

Children's Gratitude Curriculum

Engage with gratitude across several dimensions of our lives: for yourself, for community, for our human family, and for Earth. Join together through various kinds of activities to notice how gratitude touches our lives. Use these as the basis for First Day School programs, or find activities you can do with your children.

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Gratitude for Yourself - Children

This guide contains many resources. We recognize that every community's needs are different, so feel free to pick and choose what works best for you.

Preparation

Gather a book (see options below) and other materials suited to the activities you choose, like a physical puzzle or craft materials. Explore the Other Resources (below) for more opportunities.

Read guidance for [Wondering with Children](#).

Gathering (Building the community/circle)

Choose a question related to the topic like below, or a song, or do a check-in (pluses and minutes, roses and thorns) to help welcome everyone into the space.

- I love that I can...
- I love that I am...

For a more hands-on gathering, have a jar or other container and a bunch of pom pom balls that can fill up the jar. Ask the kids to say something they like about themselves and to place a pom pom ball in the jar for each thing they say. You might start by going around the circle and each person says one thing and puts one pom pom ball in, and then all everyone to do this all at once to see how fast you all can fill the jar, saying nice things about yourselves as you put each pom pom ball in the jar.

For older children, they can write something they like about themselves on sticky notes which can be put on a poster on the wall so everyone can see.

Introduction

When you look in a mirror, what do you see? Who do you see? Do you just see a set of eyes staring back at yourself with skin and hair? Do we see stories and memories? How can we look into the mirror and recognize Spirit?

When we are grateful, we are cleaning our mirrors, seeing Spirit more clearly. As part of their training with Right Sharing of World Resources, women in the women's groups in Guatemala clean their own mirrors through *fortalecimiento personal* when they learn to love themselves more. Then they can better see themselves and the

gifts they have to share. When gifts are noticed, recognized, and celebrated, the dust is wiped away and our mirrors glow.

Through our time together we'll be working on cleaning our mirrors and noticing what shows up.

Read a book (suggestions below)

[You Are Part of the Wonder by Ruth Doyle, illustrated by Britta Teckentrup \(read aloud\)](#)

[I Am Me: A Book of Authenticity by Susan Verde \(read aloud\)](#)

[I Like Me! by Nancy Carlson \(read aloud\)](#)

[I Am Enough by Grace Byers, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo \(read aloud\)](#)

[I Am God's Dream by Matthew Paul Turner, illustrated by Estrella Bascuñan \(read aloud\)](#)

Possible hands-on activities that can be done during reading

Drawing - If you want to suggest possible themes, it might be to draw yourself as happy as possible, so you might have a big smile on your face and being doing something that you really love

Coloring pages

Play-Doh

Pipe cleaners

Wondering Questions for during and after the reading

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important for you today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

I wonder...

Reflection

Choose a question to respond to that's connected to the theme:

What's one thing you've learned about yourself?

What is one of your gifts you want to use more often?

Other Resources / Extending the Lesson

Scripture Verses, Quotes, and Media

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:39

[Faith & Play Stories - “Gifts”](#)

[I am Kind](#) (song)

[From my Head to my Toes](#) (song)

Games and Activities

Gratitude Hopscotch - Instead of using numbers, write out or draw the things children might be grateful for when you make your hopscotch layout. For instance, you might write “Play time,” “Delicious breakfast,” or “Learning.” Have the kids hop onto the squares they are most grateful for.

Concrete Poems - These are poems where the words are arranged in a shape that reflects the topic of the poem. Write a poem about what you like about yourself, arranging the words in the shape of your body. The words can fill all of the space, or form an outline.

Big Wind Blows - Gather the group in a circle, seated in chairs. Stand in the middle of the circle as you give directions, and remove your chair from the circle. Explain that as the person without a chair, you are the “Big Wind.” Explain the directions: The Big Wind calls out, “The big wind blows for everyone who is grateful for...,” and finishes the sentence by naming something they are grateful for. For example, the Big Wind could say, “The big wind blows for everyone who is grateful for trees to climb on.” Everyone who shares that gratitude must move to a new seat. No one can move to the seat to either side of their current seat. The Big Wind also tries to get a seat. Whoever is left standing becomes the next Big Wind.

Gratitude for Community - Children

This guide contains many resources. We recognize that each community's needs are different, so feel free to pick and choose what works best for you.

Preparation

Gather a book (see options below) and other materials suited to the activities you choose, like a physical puzzle or craft materials. Explore the Other Resources (below) for more opportunities.

Read guidance for [Wondering with Children](#).

