

# GRATEFULNESS

Character First!® Education Series 1, Booklet 4



## Definition

*Letting others know by my words and actions how they have benefited my life.*



## Illustration

The porcupine is a passive animal that means no harm to other creatures in the forest. However, it is equipped with a very effective defense system, without which it would not survive. Young porcupines, called *porcupettes*, learn to use their 33,000 needle-like quills to protect themselves. The porcupine has very poor eyesight but is content with its extra-special abilities. Read on page 4 how this little creature values these remarkable qualities and how they are essential to its survival.

## I Will:

- show my parents and teachers that I appreciate them.
- write "Thank You" notes.
- take care of my things.
- be content with what I have.
- count my benefits rather than my burdens.



## Application

Being grateful for other people and circumstances will change a person's entire outlook on life on a day-to-day basis. The five "I Wills" are ways to implement gratefulness and focus our attention on others rather than on ourselves. The stories, activities, lessons, and crafts found on pages 8 through 14 are designed to help children show their gratefulness to others.



## Praise

Many people go through life without ever feeling appreciated or acknowledged. That pattern can be broken by praising others with gratefulness. Let others know how their demonstration of a particular character quality has benefited you. Kind words, actions, gifts, notes, or a simple "Thank You" are all ways to praise. The appreciation shown to others will inspire them to continue in their character development. Look on page 15 for more ways to praise good character.



# What Is Gratefulness?

Letting  
others know  
by my  
words and  
actions  
how they  
have  
benefited  
my life.

## GRATEFULNESS

### *vs. Unthankfulness*

**Grate•ful•ness** *n.* **1:** the state of being appreciative for benefits received. **2:** an attitude or demonstration of appreciation.

The word *gratefulness* comes from the Latin word *gratus*, meaning “free; ready; quick; willing; prompt.” One who is grateful has a healthy sense of indebtedness toward those who have benefited his or her life. A grateful person is free, ready, quick, willing, and prompt to outwardly show appreciation to those to whom it is due.

### ***Appreciation, Gratitude, and Thanks***

These words are often used interchangeably, but they each have very precise meanings that complement and balance one another.

- *Appreciation* is setting a value on something. It is esteeming a person, object, experience, or idea.
- *Gratitude* is the feeling one has after a kind word, deed, or gift has been received, especially when it was unexpected or undeserved.
- *Thanks* is the outward expression made by a grateful person toward those who have inspired gratitude. It is acknowledging that a favor has been received.



## The Concept of Gratefulness

Gratefulness is not dependent on one's circumstances. Rather, it is a matter of choice. A grateful person looks beyond his or her present condition and concentrates on what lessons of value can be learned in every situation.

Part of gratefulness is realizing that everything a person has can be attributed to another's investment in his or her life. Furthermore, gratefulness seeks ways to honor those who are responsible for one's success. Gratefulness is not an attempt to "repay" others for what they have done, but to demonstrate how much their investment is appreciated.

Many people feel thankful for the benefits they receive but never express their appreciation. In contrast, a truly grateful person recognizes the investment of others and makes a deliberate effort to show his or her appreciation. Being grateful is not a passive state of thinking, but an active role of expression.

All of us have countless sums of time, energy, and resources invested in us by others. Parents, teachers, friends, neighbors, communities, public service men and women, and numerous others have a vital part in every individual's development. Gratefulness is recognizing this fact and outwardly demonstrating appreciation for another person.

## The Role of Leadership

People learn character best from real-life examples. Written materials and classroom instruction are effective ways to communicate specific qualities and to give ideas of how to implement them; however, the example of a teacher says far more than words alone.

If a teacher tells his or her class that gratefulness is important, but that same teacher neglects to say a simple "Thank you" for a child's effort or performance, that teacher can set aside all hopes for an appreciative class. For the children to see the importance of character, it must first be consistently displayed in the lives of their instructors.

## Valuing Gratefulness

During a critical period of fighting, one of Napoleon's officers reproved him for taking time to hold an awards ceremony. Medals seemed of petty value in the face of urgency, but Napoleon turned and sharply rebuked the officer, saying, "These men are giving their lives for these medals."

Today many distractions compete for a student's attention. Students who, against all odds, choose to turn their concentration to instruction deserve all the encouragement that can be given.

Do not wait for convenient times or opportunities to show gratitude. When gratitude is expressed at times and in ways that are inconvenient, that sacrifice increases the value of your appreciation.

