



GRATITUDE ACTIVITY FOR TWEENS & TEENS

Lesson 1 **Discover Your Great Full Self**

Students identify their strengths to gain a better understanding of themselves.

Time Required

1 class period

Grade Level

6th – 12th grade

Materials

- [Lesson One PowerPoint slideshow](#)
- Computer and monitor or projector to show video
- Computer or other device for every student to take computer-based survey
- Poster paper (one per student), pencil, markers, colored pencils, etc.
- [VIA Strengths Poster](#)

Learning Objectives

- Students will:
- Identify their top five character strengths
 - Gain a greater understanding of themselves

SEL Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Identifying personal strengths

**Getting Ready
For This Activity**

Educators:
Take the adult version of the [VIA](#) to explore your own character strengths. Do you agree with the survey results of your top five strengths (i.e., your signature strengths)? Think of a moment in your life when you were performing at your best, and consider how any of your top strengths factored into that successful moment.



Lesson 1

Discover Your Great Full Self

How To Do It

Slide 1 Introduce the Lesson

Gratitude Activity
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Discover Your Great Full Self

We have a special opportunity to learn about gratitude, how to practice it and why, and to learn about the gifts we each carry around inside us so that we can use them to make the world better.

- Introduce this program and its purpose:
 - *These lessons give us a special opportunity to learn about gratitude, how to practice it and why, and to learn about the gifts we each carry around inside us so that we can use them to make the world better.*

Slide 2 Character Strengths

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Character Strengths

Creativity Perspective
Judgment Curiosity
Honesty Bravery HUMOR Fairness
PERSEVERANCE Zest
Love Kindness Leadership
Social Intelligence Love of Learning
Forgiveness Humility PRUDENCE
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence Gratitude SELF-REGULATION
HOPE Spirituality

- Introduce character strengths:



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Discover Your Great Full Self

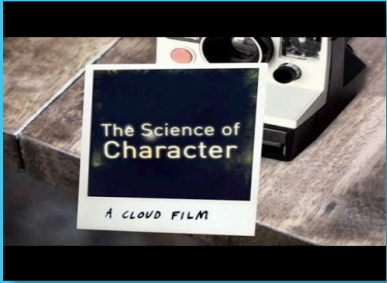
- *Before we get going on gratitude, we want to start this program by talking about YOU. Specifically, what are some of your top strengths?*
- *Character strengths are personal qualities, like honesty and leadership, that help you get along in the world and be a better person. People tend to be stronger at a few of these virtues than others. Knowing your character strengths and using them can help you be happier and more successful in the world. So...*
- Have students look at the word cloud on the slide and guess which would be their top three strengths.

Slide 3 Character Strengths Video

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What Are Character Strengths?

Watch this video to learn more about Character Strengths, why they matter, and what they mean for you!



- Have students watch the video "[The Science of Character](#)" (8 minutes).



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Slide 4 Character Strengths Survey

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Character Strengths

Take a Character Strength survey at this website:
<https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>

Record your top 5 strengths and a brief description of each.

wisdom	courage	humanity	transcendence	justice	moderation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">creativitycuriosityjudgmentlove of learningperspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">braveryperseverancehonestyaut	<ul style="list-style-type: none">lovekindnesssocial intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">appreciation of beautygratitudehopehumourspirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">teamworkfairnessleadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">forgivenessmodestyprudenceself-control

- After watching the video, tell students that they will now take an online survey that will help them discover their own character strengths.
 - *Now it's your turn to find about YOUR strengths! We're going to take a survey that will help you identify your character strengths.*
 - *Everyone pull out a device and go to the following [website](#) (see slide).*
 - *Under the heading, "Register to Get Started," enter your name, email, gender, date of birth, and a password. Make sure the second box ("I have read...of this agreement") is checked, then click "register."*
 - *On the next page, select, "I want to take the VIA survey for youth" (it's shorter than the adult version), then click, "Take survey."*
 - *On the next page, select, "I am taking the survey for myself." Answer all of the questions.*



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- At the end of the survey, you will come to a page labeled “demographics.” You can fill in the information if you wish, or you can just click, “Complete survey.”
- On the next page, click “Download your character strengths profile.”
- Teachers: If you haven’t yet taken the survey, please do so now!
- After everyone has completed the survey, tally up everyone’s strengths (see the next slide).

