

Counseling Corner

Monthly school newsletter from Lutheran Counseling Services

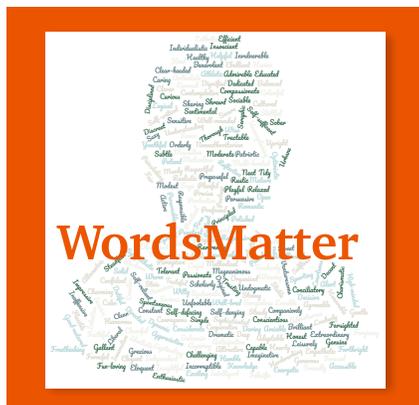
Word of the month: Gratitude

Gratitude has been shown to increase feelings of happiness, social connection, mental health, and physical health, while decreasing feelings of depression. With these amazing benefits, how can we add more gratefulness in our everyday lives? Consider some of the following ideas to put into practice in your home.

To orient your focus toward positive aspects of life, consider a brief journaling exercise to write down three things that went well each day, and to include a cause for each of the 3 things reflected upon. This typically takes less than 5 minutes but has been shown to have a great impact on increasing feelings of happiness and decreasing feelings of depression. This could even become a dinnertime reflection as a family. Consider implementing it as “Three Things Thursday” when each family shares about the 3 things that went well that day.

To dive into gratitude itself, consider spending some time reflecting on someone who has been especially kind to you and has not been properly thanked. Write a letter or card to that person to express your gratefulness about their kindness. Consider mailing or delivering the letter or card. Note that in research studies, this exercise was shown to improve happiness even if the letter was not shared with the person.

Consider taking a walk as a family and each member taking a turn sharing about something on the walk that person is



GRATITUDE

- The quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful.

Dictionary.com





grateful for. Getting into a focus on the present moment can help calm our racing thoughts that can sometimes get stuck in past issues or worry about potential future situations. Bringing attention to the present moment, being outdoors, and connecting with loved ones can all add benefits to the practice of selecting things that we are grateful for.

Consider the words of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians when he wrote “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” Consider that he joins peace, social connection and thankfulness together in these statements. As research in psychology continues to demonstrate, an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness has been shown to decrease worry, increase happiness and deepen our connections to one another. Use this verse throughout the month as a reminder of the power of gratitude for yourself and your family.



“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

COUNSELOR CONNECTION

Reach out to your school or to the LCS main office at (407) 644-4692 or lcsfl.com to connect to your school’s counselor for additional support and resources on this or other topics.

MISS A MONTH? Did you miss one of the newsletters?

Find them all here: <http://lcsfl.com/news-reources/newsletters.html>

Car conversations

Whether in the car, at the dinner table or grocery store line, here are conversation ideas to build this quality in your child.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. – Colossians 4:2

At a spontaneous time, say a family prayer aloud by using a watchful eye to share what you are thankful for around you. Consider it an “I spy” game for gratitude and prayer!

When sibling rivalry or other conflict arises in your home, challenge each party to come up with 3 things they are grateful for about the other party. Parents have to play this “game” too!

Talk about a character from a book or movie that experiences hardship and is also grateful for things. Try to name additional things that character can be grateful for.

Gratitude Challenge

Share the statement “I am grateful for _____ because _____.” Write it on a slip of paper (younger children draw a picture) and add it to a family gratitude jar. Add to it & review it spontaneously or regularly, as fits your family.



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