## Gratefulness at Work

A healthy relationship between employees and employers is vital to the success of any organization. Both the employee and employer have much for which to be grateful. Without employees, employers would lack support to carry out their plans. Likewise, employees should be grateful to their employers for the means to provide for themselves and their family.

Employers should also endeavor to make their appreciation known to their employees. Without everyone's effort and involvement, an organization will crumble. Showing gratitude to those with or for whom you work strengthens the bonds of a successful, working operation.



# Gratefulness in Nature

## The Porcupine

One crisp, winter morning, a man strolled through the forest. As he walked, he noticed something move out of the corner of his eye. He stopped short in his tracks to see what it was. Something dark and round was waddling awkwardly from one tree to another. Suddenly, whatever it was stood up on its short, hind legs and sniffed the breeze. Then it continued on its way as if tracking a scent. Much to the man's surprise, the little creature seemed to be tracking *him*. It followed the steps of his path until it stood right at his feet. There it stopped and sniffed again. Without any warning, it leaned forward, took a bite out of the man's boot and continued waddling on its way! The bite didn't injure the man, but it sure took a chunk out of his leather boot!

*Now porcupines aren't dumb; they just can't see.* A porcupine is very nearsighted. In fact, it cannot see much farther than a few feet ahead. However, the porcupine is so smart that it finds its way through the forest by its sense of smell. It leaves scent posts wherever it goes and constantly sniffs the breeze to tell where it is. Occasionally, out of curiosity, it even follows the scent of people as they walk through the woods.

On a winter evening, a man lay in his warm bed and had just fallen asleep when a loud gnawing sound came from outside of his room. He pulled his covers over his head, hoping the racket would stop. It did-

n't! Instead, it grew louder and louder. RAWR-RAWR-RAWR. Annoyed and still half asleep, he threw off his covers and pulled on a coat. He stumbled to the door and peeked out. There, standing on the steps was a huge porcupine. The loud RAWR-RAWR-RAWR was the sound of the porcupine chewing on the wooden steps leading up to the back door. The porcupine looked rather silly chewing on steps, and it made an incredibly loud noise.

*Now porcupines aren't crazy; they just crave salt and will eat almost anything that has salt on it.*



Hiking boots with salty perspiration, porch steps with salt to melt snow, ax handles, shovels, and even hand railings are all subject to the cravings of the porcupine.

Still half asleep, the man, not thinking, lifted a foot and gave the porcupine a swift kick down the steps. YEEE-OOOOW! Looking down at his foot, the man saw his toes looking like miniature porcupines. Each toe was covered with quills. The poor man didn't sleep very well the rest of that night.

In the woods one day, a bear growled a warning at a porcupine, telling it that it was not welcome.

Without any hesitation the porcupine quickly waddled up to the nearest tree and hid its head against the base of the trunk. It looked kind of funny hiding its head against the tree, but porcupines have soft heads. Even the slightest bump between the eyes can knock a porcupine unconscious, or even kill it. You see, *porcupines aren't scared; they just have soft heads.*

That bear still wanted the porcupine to leave its territory, so it prepared to attack. The bear charged toward the porcupine and bit the porcupine's tail! The bear quickly let go when it found its mouth filled with razor-sharp quills.

Now porcupines aren't mean; they're just extremely *dangerous*! A porcupine doesn't really try to hurt anyone, but just about everyone fears its dangerous "armor." The porcupine doesn't actually shoot its quills, but its lightning-quick tail moves so fast it *looks* as though the quills fly through the air. Hook-like barbs at the tip of each quill make them even more dangerous. When a quill enters the flesh of an animal, the barbs expand, making the quill very hard to pull out. If not removed, the quill works itself deeper and deeper. In some cases, the quill may work its way so deep that it comes out the other side.

No one ever wants to hug or pet a porcupine. No one hopes to cuddle a porcupine, and nobody ever dreams of snuggling up next to one! Now it's not because porcupines are ugly. *They aren't ugly; they just have lots of quills.* In fact, each one has about 33,000 quills. It would take the fastest person almost ten hours to count every quill, not to mention that each one is needle sharp.