Slide 5

Tallying Up the Class’s Character Strengths

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VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues
The Character Strengths of a Flourishing Life

WISDOM	COURAGE	HUMANITY	JUSTICE	TEMPERANCE	TRANSCENDENCE
Creativity Originality, artistic creativity	Bravery Value an abstract form, face head-on, stand up for what's right	Love Both loving and being loved, making close relations with others	Trustworthiness Civility, social responsibility, honesty	Forgiveness Mercy and seeing other's shortcomings, open oneself to reconciliation	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence Love, wonder, awe
Curiosity Interest, exploring, intellectual, openness to experience	Perseverance Persistence, industry, finishing what one starts	Kindness Generosity, kindness, care, compassion, altruism, "helper"	Fairness Acting on things being the same, decisions about others	Humility Modesty, being aware of one's accomplishments, open to correction	Gratitude Thankful to the world, recognizing benefits, feeling blessed
Judgment Critical thinking, thinking things through, open-minded	Leadership Authority, integrity	Social Intelligence Emotional intelligence, aware of the needs, feelings, and goals of others, knowing what makes other people tick	Leadership Organizing, providing structure, encouraging a group to act together	Prudence Careful, cautious, not taking unnecessary risks	Hope Optimism, faith, resilience, active-constructive
Love of Learning Nourishing one's life through systematic study to gain knowledge	Self Having one's own goals, being one and ahead			Self-Regulation Self-control, discipline, managing impulses & emotions	Humor Playfulness, bringing people to others, light-hearted
Persepective Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the long-term view					Spirituality Religiosity, faith, purpose, meaning

VIA INSTITUTE ON CHARACTER
(where the world finds strength)
www.viacharacter.org

- Tally up the class’s strengths: Ask the students to look at their top two strengths. Then get a tally of how many students had one of their top two strengths in the wisdom category, courage category, etc.
- Then reveal what your class’s top strengths were, e.g., “Looks like our class is really high on justice and courage!” This is a fun way for everyone to get a sense of each other’s strengths.

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Slide 6

How You Can Use Your Strengths

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Character Strengths

In pairs, turn to a partner and share one way you could use each of your top strengths to do something nice for someone.

 wisdom <small>//creativity //curiosity //judgement //love of learning //perspective</small>	 courage <small>//bravery //persistence //honesty //zest</small>	 humanity <small>//love //kindness //social intelligence</small>	 transcendence <small>//appreciation of beauty //gratitude //hope //spirituality</small>	 justice <small>//teamwork //fairness //leadership</small>	 moderation <small>//forgiveness //modesty //prudence //self-control</small>
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- Students will now have an opportunity to discuss how they might use their strengths.
 - *Next I want you to get into partners and discuss how you could each use one of your top strengths to help others or society. For example, if one of your top strengths is bravery, then you might make a good firefighter. Or, if you score high in creativity, then you could use it to create music. If you score high in kindness, how might you find opportunities to encourage others to be kind?*
- Give students a few minutes to discuss their strengths with a partner.
- Hand out poster materials and have each student create a poster that lists his or her top five character strengths. This can be as creative as they would like and could include art work that symbolizes their strengths. They could use pictures, images, drawings and words to describe themselves and their top five strengths. (OPTION: This can also be done as homework.)
- Teachers can create their own simpler poster that lists two of their top five strengths, one that may be apparent to most students and one that may not be.



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Reflection After The Activity

- Ask for a few volunteers to share an idea for how to use a particular strength.
- Ask students to reflect either verbally or in written form about something that they discovered about themselves or that surprised them from this activity.