

## Gratitude Journal

- Journal
- Coloring Pencils
- Stickers



### Instructions:

1. Decorate your family gratitude journal together.
2. As a family, think about what and who you are grateful for.
3. Write and draw pictures together of the people and things you came up with in your gratitude journal.
4. Make it an everyday practice to think of something to be grateful for.

### Take Home Activity

## Grateful Heart Activity

### Materials:

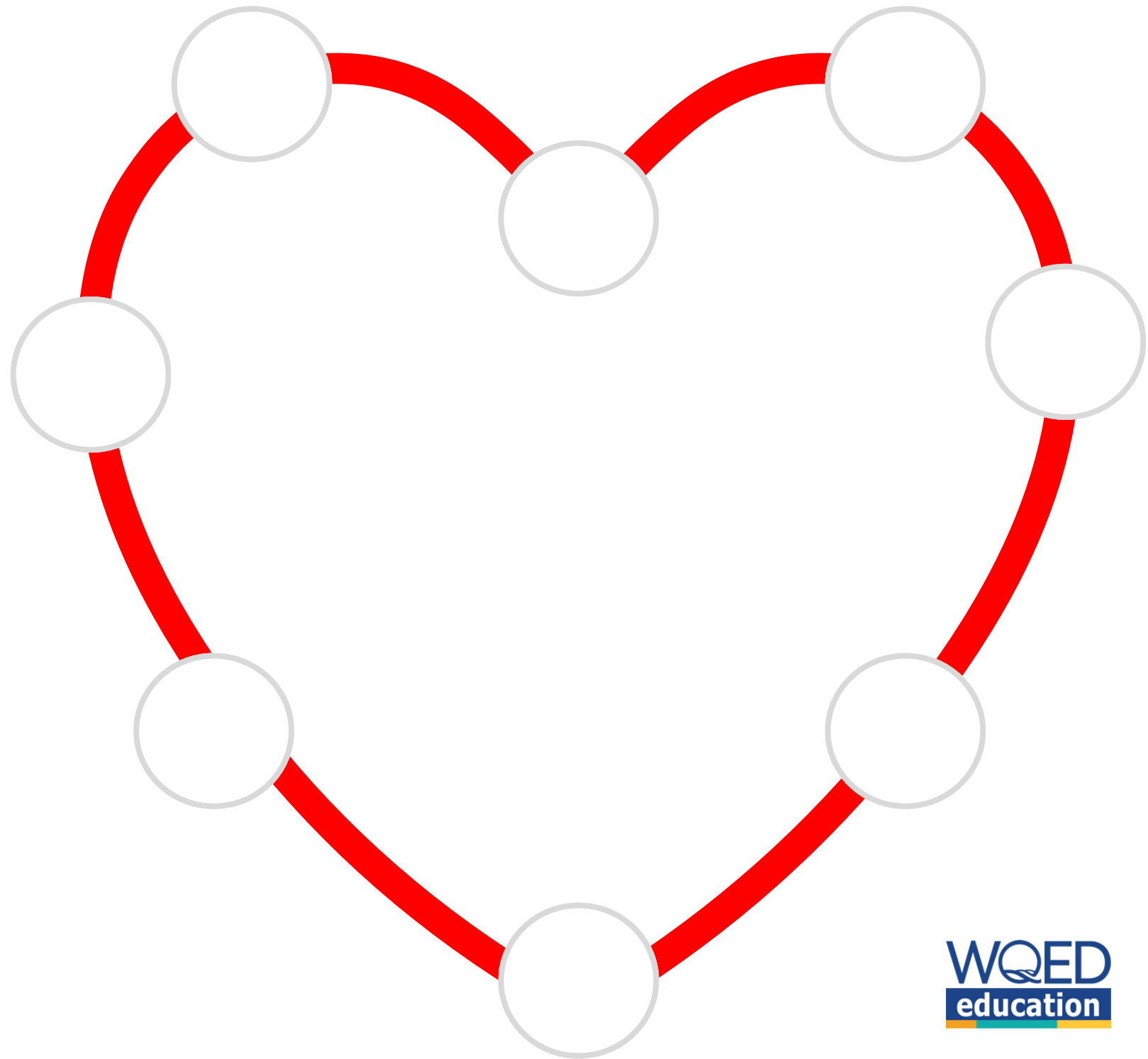
- Grateful Heart Printable
- Inkpad

### Instructions:

1. Collect thumbprints of people who you're grateful for on each of the circles to fill your grateful heart. For things you can't get thumbprints for i.e. pets, house, toys, etc. draw a picture in the circle instead.