A porcupine's babies are called *porcupettes*. Porcupettes are big—*real* big! As big as a softball. That may not seem very large, but it would be about equal to your little brother or sister weighing 80 pounds at birth. Can you imagine your mom giving birth to an 80-pound baby? Can you imagine carrying around a baby that big? Can you imagine having to find clothes that big for your baby brother or sister? Now it's not that porcupines are proud and show off their babies. *Porcupines aren't proud; they just have big babies.*

To make matters even more difficult, baby porcupines are fully quilled at birth. That's right—33,000 sharp quills! The porcu-

ette is born in a thick sack to protect its mother. If the mother doesn't chew a hole through the wrapping, the porcupette can't escape and will die.

Even though a porcupine can't see and craves salt and has a soft head and lots of quills; even though it has big babies and others think it's mean, proud, dumb, crazy, ugly, and scared; even though a porcupine can only waddle through the woods sniffing its way from place to place, a porcupine *sings* with all of its heart. If you're walking through the forest and you hear this sound, YUUUMMM OOOOO EEEEE UUUMMMM, you can be pretty sure that it is a porcupine.

When a porcupine wants to sing, it stands on its hind legs and sways back and forth. YUUUMM OOOOO EEEEE UUUMMMM! Though it can't sing very well, and its life is far from exciting, a porcupine always finds time to be grateful and sings with all of its heart. Let's try that together!

Like the porcupine, our gratefulness is not a matter of life's circumstances, but rather, it is a matter of choice. When you don't get a hug or when people misunderstand you, remember that the same is true for the porcupine. We must choose to be grateful in the good times and the bad. If the porcupine can be grateful, so can you. Why not join the porcupine and sing with all of your heart? Let's try it again.

YUUUMM OOOOO  
EEEEEE UUUMMMM!



**Mother and newborn baby.**



# Gratefulness in History

## The Log Cabin Days

**W**hen Abraham Lincoln was seven years old, his family moved from Kentucky to Little Pigeon Creek in southern Indiana. Abe's father cleared some land for them to build a log cabin, but their first house was only a three-sided shelter. It had three sides so they could burn a fire all the time to keep away the bears and the wolves.

The shelter was only supposed to be a temporary home until Pa and Abe built their log cabin. However, building it took longer than they had expected. Their temporary home was fun in the summer and fall, but when winter came, even a big fire couldn't keep them warm. The cold wind blew the rain and snow onto their blankets as they slept on the ground.

Abe's sister, Sarah, complained that Abe and Pa weren't working fast enough to complete the cabin. Abe, however, reminded her to be patient. "Pa and I will finish the cabin soon," he would tell her.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Although living in the three-sided shelter was hard, Abe did not complain but was content with what he had.

Sarah was Abe's older and only sister. They spent a lot of time playing together in the woods and working on the family's little farm. After Abe and Pa finished building the cabin, some of their relatives came to live by them. An aunt, uncle, and a cousin moved into the little three-sided shelter while building their own cabin, just as the Lincoln family had.



Abe helped in the heavy work of building a log cabin.

The next summer brought tragedy to the Lincoln family. Both his aunt and uncle died, and so their cousin Dennis came to live with them. A month later Abe's mother became ill. She had cared for his aunt and uncle all the time they were sick and then became ill herself. Within two weeks she also died. Abe was only ten years old. Years later, Abe would say that all he was or hoped to be, he owed to his "angel of a mother."

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe showed his appreciation and gratefulness for his mother.

After Abe's mother died, his father traveled back to Kentucky and left Abe, Sarah, and their cousin Dennis alone in the log cabin for over a month. Their Pa had been gone so long that Abe, Dennis, and Sarah started to consider how they would live, if he never returned.

When they were chopping wood one day, they heard the sound of horses pulling a wagon. "Come on," shouted Abe as he put down his ax and started running, "Let's see who's coming!"

Pa was home! But he didn't come back alone. He brought with him a new wife, two new sisters, and a brother. Abe and Sarah weren't quite sure if they liked this or not. They watched the new Mrs. Lincoln. She had starched skirts and brought with her fine furniture, which they had never seen before. There were cooking pots and pans, dishes and silverware, and a big pile of soft, thick quilts.

For supper they ate on their new table. Abe noticed that Sarah looked different. Her hair was combed, her face was washed, and she wore a clean dress.

"She gave me this dress," Sarah whispered to Abe. "And I thought I would scream when those girls combed all the tangles out of my hair."

Supper tasted good. They began to like this new mother and the way she did things. When they had lived alone with their cousin, they hadn't paid too much attention to washing. Now, forgetting to wash up just didn't seem right.

