



Honorees: Principals
Theme: 1950s Sock Hop Era
Lesson Title: Building Character Through Appreciation
Grade Band: K–5
Time: 25–30 minutes

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Understand the importance of leadership in creating a safe and supportive school
- Recognize how principals guide and support students and teachers
- Reflect on how expressing appreciation builds strong character
- Write a structured appreciation note expressing gratitude clearly and respectfully

Teaching Moment: Leadership in the 1950s (5 minutes)

In the 1950s, schools became important centers of community life. Events like school dances and gatherings brought students together and helped build school spirit. Strong leadership helped keep schools organized, safe, and welcoming for everyone.

Today, principals continue that tradition by guiding the school community and helping students and teachers succeed.

Ask students:

- What does a good leader do?
- Why is leadership important in a school?
- What qualities make someone a responsible leader?

Explain that strong leaders help others feel safe, supported, and encouraged.

Understanding the Role of a Principal (5–7 minutes)

Discuss together:

Principals:

- Help keep students safe
- Support teachers in helping students learn
- Set expectations for positive behavior
- Solve problems and make important decisions
- Encourage a positive school culture

Ask:

- What are some ways a principal helps students during the school day?
- When have you seen the principal helping others?
- Why is it important for someone to guide the school community?

Transition:

- Principals show responsibility and leadership every day. When we express appreciation, we show respect for the effort it takes to guide a school.ork together toward common goals



Character Connection: Growing Through Appreciation (3–5 minutes)

Ask students:

- What kind of person recognizes and respects leadership?
- How does appreciation help build respect in a school?
- What kinds of messages would encourage someone who leads others?

Explain:

Showing appreciation helps us become more respectful and thoughtful. It reminds us that leadership takes effort, responsibility, and care for others.

Reflection (3–5 minutes)

Ask:

- Why is leadership important in a school community?
- How does appreciation encourage leaders to continue doing their best?
- How does recognizing leadership help build respect and responsibility?

Close:

Good leaders guide others with responsibility and care. Appreciative people recognize that effort and show respect for those who lead.

Counselor Notes

- Keep the 1950s reference brief and focused on school community and leadership.
- Emphasize respect for responsibility and positive leadership.
- Encourage thoughtful and specific messages.

Writing Activity: Appreciation Notes (12–15 minutes)

Explain:

A meaningful appreciation note shows that you recognize someone's leadership and the positive difference they make.

Students should include:

1. Say their name

Dear __,

2. Say something meaningful

What do you notice about their leadership?

- You are a strong leader.
- You are kind and supportive.
- I appreciate how you greet students.

3. Explain the impact

How do they make a difference?

- You help keep our school safe.
- You help our school run smoothly.
- You make our school a positive place to learn.

4. Express appreciation clearly

- Thank you for leading our school.
- I appreciate everything you do for students.

5. Sign your name

Encourage students:

Think about a time when the principal helped students or made the school a better place.

Comments principals would value: These are good sentence starters but maybe also encourage them to be more specific here.

- "You help keep our school safe."
- "You care about students."
- "You are a great leader."
- "Thank you for helping our school."