Gathering (Building the community/circle)

Choose a question related to the topic like below, or a song, or do a check-in (pluses and minutes, roses and thorns) to help welcome everyone into the space.

- What is a community that is important to you, and what is one thing you appreciate about it?
- What is one of your favorite things to do with your friends?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Share a time that someone said “thank you” to you

For a more hands-on gathering, prepare the materials for [a woven mat](#) (the paper with scissor cuts made through it, and strips of paper to weave into it). Ask children to weave in a strip of paper to the mat as they respond to the chosen question. As each child responds, they can watch the paper mat grow. You can observe how all of their responses “stay together” in that community.

Introduction

A community is a lot like a tapestry, or something woven together out of thread or wool. Many individual people thread a community together. The different colors and patterns show the different kinds of people and their gifts that are in a community. And coming together they make something beautiful.

[Tapestry weaving](#) has a long history in Guatemala, where Right Sharing of World Resource works with women's groups. The tapestries present stories from the past and hopes for the future. This shows what is important to a community. Tapestries as clothing help protect our bodies, like our community supports us and keeps us safe.

Read a book (suggestions below)

[The Invisible Web by Patrice Karst](#) ([read aloud](#))

[I Am We: A Book of Community by Susan Verde](#) ([read aloud](#))

[You Hold Me Up by Monique Gray Smith, Illustrated by Danielle Daniel](#) ([read aloud](#))

[The Sharing Book by Dianne White](#) ([read aloud](#))

[We Are Together by Britta Teckentrup](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Abuela's Weave by Omar S. Castañeda](#) ([read aloud](#))

Possible hands-on activities that can be done during reading

Drawing - If you want to suggest possible themes, it might be to draw your community however you envision it, or to draw the meeting house and the community of Friends

Coloring pages - You might use [some of these](#) on tapestries from around the world

Play-Doh

[Potholder making](#)

Pipe cleaners

Wondering Questions for during and after the reading

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important for you today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

I wonder...

Reflection

Choose a question to respond to that's connected to the theme:

If you could change something about our community, what would it be?

What is something you'd like to do with others in your community?

Other Resources / Extending the Lesson

Scripture Verses, Quotes, and Media

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:20

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Galatians 6:2

[The Invisible Web Activity Kit](#)

[Magic Penny](#) (song)

[The More We Get Together](#) (song)

[We are a Patchwork Quilt](#) (song)

Games and Activities

Yarn Toss - Toss yarn and have each person hold onto string. As you toss it to someone (so that everyone gets it) say some way you're connected to the person you're tossing to, or something about them that you like. If the participants don't know each other well enough to do this, they can instead say someone in their community that they appreciate and why. After everyone has tossed the yarn, you can point to the complex patterns that connect each of us together as a community.

Just Keep it Up - Gather in a circle and hold hands. Throw one or more balloons into the air, trying to keep them up using different body parts, not trying to re-use the same body part. This will prompt everyone to be involved, and to support one another to keep the balloon in the air as long as possible. How long can your group keep it from touching the ground?

Letter Writing - Who could you write a letter to to strengthen your community? Have kids write, or speak out, who they would write to and what they would say to them. Written letters could be sent to the person, or they can remain private.

Discussion question - If you had \$100 and you had to give it away, who in your community would find it most helpful and why?

Create a community coat of arms using objects, colors, symbols, and mottos to describe a community that is important to you.

[Paper Weaving](#) (different examples of the woven mats mentioned above)

Gratitude for our Human Family - Children

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Preparation

Gather a book (see options below) and other materials suited to the activities you choose, like a physical puzzle or craft materials. Explore the Other Resources (below) for more opportunities.

Read guidance for [Wondering with Children](#).

Gathering (Building the community/circle)

Choose a question related to the topic like below, or a song, or do a check-in (pluses and minutes, roses and thorns) to help welcome everyone into the space.

- Who is someone you are grateful for that you've never met in person?
- What is something you're glad that someone in your family did before you were born?

For a more hands-on gathering, as children respond to the gathering question, have them "become" a puzzle piece on the floor, making their bodies into the shape they want their puzzle piece to be. You can take a picture of this human puzzle to share afterwards.

Introduction

Many people make up our human family. Some we interact with directly and many more indirectly. Like a puzzle (you can show one as an example), there are many pieces, some close and some far from each other. But they are all connected. Even that piece you'd set aside not knowing where it goes has its place, and fits well there.

We only have a limited view of the whole from our own perspective. To see our human family clearly, we need to work to see from other perspectives too. Right Sharing of World Resources practices this by working with people in different countries. In a puzzle, every piece matters for completing the whole picture. How is life better when we remember that we are connected to people?

