

# Gratitude (Grades 3-5)

## For PurposeFull Families



### EXPLANATION:

This month we're talking about Gratitude! The dictionary defines it as: "the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness." The definition we are using in class is:

**Gratitude: choosing to notice and appreciate things in our life, things in others, and things in the world.**

Gratitude has been shown to be one of the number one ways to reduce anxiety, increase happiness, and improve relationships. Why? Because it is a matter of where we put our attention! Did you know we can only have one thought at once? Scarlett Lewis from the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement says it like this: We can't have a grateful thought and an angry thought at the same time! So, over the course of the month, we will consistently practice putting our attention and our focus on Gratitude. We will think about how to be grateful even for challenges. We will talk about incredible artists and writers and thinkers who know the power of Gratitude in the world. We will encourage Gratitude towards our classmates, ourselves, and (of course) our family!

### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- William Arthur Ward once said, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it." Why do you agree or disagree with his thoughts on Gratitude? What happens if you wrap a present and never give it?
- Sometimes we have days where we don't feel very grateful. What strategies can you use on those days? Is there anything you can do to boost your mood to help you feel more Gratitude?
- Discuss your family history with your child. What are some triumphs in your family that you are grateful for? Who are the people that you're grateful for? The places? Share those joyous details with your family. If you have pictures or other artifacts to share, that would be a great addition to the conversation!

### QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- We've heard it said that Gratitude is many different things: a gift, an art, a science, an attitude. What does Gratitude seem like to you?
- Where do you think you could give more effort in expressing your Gratitude in your own life? Make a list together of ways you can improve and who you would like to show more appreciation to in your life!
- How do you currently express Gratitude? With your words, actions, or thoughts? How does it feel to give Gratitude? How do others respond to your Gratitude?

### APPLICATION:

#### Books:

- [\*Thanks A Million\*](#) by Nikki Grimes
- [\*The Family Under the Bridge\*](#) by Natalie Savage Carlson
- [\*The Secret Of Saying Thanks\*](#) by Douglas Wood
- [\*How Tia Lola Saved the Summer\*](#) by Julia Alvarez
- [\*Sam and Charlie \(and Sam too\) At Camp!\*](#) By Leslie Kimmelman
- [\*Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message\*](#) by Chief Jake Swamp

### FOR YOUR READING:

- [\*The Power Of Gratitude In Parenting\*](#) by Carla Naumburg
- [\*Grateful Parenting\*](#) by Anne Dunlea

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### ACTIVITY:

In Douglas Wood's book "The Secret of Saying Thanks," it reads: "We don't give thanks because we're happy; we are happy because we give thanks." As a family, create a Get Happy Chart. Write out a few ideas to show appreciation or give thanks on this page and, when your happiness starts to slip away, intentionally make Gratitude a verb. Whenever you do one of these things, put a tally mark next to it! Here are some ideas for the Get Happy Chart:

- Write a thank-you note.
- Send a kind, affirming text.
- Meditate on an inspirational quote.
- Place a Day-Maker phone call.
- Take a flower to a friend or family member.
- Draw a picture for someone.
- Invite someone over to play.
- Bake something for someone.
- Hold the door open for someone.
- Let someone go before you in line.
- Smile and wave at someone.
- Give someone a huge hug.

### PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

#### Our Thankful Things

What are the everyday things you're grateful for that you might tend to take for granted like running water, electricity, or a washer and dryer? List those things at the dinner table to see how many thankful things your family actually has. See who can come up with the most "basic" thing, no matter how silly, and get creative with why we appreciate those very small items in our life! Over the course of the meal, brainstorm ways that you might more intentionally show Gratitude for those gifts.

**Toughness:** 2

**Time:** 2

**Type:** Group

#### Thankful For YOU

Carve out time this week to schedule a face-to-face meeting time with each of your family members. Pick a spot around the house or yard that's special to you and meet there to tell one another all of the specific reasons that they are special and why you are grateful for them. Nothing is too big or too small for this Gratitude challenge.

**Toughness:** 3

**Time:** 2

**Type:** Partner

#### Gratitude Dinner

Brainstorm some of your favorite foods as a family. Take some time to cook them up together, invite some of the people you are grateful for over, and then share a meal together.

For each part of the meal, exercise Gratitude. At the beginning, share one thing you are thankful for starting this year. In the middle, share one thing you appreciate about being "in the middle of" in your life. At the end, share one thing you are grateful for about it coming to an end or something that, even though it is sad that it is now over, you look back on it with fondness.

**Toughness:** 3

**Time:** 3

**Type:** Group

#### Gratitude Family Journal

Grab a plain notebook and start a family Gratitude Journal. Write the date at the top of the page and ask each family to name one thing they are thankful for today. Commit to an amount of journal entries you want to create as a family each week - maybe you use it once a week over breakfast before school on Monday or maybe you try it nightly during bedtime.

At the end of each month, have fun looking back at previous journal entries! See if you can remember what you were grateful for exactly a week ago. A month ago? A year ago?

**Toughness:** 2

**Time:** 1

**Type:** Group