

# 3 STEPS TO RAISING MORE GRATEFUL KIDS



## 1. DEFINE GRATITUDE

The first step towards raising more grateful kids and creating a gratitude mindset in your home is to make sure everyone understands what gratitude is. **Ask your kids what it means to be, feel, and act grateful.** Make it an ongoing family discussion and provide examples. Be clear about what gratitude is, and isn't, and what you want it to look like in your home.

## 2. MODEL GRATITUDE

Grateful kids take practice. **Like any other skill we teach our children, the more they practice gratitude the better they get.** At first, there's a good chance this step will feel like an uphill battle, and that your efforts aren't paying off. But the more you keep at it, setting a consistent example of what gratitude looks and sounds like, and giving your kids opportunities to practice themselves, the more gratitude will become a natural go-to for everyone.



## 3. SET UP A GRATITUDE ROUTINE

Kids thrive on routine. **Including a gratitude activity in your family's daily routine will make it an easy, expected part of your day.** It will also spark conversations on the topic. Start with something simple. For example, at the dinner table each night, have everyone share something they are thankful for from the day. The next night, you can challenge each other to think of something new. Then build on your routine from there!

# DEFINING GRATITUDE continued...

1

Ask your kids what it means to be grateful.

This might feel like a waste of time, especially if your kids are older. But

it's easy to assume they know, and you might be surprised at their answers. There's a chance they will have trouble putting a feeling into words.

**PLUS** gratitude can mean a number of things:

- **appreciating** something someone has done for you.
- **being thankful** you can do something for someone else.
- **feeling gratitude** for actual, physical things or gifts.
- **valuing** a specific person and their role or influence in your life.

**Gratitude can also take on different forms. It can be:**

- **a spontaneous emotion** you're not expecting, towards someone or something.
- **an appreciation** that builds up over time.
- **a practice** that includes looking on purpose for things to be grateful for during the day.

**Making sure everyone understands what gratitude means is an important step in raising more grateful kids and creating a culture of gratitude at home.**

Carve out some time, discuss it across a number of days, write down your family's thoughts, and provide examples. **Be clear about what gratitude is, and isn't, and what you want it to look like in your home.**

notes



# MODELING GRATITUDE continued...

2

I cannot tell you how many times I handed my kids something as a toddler and said, "thank you," waiting to hear

them repeat it. I remember thinking, "When is this going to happen without a reminder?" **Then one magical day, that toddler said thank you all on her own and just like that, all those repetitive hours were worth it!**

**But that is just the beginning.** It's important that we continue to model gratitude for our kids. **We want them to move beyond the starting point of "thank you" and into an actual way of being and thinking.** Here are some easy ways to take your family's gratitude to the next level:

- **Thank your kids often and go out of your way to add details.** For example, "Thank you so much for picking up your snack wrapper. You know how much I like a clean house and it was nice of you to think of that!"
- **Thank your spouse in front of your kids in the same way.** For example, "Thank you for unloading the dishwasher. It makes the day so much easier when we work together and I don't have to stare at those dishes."

- **Encourage thank you notes,** even for small things and deeds. Help your kids write them to siblings, friends, family, or community members (like teachers, doctors, or the mail person). **The whole process of thinking about being grateful for something/someone and taking the time to tell them - this matters.** \*Bonus points if the kids get to witness the positive reaction to their note!
- **Model giving thanks during hard moments.** This one is SO IMPORTANT! For example, "Gosh it is raining so hard and I know we are all wet. But I am so glad for a warm car and windshield wipers to get us home safely." Or, "I know it was totally crazy getting out of the house today, but I am so thankful you grabbed your water and that we have this fun activity to go to."

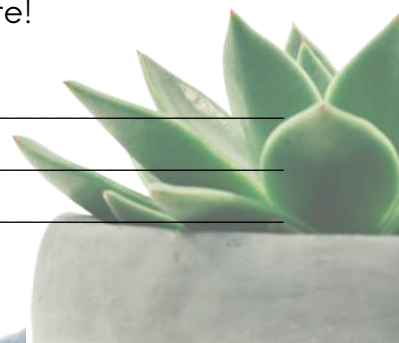
**Grateful kids take practice** and when we consistently model what it looks and sounds like, we can help our kids get there!

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## SETTING UP A GRATITUDE ROUTINE *continued...*

# 3

If there's one thing I've learned as a teacher and mom of three, it's that kids thrive on routine. **Whether you**

**operate best on a schedule or prefer the laid back approach, making gratitude an expected part of your everyday is key to raising grateful kids.**

Your routine does not have to be confining or rigid. Ours takes place at dinner. We go around and everyone says something they are grateful for, something they are sorry for, and something they are hopeful for. That's it - simple and doable.

**The point of a gratitude routine is for practice and to spark conversations.** At dinner, we often discuss LITTLE things verses big things. For us, An A on a test is a big thing. Seeing a cardinal is a LITTLE thing. The goal is to challenge each other to go beyond what we are normally grateful for to find the things we might have overlooked.

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**Here are some other easy ideas to help set up a gratitude routine:**

- **At breakfast**, tell each person at the table one reason you are grateful to have them as your sister, brother, friend, helper, mom, dad, etc.
- **After something hard**, challenge each other to find something good.
- **At dinner**, see who can name the most LITTLE things from the day.
- **At bedtime**, write down three things you are thankful for from the day.
- **When you get in the car**, tell one nice thing someone has done for you and one nice thing you've done for someone else that day.
- **Each week, draw someone's name** from a jar and leave a surprise thank you note or picture for them to find.
- **Each month, come up with 2 family gratitude projects** (baking cookies for the police station, sending grandparents a fun video, or chalking neighbor's driveways).