Possible hands-on activities that can be done during reading

Drawing - If you want to suggest possible themes, draw or print out equal sized hexagons for children to draw in as their puzzle pieces, which can be cut out and put together with others' pieces (hexagons are easy to fit together and can be a fun shape)

Coloring pages

Play-Doh

Pipe cleaners

Read a book (suggestions below)

[If Kids Ran the World by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Be a Good Ancestor by Leona Prince and Gabrielle Prince](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Home in a Lunchbox by Cherry Mo](#) ([read aloud](#))

[The Table by Winsome Bingham](#) ([read aloud](#))

Wondering Questions for during and after the reading

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important for you today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

I wonder...

Reflection

Choose a question to respond to that's connected to the theme:

Who does a lot of work for our human family that you hadn't thought about before?

What's something you want more of for our human family?

Other Resources / Extending the Lesson

[Turning of the World](#) ([song](#))

Games and Activities

Send a Thank You Note (or email or text) - Think of someone you appreciate who is outside of your family or school, and write them a note sharing what you appreciate about them. These can be shared with this person, or not.

Scavenger Hunt - Find objects and materials around you that you are thankful for (each person finds 1). Share why you're thankful for this, and how you think it came to being (e.g. your shirt, you can see where it was put together on the tag and you can guess who might have sewed the shirt in that place.

Blank Puzzle - Purchase a large blank puzzle and have each person draw on a puzzle piece in response to a query. Examples are to draw themselves, someone in the wider human family that they appreciate (e.g. a firefighter), or it could be in response to the story that is read (e.g. "If children ran the world, what is something that would be in it?" if that was the book that was read). This can also serve as an intergenerational activity.

Gratitude for Earth - Children

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Preparation

Gather a book (see options below) and other materials suited to the activities you choose, like a physical puzzle or craft materials. Explore the Other Resources (below) for more opportunities.

Read guidance for [Wondering with Children](#).

Gathering (Building the community/circle)

Choose a question related to the topic like below, or a song, or do a check-in (pluses and minutes, roses and thorns) to help welcome everyone into the space.

- What's an animal or plant that you have a partnership with? What do you receive and what do you give?
- What is a place in nature that you love?

For a more hands-on gathering, have the children go outside and find an object that they love in nature, or that connects to a wonderful experience they had outside. As a gathering, they can share the object and why they chose it.

Introduction

In a garden, we see the partnership between soil and seed. The soil nourishes the seed, and as the seed grows, its roots hold the soil in place and protects the soil from the sun. One is not better than the other. Many of the women who partner with Right Sharing of World Resources are farmers. They understand the importance of the soil and the seed. Can we live in healthy interdependence with nature in the same manner that seed partners with soil?

Possible hands-on activities that can be done during reading

Drawing - If you want to suggest possible themes, it might be to draw a place outside that you love

Coloring pages - Such as animals and plants and landscapes

Play-Doh

Pipe cleaners

Read a book (suggestions below)

[Giving Thanks by Chief Jake Swamp](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa by Jeanette Winter](#) ([read aloud](#))

[The Lorax by Dr. Seuss](#) ([read aloud](#))

[The Curious Garden by Peter Brown](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Grandad's Prayers of the Earth by Douglas Wood](#) ([read aloud](#))

[Harlem Grown by Tony Hillery](#) ([read aloud](#))

Wondering Questions for during and after the reading

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important for you today?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story that we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

I wonder...

Reflection

Choose a question to respond to that's connected to the theme:

What's something I can do to care for a place in nature that I love?

How do I feel when I am outside in a garden or park?

Other Resources / Extending the Lesson

Scripture Verses, Quotes, and Media

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."

Job 12:7-10

[A Place in the Choir](#) (song)

[Waltzing with Bears](#) (song)

[Harlem Grown Curriculum Guide](#)

Games and Activities

Recite or write an animal diary - Imagine what it might be like to be a favorite animal, and say or write about an experience you can imagine the animal having.

Empathy Map - Complete [an empathy map](#) by drawing a non-human creature of your choice in the middle and then drawing and/or writing words to describe what they see, hear, think and feel over the course of a day in their life.

An animal in your life - Think of an animal that you occasionally interact with, whether you drive by cows on a farm, see robins resting on a tree limb, or witness chipmunks frolicking in the grass. Talk, think, or write about the joys and challenges the animal might face. How might we help out with the challenges?

For more activities, check out Quaker Earthcare Witness' [Earthcare for Children Curriculum](#)