

Lesson Plan: Joy Finding

Grade level: 7th

Subject: Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Duration: 60 minutes

Montana Whole Child Competencies:

- **MTSEL.K-12.1.a** Identify, understand, and link emotions, thoughts, and values and recognize how they influence behavior across contexts
- **MTSEL.6-8.3.d** Practice activities that promote and express gratitude for self and others

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the concept of "joy finding"
- Identify sources of joy in their daily lives
- Develop strategies for cultivating gratitude and positivity

Materials:

- Glue
- Poster size paper
- Journals or paper for reflection
- Whiteboard
- Marker

Lesson Outline:

1. Initial Engagement: (5 minutes)

- Begin with a short check-in and mood scaling: "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you're feeling sad with no joy at all, and 10 means you're overflowing with joy, where would you place yourself right now?"
- "If you could capture a photo or image of something, or a moment, that brings you joy, what would it look like?"
- Share a short definition of "joy finding"--the practice of noticing and appreciating the small and big things in life that bring us happiness.

2. Explicit Instruction: (10 minutes)

Students will read the *Laughing Song* poem by William Blake. Ask students what images Blake used to show joy. Briefly emphasize that joy can be found in small things, including nature, friendships, other people's laughter, etc. Emphasize the benefits of recognizing joy: improved mood, resilience, and gratitude.

3. Guided Practice: (15 minutes)

Open with the question: *"Think about your everyday life. What are some moments in your day when you feel joyful or content?"* Give students 30 seconds of quiet think time. Divide students into five groups and invite them to move through five stations labeled **Family, School, Friendship, Community, and Other**, contributing personal examples of joyful moments at each one. Give students 2-3 minutes at each station. Encourage them to think about something small and specific. After students finish writing their examples, ask them: *"Why do you think it's important to notice these moments?"*

4. Collaborative Activity: (20 mins)

- In small groups, students will build a joy collage that reflects what joy genuinely looks like *for them*. Options include writing down joyful moments, cutting and arranging images from magazines, drawing their own visuals, or expressing joy through a short poem.
- Facilitate a brief discussion on the variety of joys shared, inviting students to notice how joy shows up differently for each person and that even the smallest, most unexpected things count.

5. Independent Application: (5 mins)

Distribute student journals or ask them to open their notebooks. Then, prompt students to think about what they do to bring back joy when days feel difficult. After 3-5 minutes of writing, ask for volunteers to share one of their joyful moments.

6. Closing: (5 mins)

Do another mood scaling to help students notice whether and how their mood changed over the course of the activity. Invite students to briefly and voluntarily share answers for the following exit ticket questions:

- "Right now, I feel..."
- "One small way I could invite joy into my week is..."
- "One thing I want to notice more this week is..."

7. Plan for Continued Integration

Students will have the choice to either keep a joy log for a week, write down one joyful moment per day, or create a one-week joy collage.