and must leave all my friends behind. (*Brighter side: I can make new friends and will be able to explore a new city.*)

Remind students that finding the brighter side of a negative situation will make it better.

Guided Student Practice / We Do (15 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and a pencil to each student. Instruct them to think of positive characteristics about themselves. Give examples of positive character traits, such as “friendly,” “caring,” “funny,” “athletic,” and “smart.” Have students write down the positive character traits about themselves, and then have other students add one positive thing about each student.

Student Independent Practice / You Do (30 minutes)

Tell students, “Sometimes it is hard to see the good in a bad situation. When this happens, I like to make a list of all of my favorite things in life. This helps me cheer up my mood and realize how many things I should be thankful for.” Give each student a copy of the “My Favorite Things” activity sheet. Instruct them to draw pictures of their favorite things in the boxes on the activity sheet. Once students have completed the task, have volunteers share aloud what they chose to draw.

Closure (3 minutes)

Remind students that having a positive attitude is a choice that each person should make every day. In order to have a positive attitude, it is important to look for the best in every situation. If that doesn't work, it can be helpful to think about one's favorite things.

Student Assessment

1. How can you change the way you think?
2. What can you do to help others when they have a bad day?
3. How does having a positive attitude help you?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Art Extension

Have students create a self-portrait that includes positive character traits about themselves.

Art Extension

Have students create “positivity glasses,” oversized glasses that they decorate with positive images and positive phrases on each lens.

ELA Extension

Have students create a “happy thoughts” journal. In this journal, students will write happy thoughts they have each day. They can read their journal whenever they are feeling negative.

Literature Extension

Read the story *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, by Judith Viorst, and ask students:

1. What do you think this book is about?
2. Have you ever had a bad day? What happened?
3. Do you think Alexander helped himself turn his day around?
4. What was Alexander’s idea to make his day better?
5. Do you think his day would have been better if he had changed the way he talked to himself?

Technology Extension

Create a “word cloud” with positive character traits about each student and hang it in the classroom.

MY FAVORITE THINGS

Whenever I am feeling down, I think of...

Favorite Thing #1

Favorite Thing #2

Favorite Thing #3

Favorite Thing #4

...to cheer me up!

NEGATIVE SCENARIOS

1. All of my friends are out of town, and I have no one to play with.
2. I broke my leg and have to wear a cast for six weeks.
3. I did not make a good grade on my reading test.
4. It's my brother's birthday, and he wants to go to a movie that I don't want to go see.
5. My team lost the tournament game.
6. I don't want to eat vegetables.