Pa and Abe decided it would be a good idea to patch up the cracks in the walls of the cabin where the wind blew in



and build a wooden floor over the dirt one. Abe knew he would never forget his real mother, but he was thankful for the new one his father had brought to their home.

Did you spot the “I Will”? Abe learned to take care of the few things he and his family owned.

When they lived in Kentucky, Abe and Sarah’s Ma had persuaded their Pa to let the children go to school. Although they were able to go only for a few months, Abe learned quickly how to read, write, and do arithmetic.

Their teacher taught them much more than reading and writing, though. They were taught good manners: how to properly introduce people, how to write a letter, and how to behave in public meetings. Because of his character and skill, Abe was asked by the new Mrs. Lincoln to teach her son and daughters the things he had learned.

“Elizabeth and Matilda take to learning right well. But John is a little slow. Do you think you could help him?” she asked.

“I reckon I could,” Abe replied. “And it wouldn’t hurt me to practice.”

With the help of the books that his new mother had brought, Abe started to teach his stepbrother and sisters what he had learned. They wrote the letters of the alphabet on pieces of wood, using charcoal for pencils. They pretended to introduce kings and queens to each other as they ran through the woods:

“King George, may I present to you my immensely wise brother, John.”

“President Washington, I am honored to make your acquaintance.”

They practiced writing letters on wooden shingles. Mrs. Lincoln wanted her children to learn reading, writing, arithmetic, and especially good manners.

Under Abe’s tutoring, the girls wrote to each other on pieces of kindling.

“My dearest sister Matilda, I hope that you might accompany me to Mrs. Calhoun’s for tea on this Tuesday next. Your devoted sister, Elizabeth.”

“My devoted sister Elizabeth, With much gratefulness, I accept your invitation to tea at Mrs. Calhoun’s this Tuesday next. Your dearest sister, Matilda.”

“Our grandest and loving mother, Thank you for the magnificent squirrel stew that graced our table this past night. Your gracious and loving daughters, Elizabeth, Matilda, and Sarah.”

Did you spot the “I Will”? Abe’s mother taught her family the importance of a written “Thank You” note.

Several years later, Sarah announced at the supper table that Aaron Grigsby, a neighbor, had asked her to be his wife, and she was wanting to accept.

Abe responded, “He’ll be getting himself a fine wife!”

After the wedding, Abe missed his big sister. But she and Aaron lived only a few miles away. Within a year came the news that they were expecting their first baby.

But it was not to be. Both Sarah and the baby died before the birth. Abe could not believe his beloved sister was gone.

After the funeral, Aaron stayed with Abe for a few days. “Remember what the preacher said when Sarah and I were wed?” he asked Abe. “May their time together be blessed and joyous.”

“I remember, Aaron,” replied Abe.

“Well Abe, it was. We didn’t have much time, but it was blessed and joyous.”

Abe agreed. Though grieved over his sister’s death, he was thankful that Sarah’s final years on earth had been a “blessed and joyous” time.

Did you spot the “I Will”? Abe saw the benefits of his sister Sarah’s life rather than the pain of her death.

**Abe had no paper or pencils. Instead, he used a smooth board and charcoal to do his arithmetic in front of the fireplace.**





# Will to Be Grateful

## I Will Show My Parents and Teachers That I Appreciate Them.

Parents have one of the most challenging responsibilities yet often receive the least amount of gratitude or appreciation. Teachers need to be recognized and honored for their devoted service, too. Their investment is incalculable. Gratefulness can be expressed through both attitudes and actions. One expression of gratefulness to parents and teachers is obedience. Obedient children communicate that they value their authorities, because carrying out the desires and wishes of parents and teachers means a child respects and honors them.



Character Training Never Ends

## I Will Write "Thank You" Notes.

Gratefulness is unique in that it implies action. Gratefulness is more than just feeling thankful; it is "showing others how they have benefited my life." A good way to do this is to write "Thank you" notes. Drawing a picture or making a special craft for a person is also a good way to express gratitude. It is an added investment of time and energy that shows an extra sense of appreciation.

## I Will Take Care of My Things.

To show appreciation for what has been given, a child should take care of his or her possessions. If a teacher lends a student a book and he or she is careless with it, the teacher will know that the book was not appreciated. If a parent gives a child a pet, she should show her gratefulness by taking care of it. A desk, a bedroom, and all personal belongings should be kept in a clean and orderly condition. People take good care of things that are valuable to them.

