8 Keys of Excellence Curriculum

This Is It! Key Lesson – The Present

enroll and experience

Materials:
A big wrapped gift box with a removable lid, index cards, markers.
The book “The Present” by Spencer Johnson, MD

Think of the “best” gift you have ever received? Get a clear picture of it in your mind. How big was it? What was the gift for? A birthday? Christmas? Another celebration? What color was the gift? What was the best part of the gift? When you have a clear picture of the best gift you have ever received nod your head.

On the index card provided draw a picture or describe in a few sentences the “best” gift you have ever received.

Pass out markers and index cards. Monitor progress and ask for more details if the drawings or descriptions are vague. Every student should have a clear picture of their gift. Once everyone has finished collect markers and have the students hold on to their index cards.

Turn to the person next to you and share with them the best gift you have ever received.

After a few minutes of sharing ask students to raise their hand if they are willing to share what their gift was. Take a few shares to build excitement.

Take a moment and reflect on how it felt to receive your gift. What were the feelings you had when you were given your gift?

Take a few more shares. (Great! Incredible! Surprised! So grateful!) After taking a few shares reveal the big wrapped gift box.

Here in my hands I have a gift for you. As you can see it is a pretty nice gift. This gift is free. There is no trick or special conditions. In fact you don’t even have to do anything special to
deserve it. You get this gift and all of its benefits if you choose it. Raise your hand if you would like to have this gift. Before we open this gift I would like to share a story with you.

Excerpts from *The Present*, by Spencer Johnson, MD
*(page numbers indicated below for full story or you can read the excerpts below)*

*Read full excerpt on page 17 paragraphs 1-6.*

“One there was a boy, who listened to an old wise man, and thus began to learn about The Present.” One day the old man said, “It is called simply ‘The Present’ because, of all the gifts you might receive, you will find this present the most valuable one of all.”

“Wow!” the little boy exclaimed. “I hope someone gives me The Present someday.”

*Read full excerpt on pages 19-25.*

“What is so special about The Present?” “What could make it so much better than any other present?” Wanting answers to his questions, the crossed the street to ask the old man.

“Is the Present a magic wand that can make all my wishes come true?”

“No,” the old man answered with a laugh.

“Is the Present,” he asked, “a time machine that I could get I and go anywhere I wanted?”

“No,” the old man replied. “When you receive The Present, you no longer spend your time dreaming about being somewhere else.”

Time passed—the story continues with the boy as a teenager …

He approached the old man again and asked, “Is The Present something that will make me rich?”

“Yes, in a way it can,” the old man told him. “The present can lead you to many kinds of riches. But it’s true value is not measured in gold or money alone.”

Unfortunately, the teenager did not take the time to reflect on what he had just heard. Instead, he became more impatient. “If you really want me to be happier, why don’t you just tell me what The Present is?”
"I would like to," the old man began, "But I do not have such power. No one can find The Present for someone else. The Present is a gift you give to yourself. Only you have the power to discover what it is," the old man explained.

Raise your hand if you have ever received a gift and just by looking at the box got excited about what that gift could be? How many of you started imagining what was in this box? (Reference the big wrapped gift box) Why is it so exciting to get a present wrapped in a box?

_Elicit “You don’t know what it is!” or “The anticipation of not knowing!”_

Now it is time to open this gift! (Reference the big wrapped gift box) _Open and reveal the empty box._ This is the _PRESENT._ What was your reaction to seeing the box was empty?

_Elicit “Upset” or “I knew it!” or “Disappointed”_

_Instruct_

How many of you have ever got excited about a gift, opened it up, and were disappointed by what the gift actually was? Where does that disappointment come from?

_Elicit “Wanting it to be something and it is something else.”_

We become disappointed when our expectation is not met. When we expect a gift, a person, a situation to turn out a certain way and they don’t we become frustrated, disappointed and even angry. We say to ourselves, “This is not it!”

Where in life and school have you expected something and were disappointed when it turned out differently?

Now back to our story.

_Read full excerpt from page 39._

“Well, I found myself feeling happier and realized that I wasn’t thinking about what had happened to me in The Past, and I wasn’t feeling anxious about what might happen to me in The Future. All of a sudden, the obvious occurred to me. The Present, the gift you give yourself, is just that – the present moment. I see now that being in The Present means focusing on what is, right now.”
The Key of the Month is THIS IS IT! – Make the most of every moment
Focus your attention on the present moment. Keep a positive attitude.

This Is It! is about focusing on NOW instead of later, or next week, or next month, or next year, or yesterday, etc., and making the most of it. A positive This Is It! attitude can make everything we do and every day productive, fulfilling, and fun!

When we are fully present, without expectations, every day is a gift. Each day we get to unwrap the precious present and be grateful for what is being presented to us. The challenge is seeing even the things we don’t at times as part of our gift of learning and growing.

demonstrate

What lesson did the young man learn in this story? Why did it take so long for him to learn it? How are you like the young man? How can you be more grateful for the precious present in your life?

Give time.

At home?

Give time.

At school?

Give time.

review

Do a callback and review with whatever visuals you choose for the introduction of the Key.

The Key for this month is …

Elicit THIS IS IT!—loud and clear!

And what does This Is It! mean?

Read definition with students.

Make the most of every moment. Focus your attention on the present moment.
Keep a positive attitude.
This Is It! is about focusing on now instead of later, or next week, or next month, or next year, or yesterday, etc., and making the most of it. A positive This Is It! attitude can make everything we do and every day productive, fulfilling, and fun!

Life is full of distractions and opportunities to do something else, something other than what we’re doing now. Many of us spend a lot of time thinking about those other things. Instead of making what we’re doing now “it” our focus is often elsewhere—on things we wanted to do, could have done, should have done, or want to do “sometime.” Whenever our thoughts are occupied with something other than what we’re doing, we miss what’s going on around us in the moment … while we’re waiting for the next moment to arrive the present moment slips away.

When we live in the NOW we have power! With a This Is It! attitude we make the present “it” and find joyful moments that we might otherwise have missed!

*Read affirmation with students.*

I focus on what’s happening now.

*Review the body motion.*

Hand under chin, palm down (chin up for good attitude)

celebrate

Now let’s high-five all around the classroom to celebrate learning about one of the 8 Keys of Excellence—THIS IS IT! *(Optional: Have the students repeat the affirmation as they high-five their classmates.)*

*Or create your own class celebration.*