



PRINTABLE LESSON

The Ungrateful Gull

A lesson in what goes without being asked, and then goes



One complete lesson from The Sing Me a Fable Lesson Book

Ages 4 to 8 . Printable . 26 lessons in the full book

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The Ungrateful Gull

Fable U from Sing Me a Fable — a lesson in what goes without being asked, and then goes

AGE	LENGTH	SUBJECT	GROUP
4–7 (Pre-K to Year 2)	30–40 minutes	PSHE · SEL · Speaking	Whole class, then pairs

Learning objective

Children understand that kindness given freely can be withdrawn quietly, and that nobody announces they are about to stop.

You will need

The fable, read aloud A paper boat A long strip of blue paper Six paper fish Poster U to colour

The blue strip is the bay. Put the boat at the near end of it, close to the class, and the fish in a pile beside the boat.

Before the story

4 minutes

Lay the blue strip across the table with the paper boat at the near end, right in front of the class, and the six fish stacked beside it.

Ask: “Who gave you something today without being asked? Anything at all.”

Then: “Keep your answer. We will see where the boat is when we come back to it.”

Read the fable

5 minutes

Read fable U aloud. Slide the boat one hand's width further away every time the gull demands, pecks or mocks. Say nothing about it while you read.

By the last stanza the boat is at the far end of the strip and the fish are still in a pile. Nobody took them away. They simply stopped being offered.

Talk about it

10 minutes

1. The fisherman never once told the gull off. So why did he sail away?
2. The gull was fed every single day. Why did she stop noticing it?
3. Could she have brought the boat back? What would she have had to do, and when?

Question 2 is the one to stay with. A kindness that happens every day stops looking like a kindness, which is true of children, teachers and grandparents alike, and children recognise it immediately.

Main activity: The boat in the bay

12 minutes

1. Slide the boat back to the near end of the strip and stack the fish beside it.
2. Read a situation from the teacher's sheet. Each has an ungrateful answer and a thankful one.
3. The class votes, hands up, demand or thank. The class decides, not you.
4. Thank: the boat stays and a fish comes across. Demand: the boat slides one hand further out.
5. After the third situation, ask how far the boat is now and whether anybody noticed it moving.
6. At the end, ask what one sentence would have kept the boat where it started.

Do not turn this into a lesson about saying please and thank you on command. Being made to say thank you is not gratitude and every child knows the difference.

Plenary

4 minutes

“Nobody was ever unkind to the gull. So why was she hungry at the end?”



PLAY THE GAME · GABBY THE GULL

Play it together

Put the game on the board. At every choice, stop, let the class vote, then press the card they chose.



Scan to play

OPEN IT

singmeafable.com/arcade/gabby-the-gull

UNLOCK WORDS

WAITING FOR

CHOICES

6, about 2 minutes of play

Level 1 · The Morning Catch



The First Fish

- A Squawk that the fish is far too small!
- B Chirp a thank you to the Captain. ✓



The Big One

- A Take it gently and thank him. ✓
- B Snatch it and shout for the next one!

Level 2 · The Rainy Day



Bread Instead

- A Squawk that bread is a horrible offering!
- B Coo a thank you for the warm bread. ✓



The Empty Dock

- A Sit down quietly and think about why he left. ✓
- B Scream at the empty water for him to come back!



PLAY THE GAME · CONTINUED

The last level, and what to ask

The tick marks the choice that earns the stars. Keep this page to yourself while the class votes.

Level 3 · The Empty Pier



The Dirty Mooring

A Say it is too hard and wait to be fed.

B Tidy his mooring ready for his return. ✓



The Boat Returns

A Welcome him home and thank him for coming back. ✓

B Demand fish and scold him for leaving.

Ask at every choice

Before pressing: “Which card would you press, and why?”

After it plays out: “What changed because of that choice? What would the other card have done?”

How it joins the lesson

The main activity, **The boat in the bay**, takes the same lesson off the screen and into the room. Play the game first, so the class has already watched both kinds of choice play out before they make one themselves.

Every choice plays out and nothing is timed, so a wrong vote is something to talk about, not a failure. Stars at the end of each level show how many right choices the class made.



Six situations to vote on

Read the left column aloud only. The right column is what noticing sounds like.

THE SITUATION, AS THE CLASS HEARS IT	WHAT THANKS SOUNDS LIKE
Somebody makes your lunch every single day.	"That was a good one today."
A friend always lets you go first and you have stopped noticing.	"You always let me go first. Your turn."
Somebody helped you with your coat again.	"Thanks. I nearly got it that time."
You wanted the bigger half and got the smaller one.	"Thanks for sharing it."
Your teacher stayed in to help you finish.	"Thank you for waiting with me."
Somebody gives you something you did not want.	"Thank you for thinking of me."

The last one is the hard one and it is worth doing properly. Thanking somebody for the thought rather than the object is a genuinely useful thing to learn at six.

The line, in one sentence

Nobody tells you they are about to stop being kind. The boat just is not there.

Give the class that sentence at the end, never at the beginning.

Adapting for your class

Ages 4 · Pre-K. Three situations, and let a child slide the boat, so the distance is something they did.

Ages 5–7 · K to Year 2. Run it as written.

Ages 7–8 · Year 3. Add the hard case: can you be grateful and still say you did not like it? You can, and working out how is a real social skill.

Mixed ages: pair an older child with a younger one and give the older one the job of asking, not answering.

What children take away

- **Kindness gets invisible.** The gull was fed daily, which is exactly why she stopped seeing it.
- **Nobody gives a warning.** The fisherman does not scold her. He simply stops coming.
- **Noticing out loud is the whole job.** One sentence, said once, would have kept the boat there.
- **Being told to say thank you is not gratitude.** Children know the difference, and so does whoever is being thanked.

If you have more time

- **Colour the poster.** While they work, ask what the gull would say to the fisherman if the boat came back.
- **Sing it.** The fable's song with on-screen words runs about 90 seconds.
- **Play it.** In the browser game the child chooses whether the gull says thank you or takes it for granted.

Where this fits

One of twenty-six lessons, one for each letter and one character trait each. A week at a time, the set covers a school year. All twenty-six songs and the printable posters are free at singmeafable.com.

Curriculum links. PSHE and SEL: gratitude, noticing others, taking people for granted. Speaking and listening: justifying a choice, predicting an outcome. Literacy: letter recognition, traditional tales, cause and effect.