## I Will Be Content With What I Have.

Children must realize that true joy and happiness are not dependent on material wealth or possessions. A narrow focus on these things keeps children from valuing important things such as relationships with family, friends, and neighbors. If children are not grateful for what they have right now, they will never be content with what they might have in the future. Contentment, however, is no excuse for complacency. Children should be content with what they have, but not complacent about who they are or what they achieve. Children should always strive to do their best in every aspect of life.

## I Will Count My Benefits Rather Than My Burdens.

Attitudes are greatly influenced by one's outlook or perspective. Children who look only for the negative things in life will become discouraged and possibly even bitter. However, children looking at the benefits in their lives (such as food to eat, clothes to wear, family, friends, and a good education) will realize their need to be grateful. Because gratefulness is not dependent on one's circumstances, children should choose to be grateful and look beyond their problems to their benefits.





## Hidden Messages (Project)



There are many ways to express gratefulness to others. A kind word, a smile, or a "Thank you" note are some. Encourage the children to express their gratefulness to those who have helped them in the past.

This activity is a lot of fun for the children. They will write an "invisible" note to someone for whom they are grateful.

### Supplies:

- Lemon juice—concentrated
- Small cups—to hold the lemon juice
- White feathers—quill type
- White paper—one piece per child

The children will write with the "quill," using the lemon juice as the "ink." They will need to dip the "quill" frequently in order to write effectively. As the "ink" dries, the message will disappear. They can deliver their note with instructions on how to "decode" it.

### Instructions:

Set an iron to "steam heat." Carefully iron the paper until the message appears. Note: The message must be "decoded" in 24 to 48 hours, otherwise the "ink" will not be visible when heated. This activity is a creative way to excite children about expressing their gratefulness to those around them.

## Blindfold Game

Prepare a few hand-drawn pictures of a house, car, table, chair, or some other type of simple object. Make a blindfold out of paper and string or use a handkerchief from home. Blindfold one child and then ask him or her to draw a picture on the chalkboard as you describe it. Give step-by-step instructions of what to draw. Example: "Draw a horizontal straight line. Draw another line going straight up from there," etc.



When the child is finished, remove the blindfold and compare his or her drawing with the picture. Ask the child to draw the picture again, this time without the blindfold. Compare the pictures. Point out the benefit of eyesight. This activity can be repeated with children giving and receiving the instructions.

## If You're Grateful...



(Sing to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It.")

If you're grateful and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you're grateful and you know it, clap your hands.  
 If you're grateful and you know it,  
 Then your life will surely show it.  
 If you're grateful and you know it, clap your hands.

Additional Verses:

If you're grateful and you know it, stomp your feet.  
 If you're grateful and you know it, touch your head.  
 If you're grateful and you know it, turn around.  
 If you're grateful and you know it, stand and cheer.  
 If you're grateful and you know it, do all five.



# Activities

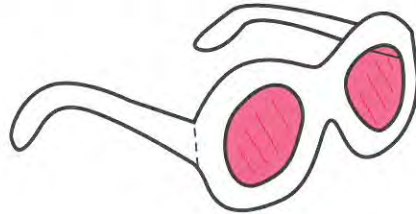
## Gratefulness Glasses (Craft)



This craft is designed to teach children that gratefulness centers around our perspective on life. Before gratefulness can be outwardly expressed, people must first recognize the benefits they receive as gifts from others. Seeing things from a grateful point of view requires special effort.

### Supplies:

- Posterboard
- Scissors
- Markers
- Iridescent cellophane
- Clear tape



Cut a pair of glasses out of posterboard. Have the children decorate their glasses. Cut circles of iridescent cellophane and tape them in place as "lenses" on the inside of the glasses. The glasses may need to be sized for different ages of children. Talk with children about the importance of seeing things with grateful eyes. Children may then use their gratefulness glasses in the "Grateful in All Situations" activity.

## Grateful in All Situations

After the children have completed their "gratefulness glasses," talk with them about the fact that glasses can help us to see things from a different perspective. Depending on our view, we can choose to be grateful or upset. Being grateful for good things in life is quite natural. Being grateful for the more difficult things requires a grateful perspective.

List several situations where gratefulness comes easily.

For instance:

- A new bicycle
- Nice clothes
- A special trip
- A surprise gift
- Education
- Good health
- Food
- Pets

As children develop the character quality of gratefulness, they can also be thankful for difficult situations. There are many things a child can *learn* from disappointments and hard times. Talk about how children can be grateful in difficult circumstances and what valuable lessons can be learned.