# Grateful Heart Activity

**Collect thumbprints of people who you're grateful for on each of the circles to fill your grateful heart. For things you can't get thumbprints for i.e. pets, house, toys, etc. draw a picture in the circle.**





# Thankful Time Notes

These notes are a great way to show thanks and appreciation any day of the year. Let your child color them in and give them out to the special people in their life.



**You're Beary Special To Me.**



**Me Thankful for Cookies...and You!**



**You're Magical!**



**Thank You!**

Find more games and activities at [pbskidsforparents.org](http://pbskidsforparents.org)

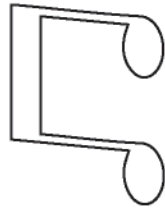




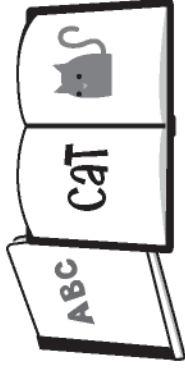
# My Favorite Things

## Instructions:

Think about your favorite things and what you are grateful for. Invite someone to join you. Color the pictures and then cut along the lines. Fold each strip of paper and place them in a jar or cup. Take turns choosing one piece and sharing your favorite things that you are grateful for.



**Sing ONE of your favorite songs.**



**Read TWO books you enjoy the most.**



**Name THREE things that make you laugh.**



**Name FOUR people you are thankful for.**



**Name your FIVE favorite healthy foods.**



## For Greater Happiness, Teach Gratitude

By Katie Hurley, LCSW

Nov 2, 2015

Four years ago, I asked my daughter, who was four years old at the time, to help me create a giant tree on our family room wall. We used construction paper, tape, and stickers to get the job done and we talked about the importance of being thankful while we worked. With the trunk and limbs complete, we set to work on cutting leaves in a rainbow of colors.

Then we talked about gratitude.

This very first attempt at a thankful tree was meant to last from November to January. We added new leaves with words of gratitude scrawled across them almost every day during those months. By January, the tree was completely full. I took some photos before I began to dismantle the tree for the season so that we could revisit it throughout the year.

At the very moment that I reached for the leaf at the very top of the tree, a small voice stopped me in my tracks. It was my son, just three years old at the time. "Mommy, can we be thankful ALL year?" Needless to say, the tree still stands today. The leaves change shape and the words are more legible, but the tree still brings us together in gratitude throughout the year.

In the world of positive psychology, gratitude is strongly linked with happiness. When people practice acts of gratitude, they feel happy. In one study led by Dr. Robert A. Emmons and Dr. Michael E. McCullough, subjects who wrote down things they were grateful for that happened during the week for ten weeks were more optimistic and felt better about their lives than the subjects who wrote about daily irritations. They also exercised more and had fewer visits to a physician.

Gratitude fosters happiness, which enables people to cope with stress and setbacks. People who are grateful are likely to be more hopeful, energetic, empathic and helpful to others. They are also less likely to be depressed, anxious or envious of others. In short, practicing gratitude and holding on to positive emotion leads to greater overall happiness.

The question for parents is, how do we fit that into our already packed schedules? The truth is that if we want to raise happy kids, we have to learn to slow down and focus on what really matters in this world. Practicing gratitude is a great way to begin. Try a few of these strategies to help your family engage in meaningful discussions about gratitude.

## **Create a thankful tree.**

Whether you craft a life size tree for your wall or a smaller tree to display on your kitchen counter, creating and adding to a thankful tree is a great way to get the whole family involved. Try to add a few leaves each week and take turns reading them out loud. Encourage you kids to visit the tree for inspiration when they're feeling low, and be sure to do the same when you're having a hard day.

## **Start a gratitude jar.**

Perhaps a tree sounds like a lot of work or you simply don't have the space for it. A gratitude jar is an excellent alternative and can be used throughout the year. It's as simple as it sounds. You need a large clear jar, a stack of sticky notes and a pen. Have each family member write (or draw) something that they are grateful for a few times a week. It can be small things, like a shiny red apple, or big things, like time spent with a grandparent. At the end of the week, read the gratitude slips together as a family and soak up the positive emotions.

## **Write a letter of gratitude.**

In this fast-paced high-tech world, the handwritten note is not as widely used as it once was. That's a shame, really, because both writing and receiving notes of gratitude spikes happiness on both ends. Sit down as a family once a month and take the time to write notes to those you love and care about. Kids can write to friends or family far away or even in their own neighborhood. Pre-writers can draw pictures to communicate their gratitude.

## **Consider handmade gifts.**

Kids love to express their feelings for others through handmade gifts, like pictures and necklaces made from giant beads. Tap into this pint-sized expression of gratitude by baking cookies or muffins

or cutting some flowers from your yard and arranging them in a jar for a neighbor or friend.

