

CHOOSING GRATITUDE

In a time where life seems especially challenging, it's easy to focus on what's going wrong. By intentionally choosing a practice of gratitude, individually and corporately, we have an opportunity to be encouraged and focus more fully on what is always right...God's promises and faithfulness.

The following resource is meant to be a guide as you cultivate a practice of gratitude in the coming weeks. Please do what works best for you. We would love to hear how you experience God throughout this journey. (We invite you to share your thoughts/prayers/experiences via the Connecting Card or by clicking Prayer on the Wayzata Free app.)

READ Spend time exploring God's Word and giving thanks for His promises.

SUGGESTED PASSAGES

week 1

I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. - Psalm 9:1 (NLT)

week 2

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe. - Hebrews 12:28 (NASB)

week 3

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. - Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIV)

week 4

Let us give thanks all the time to God through Jesus Christ. Our gift to Him is to give thanks. Our lips should always give thanks to His name. Remember to do good and help each other. Gifts like this please God. - Hebrews 13:15-16 (NLT)

WRITE Start a gratitude journal. Each week we encourage you to add 5 (or more) new things to your list.

PRAY Devote time to thanking God in prayer. You can refer to your gratitude list or whatever is on your heart. If you feel led, share your prayers of gratitude with others or the staff.

WORSHIP We can express gratitude through worship in a variety of ways. Take a few minutes (alone or in community with others) to worship in a way that is meaningful to you. Examples include: singing/playing/listening to music, drawing/creating, writing/-journaling, movement, standing in awe of nature, etc...).

ACT Put your gratitude into action. See page 2 for a list of ideas.

IDEAS FOR GRATITUDE IN ACTION

- + Write a note of thanks (handwritten/email/text) for someone's help, love, support and/or friendship.
- + Do something unexpected for someone. Surprise someone for no reason and brighten his or her day!
- + Share your gratitude around the dinner table. You can share one thing you were grateful for that day with your family and ask them to do the same.
- + Complete a survey or leave a positive review for a product or service you believe in to express your appreciation and provide valuable feedback.
- + Offer to do a task or chore for a family member or friend that they don't enjoy. Tell them you're grateful for all the things they do.
- + Show appreciation to someone older or younger than you by writing them a note. Let them know how they influenced your life in a positive way.
- + Thank people for their service. Whether it's someone delivering items to your home, someone helping you in a store, or a customer service agent on the phone, take an extra moment to really thank them for their efforts.
- + Give hope and encouragement to someone in need. Your compassion can have an inspiring, even life-changing effect on another person.
- + Give a genuine compliment on a talent, skill, or strength that you admire in someone.
- + Tell co-workers how thankful you are for their support with a project or task.
- + Vow not to complain for an entire day. Switch from complaint to gratitude.
- + Be present with someone. Show someone you appreciate being with them by simply being present, listening, and avoiding distractions.
- + Reach out to teachers/mentors (past or present) to let them know how they made or are making a difference in your life.
- + Smile more often. Pick a day where you intentionally smile at people as you walk by them. It shows them you see them and might just be the thing that brightens their day.
- + Leave a nice tip to recognize a waiter for excellent service.
- + Make a friend or family member their favorite meal or treat. At the very least, offer to clean up if they are the one serving you.
- + Challenge your inner critic with thoughts of thankfulness, which will help turn negative thoughts into positive ones.
- + Take action to protect the environment. Examples: recycling, picking up litter, conserving energy, using a reusable water bottle, etc.
- + Mentor or teach someone. Sharing your expertise with someone in a compassionate way can make a huge impact.
- + Take a moment to thank security guards and your local law enforcement officers for their service.
- + Call an elderly family member or friend who may be feeling lonely and isolated.
- + Donate your time, funds, items or other resources, as needed, to a local charity.

Gratitude gets us through the hard stuff. To reflect on your blessings is to rehearse God's accomplishments. To rehearse God's accomplishments is to discover his heart. To discover his heart is to discover not just good gifts but the Good Giver. Gratitude always leaves us looking at God and away from dread. It does to anxiety what the morning sun does to valley mist. It burns it up.