For instance:

- Flat tire = Car repair
- Torn clothes = Mending and sewing
- Stolen property = Forgiveness
- Sickness = Medical skills
- Spilled food = Cleaning messes
- Accident = Alertness and cautiousness
- Parents say "No" = Obedience

Hard situations should become "classrooms" to learn important lessons in life. Children must not focus on their own problems but help others learn gratefulness in all situations.



## Gratefulness Song

When we all see what we should see,  
All we should see is the good  
We know that others do for us  
And show them all our gratefulness.

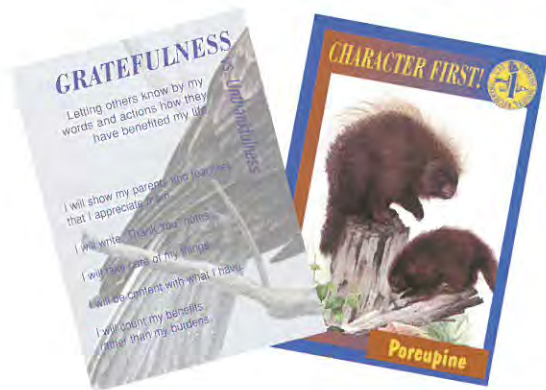
Everything we call our own is  
Only what we have been given.  
If we see life selfishly  
We miss out on the joy of living.

(Repeat from the beginning.  
Sing faster each time through.)



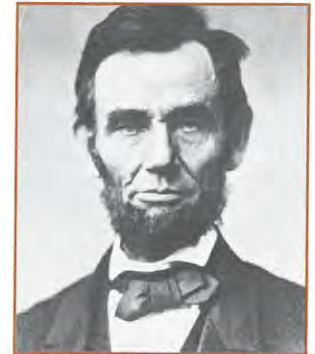
## Character Cards

Right choices and actions do not become *character* until they become a part of everyday life. Distribute the Gratefulness *Character Cards* to your students, looking each one in the eye and saying, "Here are ways *you* can be grateful." Read the "I Wills" on the back of each card. Refer to page 8 for elaboration on these commitments. Review the porcupine story, asking how the porcupine illustrates gratefulness in its circumstances.



## Abraham Lincoln Story

Because Abraham Lincoln chose to be grateful instead of bitter for his circumstances, he was equipped to see the positive things in every situation. The lessons of gratefulness learned in his youth trained him to never lose hope throughout his monumental life. The story on page 6, based on a true account from Mr. Lincoln's childhood, is a striking illustration of his gratefulness. While reading the story, use the questions in the boxes to focus the children's attention on how Abraham Lincoln demonstrated the five "I Will" statements.



Though he lived in poor circumstances for many years of his life, Abraham Lincoln remained grateful for the benefits he had.

### Variations:

- Contrast grateful and ungrateful responses using the five "I Wills" as an outline.
- Share a personal illustration from your own life of when you were grateful or ungrateful. Be sure to emphasize that there were benefits to being grateful and consequences to being ungrateful.
- Give each child an opportunity to make a commitment to be grateful. Say, "Will you...?" and have the children respond, "Yes, I will..." for each of the five "I Wills."

"Will you show your parents and teachers that you appreciate them?"

"Yes! I will show my parents and teachers that I appreciate them."

"Will you write 'Thank you' notes?"

"Yes! I will write 'Thank you' notes."

"Will you take care of your things?"

"Yes! I will take care of my things."

"Will you be content with what you have?"

"Yes! I will be content with what I have."

"Will you count your benefits rather than your burdens?"

"Yes! I will count my benefits rather than my burdens."



### Memory Work

I will show appreciation  
To my authorities.  
I will write them notes of gratefulness  
For all they've done for me.

I will be content with what I have  
And never gripe or groan.  
I will count my many benefits  
And care for what I own.

Commitments are important steps  
To guard us from disaster.  
And just to show we know them well,  
Let's say them even faster.



