



# November: Gratitude

# Gratitude

Gratitude is the appreciation for the benefits we receive from others, and the desire to reciprocate. The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.



# Wais' Wisdom: Gratitude

- As you know I love Greater Good Science Center, I think this a particularly good [posting](#) for teachers. This [posting](#) is also interesting.
- I think doing this exercise in the classroom is great for this time of year - Fold pieces of construction paper in half, and make them into humongous place cards, decorate the front, have each child write everyone's name. Have each student write on the inside of the place cards, noting what they are thankful for about each person named on the front of the card.
- And here are some general discussion questions:
  1. What's the nicest thing that anyone has done for you this year? Why?
  2. What's the nicest thing that you've seen someone else-friend, family member, teacher, coach - do for another person? Why?
  3. If you had one superpower that you could use to make a difference in the world, what would it be? Why?
  4. What are you most grateful for that doesn't cost money? Why?

# Benefits of Gratitude

By Dr. Caelan Soma, Director of The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children

Gratitude, the practice of being thankful, has significant benefits for children. Gratitude can:

- Boost overall well-being
- Encourage better grades
- Improve pro-social behavior
- Help promote good sleep
- Protect from negative emotions associated with loss or stress
- Enhance group/team morale

# Practicing Gratitude

Practicing gratitude can be as simple as asking youth, "What are you thankful for today?" However, for many youth who have experienced trauma, thinking about even one thing to be thankful for when everything seems terrible is hardly simple. Many of us who ask that question will hear responses like, "I don't know" or "nothing."

Finding the words to describe anything – good or bad – is difficult following trauma. As caring adults, we can help facilitate the practice of gratitude. The **5 Senses Practice** below can help children practice being thankful in a direct, but easy way.

# Practicing Gratitude

## 5 Senses Practice

- **What do you see, hear, taste, touch or smell that you enjoy?**
- **Have you experienced any of those senses recently?**
- **If you have, be thankful. If you haven't, how can you experience one of those senses soon?**
- **When you experience anything that looks, sounds, tastes, feels or smells good, stop and enjoy the moment and be thankful!**

# Gratitude Activities

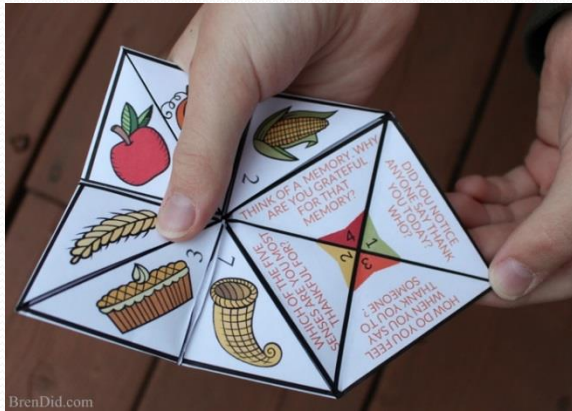
- Say thank you on a regular basis.
- Keep a journal. Spend a few minutes each day reflecting and writing about the good things in your life. Try to notice things you would normally take for granted.
- Consider all the different areas of your life. List the things you are grateful for in that area. For example with work, you are grateful you only have a 20 minute commute to work.
- Write a letter of gratitude to someone who has made a positive impact on your life. If you can, send it to them. Even better, read it to them.
- Each day write down three good things about your life.
- Step back and appreciate what you have. Such regular reflection can help prevent you taking your life for granted.
- Recall a bad event and how you got through it.

# Gratitude Activities

- Look for other people's good deeds and know that the world is better for that act. Express your gratitude - whether privately or publicly.
- Reflect on how your life would be if you didn't have the people in it that you do have. Recognize how much poorer your life would be.
- Learn prayers of gratitude.
- Use visual reminders. Awareness is a precondition for gratitude: we must have noticed whatever we are to be thankful for. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves and to become aware.
- Be aware of the language you use. Grateful people have a particular linguistic style. They tend to use the language of gift, givers, blessings, blessed, fortune, fortunate, abundance. They traffic in the discourse of thankfulness.
- Enlist a gratitude partner, a spouse or friend, with whom you can share your gratitude thoughts on a daily basis