Once families get into the gratitude habit, it becomes easier to make these family rituals part of the daily routine. Families are likely to experience greater happiness and less overall stress as a result. That's something that will leave you feeling grateful.

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*Katie Hurley, LCSW, is a child and adolescent psychotherapist, parenting expert, and writer. She is the founder of "Girls Can!" empowerment groups for girls between ages 5-11. Hurley is the author of No More Mean Girls and The Happy Kid Handbook, and her work can be found in The Washington Post, Psychology Today, and US News and World Report.*

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<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/for-greater-happiness-teach-gratitude>





## Raising Grateful Kids: Why Giving Thanks Is Good for the Soul

By Deborah Farmer Kris

Aug 22, 2016

Gratitude is good for you — and for your kids.

Psychologist Martin Seligman, who has conducted studies on benefits of expressing thanks, writes, “Gratitude can make your life happier and more satisfying. When we feel gratitude, we benefit from the pleasant memory of a positive event in our life. Also, when we express our gratitude to others, we strengthen our relationship with them.”

In fact, according to research, gratitude helps people “feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.”

For preschoolers, gratitude means learning how and when to say “thank you” to others. Parents can help them identify people, places, rituals, objects and events that make them feel thankful — such as playing with favorite toy, swinging at the playground, or reading with Grandma. Draw attention to gratitude by sharing good memories together, the types of “remember when” moments that bring a smile to everyone’s face.



As children get older, gratitude can expand to include recognizing how people contribute to the community in large and small ways. Help them look for “helpers” in their school and in their community — including those whose quiet, hard work might be overlooked — and find ways to express gratitude, from verbal “thank you’s” to writing cards expressing gratitude. Honoring unsung heroes can inspire children to find their own ways to help those around them.

My husband and I have two small children. We remind them to say “thank you” when people help them, and we try to model gratitude ourselves. But the research surrounding this topic inspired us to look for a more formal way to bring gratitude to the forefront of our family life. So we started a new ritual: The Thankful Jar.

The materials are bare-bones: a jar and a bag of glass beads I picked up at a craft store. Each night, we take turns sharing something that we are thankful for, asking ourselves, “What made you smile today? What went well? Who helped you?” The kids took to it instantly. Each night at dinnertime, the five-year-old enthusiastically brings the jar and bag to the table and announces who gets to go first.

The two-year-old is often grateful for the items he sees on his dinner plate: (“I thankful for avocado and chicken nuggets and apples.”) His older sister’s expressions have become increasingly complex over time. She talks about people who helped her at school, an activity she enjoyed, and simple moments of pleasure such as dancing with her brother or picking flowers. It’s been a wonderful window into what brings her joy — particularly as she regularly expresses gratitude for snuggling with her family. As for the parents? Well, on days when work has been stressful or car repairs have been costly, this simple exercise has been good for us, too, as we pause remind ourselves of the goodness that fills our lives.

## **Tips for Teaching Gratitude**

### **1 Model Gratitude:**

Children imitate adult behavior. In your daily interactions, model saying “thank you” to store clerks, teachers, librarians and family members. Encourage your child to follow suit. When you write a thank you note to someone they know, let them add a picture or dictate a few words. As they get older, encourage them to write their own thank you cards or make thank you gifts for people who have touched their lives, such as teachers, coaches or community helpers.

### **2 Share “Three Good Things” Each Day:**

As a family, make it a ritual to share three good things that happened that day. This is a perfect way to connect at dinnertime or bedtime. Simply ask children a question such as, “What made you happy today?” “What went well?” Or “What are you thankful for?” And don’t forget to share your own reflections, modeling for your kids a daily attitude of gratitude for the small things in life.

### 3 Use Books and Media to Talk about Gratitude:

Children are inspired and motivated by the examples of others — both people they know and characters they read about and watch. Here are a few books and videos that may prompt some good conversation between you and your child:

- Bear Says Thanks, by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman
- The Thankful Book, by Todd Parr
- Good People Everywhere, by Lynea Gillan and Kristina Swarner
- Daniel Tiger’s “Thank You Grandpere Tiger!/ Neighborhood Thank You Day” (episode 114) which includes this “Thank You Song.”

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*Deborah Farmer Kris is an education journalist, parent educator and the author of the “All the Time” picture book series. Her bylines include PBS KIDS, NPR’s Mindshift, The Washington Post, the Boston Globe Magazine, and Oprah Daily. She also spent 20+ years as a K-12 teacher and administrator. You can also find her at [www.parenthood365.org](http://www.parenthood365.org)*

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<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/raising-grateful-kids-why-giving-thanks-is-good-for-the-soul>