# Activities

## Grateful Porcupine (Craft)

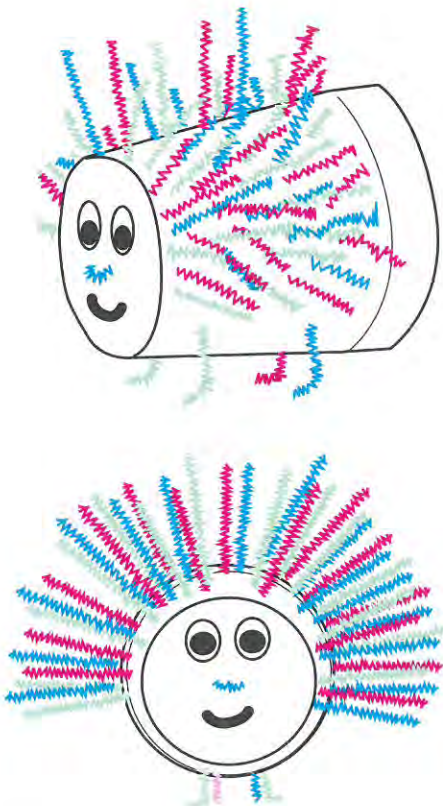
This craft is to remind children to be grateful in all circumstances, just like the porcupine.

### Supplies:

- Foam cups (one per child)
- Brown pipe cleaners (quills, legs, and nose)
- Googly eyes
- Scissors
- Glue

Cut brown pipe cleaners into two-inch sections (about 25 per child). Have children stick the pipe cleaner "quills" into the foam cup (see illustration). Glue eyes to the end of the cup. (Children may need to hold the eyes in place until the glue dries, so the eyes don't slide down the face.) Make a small, rounded nose out of a pipe cleaner and poke into face. Finally, stick legs into the bottom of the cup.

Review what challenges the porcupine overcomes and how it still demonstrates a cheerful attitude.



## Draw With the "Wrong Hand"

Similar to the blindfold game on page 9, this activity is to teach children gratefulness for the use of their hands. Give children a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct them to copy onto their paper a picture which you have either given them or drawn on the chalkboard. The only stipulation is that they must draw with their opposite hand. This exercise may be difficult for some, but it will cause them to be grateful for what they are able to do.

## Proper Manners (Lesson)

Manners are an important part of society. People enjoy being around those who are well-mannered. Proper manners are not as difficult as it might seem and will become habits when practiced. Manners enable a person to communicate well with others and feel confident in a variety of situations. It is important to understand the "code of proper behavior" for different situations, without being "stuffy" or "stiff." Talk about different manners and how to use them. Challenge the children to practice good manners during school and at home.

### Examples:

- Say "Yes, Sir," "Yes, Ma'am," "No, Sir," and "No, Ma'am."
- Always use "Please" and "Thank you."
- Say, "You're welcome" and "Excuse me, please."
- Stand when an elder enters the room.
- Hold the door open for others.
- Sit and stand up straight.
- Place napkin in lap at the dinner table.
- Hold utensils properly.
- Keep arms and elbows off the table.
- Chew with your mouth closed.
- Don't speak with food in your mouth.
- Ask to be excused from the table.



## “Round of Applause” (Craft)

Choose someone to whom your class will write a special note of thanks. It might be someone who does not receive a “Thank you” very often (custodian, counselor, principal, nurse, secretary, or others).

### Supplies:

- Varied colors of construction paper
- Pens or pencils
- Scissors
- Stapler

Have children trace their hands on a piece of construction paper. Children should cut out the hand and write a note of gratefulness on it. Make sure the children write only between the index finger and the ring finger so the writing will not be covered up when the hands are stapled together. Thank the person for specific ways he or she has helped the class.

Collect all the hands and place them in a circle. Staple the thumb of one hand to the little finger of the next. As a class, present the “Round of Applause” to the individual to whom you wish to express your appreciation and gratefulness.



## Gratefulness Acrostic

Make an acrostic using things for which children are grateful. Use each letter in the word *Gratefulness* as the basis for several other items. For example:

- G** - grapes, goats, grandparents, giraffes
- R** - rewards, reading, running
- A** - apples, animals, authorities
- T** - toys, trains, toothpaste, teachers, telephones
- E** - eggs, exercise, electricity
- F** - friends, family, food, facts, fish
- U** - umbrellas, uncles
- L** - lollipops, land, lions, lights
- N** - naps, nectarines, neighbors
- E** - energy, elephants, eating
- S** - schools, smiles, stickers, songs
- S** - stop signs, school buses, sandwiches

### Variations:

- Make a list of things for which you are grateful, beginning with the letter “A” and going through the whole alphabet!
- Children can look up various words related to “gratefulness” in a thesaurus and make a list of the words they find. Make another acrostic using words only out of the thesaurus.