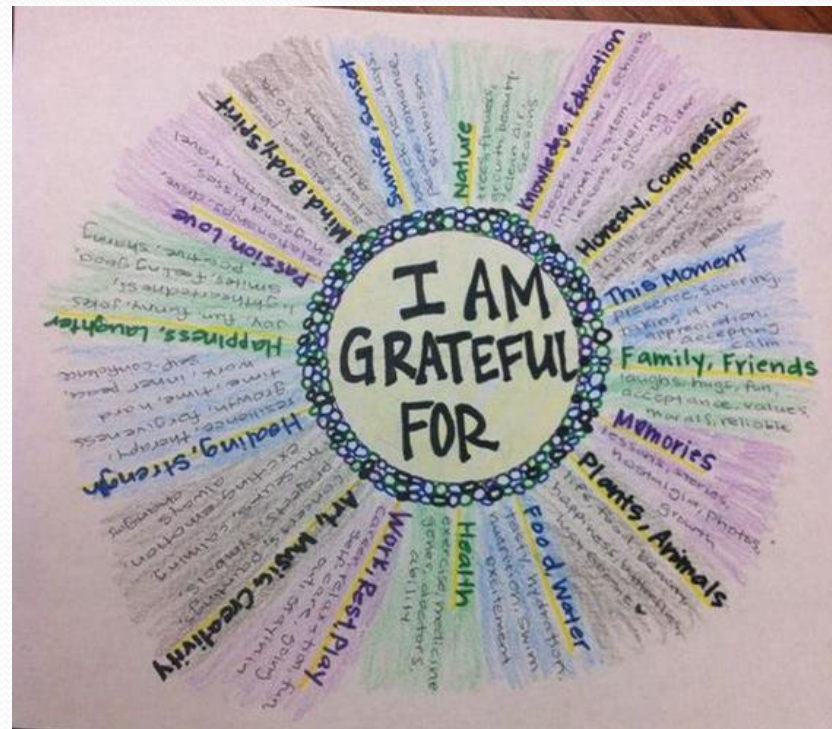


# Gratitude Activities



[Gratitude Cootie-Catcher](https://brendid.com/gratitude-activity-for-kids-thanksgiving-cootie-catcher/)

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# HOW Gratitude AFFECTS THE HUMAN BODY

Cultivating an attitude of gratitude can do more than make you a happier person. It can make you healthier, too. Studies point to a wide variety of medical benefits to maintaining a positive outlook on life.

## Psychological Benefits



## Overall Benefits



### CALM DOWN

Cultivating gratitude and other positive emotions can reduce stress hormones like cortisol by as much as 23%.<sup>1</sup>

A study of 400 people, 40% of whom had sleep disorders, shows making nightly lists of things one is grateful for can also improve the duration and quality of sleep.<sup>2</sup>



### HEALTHIER HEART

Recalling feelings of appreciation<sup>3</sup> and listing things to be grateful for<sup>4</sup> can protect the heart by decreasing blood pressure and lowering heart rate variability.



### BREATHE EASIER

In addition to making other healthy choices, grateful individuals avoid smoking tobacco, thus avoiding a hard-to-kick habit that harms lung function and lowers life expectancy.<sup>5</sup>



### SLIM DOWN

In a study involving 192 undergraduate students, grateful participants were shown to spend an average of 36% more time exercising per week and to take better care of health overall.<sup>7</sup>



### STRONGER IMMUNITY

Gratitude is linked with optimism, which can improve the body's immune response in certain situations, resulting in an increase in white blood cells needed to fight disease.<sup>6</sup>



# Wisdom for Your Walls

“HE WHO IS NOT  
CONTENTED WITH  
what he has,  
WOULD NOT BE  
CONTENTED WITH  
WHAT HE WOULD  
like to have.”

*-Socrates*

IF YOU  
WANT TO  
KNOW HOW  
RICH YOU ARE,  
FIND OUT HOW  
MANY THINGS  
YOU HAVE  
THAT MONEY  
CANNOT BUY.

