



Gratitude Journal



Growing Gratitude & Generosity

Introduction

The Collaborative for Educational Services' Growing Gratitude and Generosity Program (G3 for short) is funded by the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC) in Berkeley, California. The overall goal of the GGSC project is "to equip community-based organizations with research-based knowledge and resources that can help parents guide their children toward choices that place the long-term good of their communities ahead of their immediate self-interest." Among the requirements for grant funding were that the proposed program serve children between the ages of 4 and 14 and be based on one or more of the following values: forgiveness, generosity, gratitude, honesty, humility, love, purpose, reliability. We chose to focus on generosity and gratitude because of the way they relate to and influence one another and because even young children can understand them. GGSC defines generosity and gratitude as follows:

GENEROSITY: Not simply giving but giving more than is expected in a situation, incurring a cost to promote someone else's welfare.

GRATITUDE: Acknowledging the gifts and benefits we've received and recognizing that the sources of this goodness come from outside of ourselves. That means recognizing how other people, or even higher powers, have given us gifts to help us achieve the good things in our lives, and feeling thankful to them for those gifts.

Through your family's participation in the G3 Program, you will learn about several research studies that conclude that practicing gratitude and generosity can lead to greater happiness and well-being, for both adults and children. We have created this gratitude journal for your family's use based on the 2003 study by Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough who found that people who wrote down a few things they were grateful for, and why, on a regular basis - daily, whenever possible - experienced a greater sense of well-being compared to those who wrote about negative or neutral events. This pioneering study has since been replicated many times, and gratitude and generosity have been associated with specific positive outcomes for children, including better physical and mental health, academic strengths, altruism, and greater satisfaction with relationships and their lives in general.

Keeping Individual Journals

We realize that any daily practice will be very challenging for busy families, so if family members choose to write in their journals individually, we encourage writing in the journal as often as possible, without getting discouraged or giving up when days are missed. Family members will benefit from any amount of noticing and recording the large and small gifts that make them grateful. It may help to set aside a few minutes at a regular time each day to write, such as before or after dinner or homework, or just before bed. Younger children may want to keep their own journal to draw pictures that illustrate their gratitude and/or dictate their responses to an adult or older child who writes their words down. Or children may want to add drawings or photos to the family journal, another way to use the journal, described below. Whatever option your family chooses, we encourage you to try to keep it up for at least one month as regularly as you can manage. If you want to continue after you run out of pages, you may use a blank journal or download another copy of the journal from <http://collaborative.org/g-3>.

Using the Journal as a Family Activity

1

Choose a time each day - or as often as is practical for your family - when all participating family members are together, such as before or after a meal, or incorporated into the bedtime ritual.

2

Have a volunteer read some of the categories of things to be grateful for from the graphic on the next page.

3

After a few minutes of silent thought, go around in a circle asking each adult and child to take a turn mentioning one thing they were particularly grateful for that day, and why. [Note: younger children may relate better to using the word, “thankful” until they get used to “grateful.”] The scribe will write down the date, listing each person’s name and what they reported, leaving space between entries for later rounds.

4

Try to go around the family circle at least 3 times. It’s always OK to pass, but check after each round in case someone who passed has thought of something new to share.

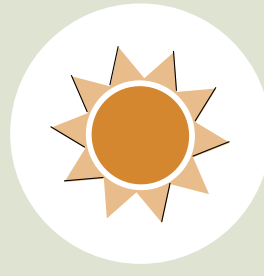
5

After everyone has shared, discuss any acts of generosity by others that were mentioned. For example, if a child was grateful to a friend because they shared a toy with them, be explicit in labeling the friend’s generosity. You might want to use a highlighter to highlight all the acts of generosity that your family members have experienced each day. If you want to extend the conversation, you could encourage family members to share any ways in which they were generous or helpful to others that day.

If family members are keeping individual journals, you might want to schedule a time each week when anyone who chooses to, shares from their journal entries for the week. Sharing should be completely voluntary, with no pressure. After everyone has shared, there would be an opportunity to have the family conversations about generosity that are described above.



**SOMETHING YOU
LEARNED**

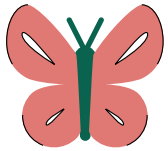


**SOMETHING
BEAUTIFUL
OR FOUND IN
NATURE**

**DELICIOUS
FOOD**

**What are you
grateful for?**

**A
FUN THING
YOU DID**



**A SPECIAL
MEMORY**

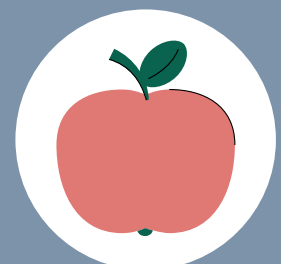


**SOMETHING
HARD TO DO
THAT YOU TRIED
YOUR BEST AT**

**A PERSON WHO
HELPED YOU OR
WAS KIND**



**A FAMILY
MEMBER OR
FRIEND**



**A GOOD
THOUGHT OR
FEELING**



**SOMETHING
YOU'RE GOOD
AT**

**SOMETHING
LUCKY THAT
HAPPENED TO
YOU**



A COMPLIMENT



Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?

Date: __/__/__

What are 3 things you are grateful for today and why?



collaborative.org /g-3

Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) • Early Childhood Department
Corky Klimczak: 413.586.4900 x5565 | cklimczak@collaborative.org



www.facebook.com/collaborative.earlychildhood

Everyone is a learner