# Activities

## Grateful Languages

Teach children to be grateful for the ability to communicate with one another by asking them not to speak for a certain amount of time (the "quiet" game). You can also teach them how to say words or phrases in different languages.

Challenge the children to be grateful all day long. Have them choose one way to say "Thank you," and instruct them to express their gratefulness in that language the rest of the day.

"Thank You" in:

- Spanish = GRAH - see - as
- French = Mare - SEE
- Italian = GRAT - see
- Chinese = SHYEH - shyeh
- Russian = Spa - SEE - ba
- German = DAN - ka
- Japanese = Ah - ree - GAH - to

## "Gratefulness Tree" (Craft)

Draw a tree trunk and branches on butcher paper. Allow the children to color it. Enlist children to help you cut leaves from red, yellow, brown, and green construction paper. Place the colored leaves beside the trunk.

Instruct the children to write on a leaf the name of someone or something for which they are grateful. The more things the class thinks of, the more leaves the tree will have. Attach the leaves to the tree and read the leaves aloud at the end of the week.

Keep this in the classroom as a visual reminder of the many things for which each child is grateful.

### Supplies:

- Butcher paper
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils
- Colored construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue





## Redirecting Praise

Gratefulness can be expressed every time a person receives praise for good character or achievements. A person's accomplishments usually are not the result of his or her efforts alone. It is often due to the assistance of others. A person being praised who fails to acknowledge the work of others communicates the false idea that he or she alone is responsible for a success. When being praised, such a prideful message can be avoided by expressing gratefulness for others. Do so by the following:

### 1. Thank the one who praises you.

A bright, cheery "Thank you" will be a pleasant reward to the person who is expressing gratefulness.

### 2. Praise the one who thanks you.

When thanked, identify a character quality which you can praise that person for in return. If thanked for helping someone, you could say, "Thank you! You are very kind in saying that." If complimented for an achievement, you could say, "Thank you! You are very thoughtful to encourage me." If praised by one who exhibits the same quality, you could say, "Thank you! You have been a great example to me in this area."

### 3. Recognize those who helped you.

Be prepared to acknowledge immediately those who helped you do that for which you are being praised. Here are some examples: "I am grateful for my parents' training." "I had very good teachers." "It was a team effort, and I could not have done it without \_\_\_\_\_." A proper response requires forethought in order to be accurate and appropriate.

### 4. Distinguish praise from flattery.

Praise is pointing out a specific character quality in another person and telling how that quality is beneficial to you. However, flattery is an exaggerated compliment, usually given with an ulterior motive.

## Ways to Praise

- Make books of gratefulness with pictures, snapshots, or drawings of people or objects for which you are grateful.
- Write notes of appreciation to students, teachers, or parents.
- Publicly praise other teachers, custodians, parents, or visitors.
- Contrast historical schoolhouses with modern classrooms. Help children to see the many benefits they enjoy every day at school. Encourage them to care for the resources made available for their use.
- As a class, "adopt" a city official (police officer, fire chief, mayor, etc.). Have children write notes or draw pictures as gifts to show their appreciation for the official's work. Invite the official to visit your class and honor him or her on behalf of the school.
- Make or purchase a small gift of appreciation.
- Write a poem of tribute about someone. Highlight his or her demonstration of particular character qualities.
- Invest time in a hand-made gift for someone, such as a carving, painting, or drawing.

# GRATEFULNESS



Letting others know by my words and actions how they have benefited my life.

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## Coloring Fun

Make copies of the picture on the left. Let students color and take home.

### Copying guide:

Choose "enlarge"—8.5 x 11 to 11 x 17 (129%) to fill an 8.5 x 11 page.

Be sure to choose the "8.5 x 11" paper source.

Some copiers may require repositioning the page on the copier to copy only the area to be colored.

## Teaching Tips

### Greeting Children

- Be enthusiastic.
- Shake their hands.
- Look them in the eye.
- Be open and friendly.
- Call each by name.

### Work With Parents

- Train children to remember and apply the lessons at home as well as at school.
- Ask parents what you can do to help them.
- Involve parents whenever possible.
- Show appreciation for parents with kind words, notes, or gifts.

### Ask Your Librarian

- Obtain resources from your school library about porcupines or Abraham Lincoln.
- Look for other materials written about character.