KUSHANDWIZDOM

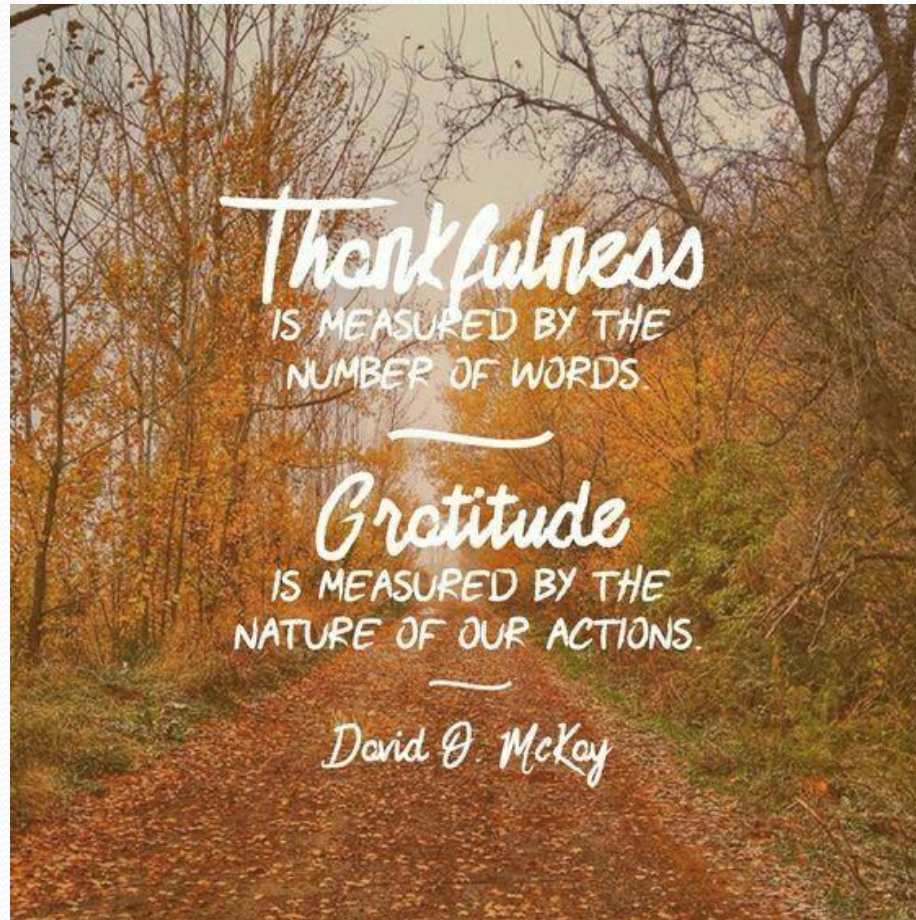
# Wisdom for Your Walls

gratitude  
TURNS WHAT WE  
HAVE  
INTO  
ENOUGH.

"Be thankful for what you have. Your life, no matter how bad you think it is, is someone else's fairytale."

Wale Ayeni

# Wisdom for Your Walls



# Gratitude Texts

Gratitude Soup

by Olivia Rosewood

The Thankful Book

by Todd Parr

The Blue Daisy: A Lesson in Gratitude

by Stacie Theis

Secret of Saying Thanks

by Douglas Wood

Thanksgiving is for Giving thanks

by Margaret Sutherland

The Blessings Jar: A Story about Being Thankful

by Colleen Coble

I'm Thankful For...

By Uncle Amon

Contented

by Chaim Gold

Boxes For Kate

by Candace Fleming

Beatrice's Goat

by Hillary Rodham Clinton

The Talking Eggs

by Robert San Souci

An Orange for Frankie

by Patricia Polacco

The Other Side

By A. M. Marcus

An Awesome Book of Thanks

by Dallas Clayton

The Thankful Book

by Todd Parr

Bear Says Thanks

by Karma Wilson

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble

by William Steig

There's a Flower at the Tip of My Nose Smelling Me

by Alice Walker

Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?

by Dr. Seuss

The Giving Tree

by Shel Silverstein

The Pilgrim's First Thanksgiving

by Ann McGovern

Thanks a Million

by Nikki Grimes

Andy and the Lion

by James Henry Daugherty

Giving Thanks

by Chief Jake Swamp