

COUNSELING CORNER

Monthly School Newsletter from Lutheran Counseling Services



Car Conversations

In the car, classroom or dinner table, try some of these ideas to build in yourself, your family or your class.

◆ Caught With Character

As a family or class, play this game to catch each other showing a social-emotional character trait, like gratitude. Decide on what happens when someone is caught with character. Some ideas could be putting pennies into a jar to fill for a family/class prize when filled, wearing a special hat/sash/pin until the next person is "caught", or a quick pause for a dance, chant or handshake. Come up with the ideas as a group to build an interest in building positive emotional character traits!

◆ Play a gratitude scavenger hunt to find things that kids and adults are grateful for. Use this [outdoor gratitude scavenger hunt](#), use the



Gratitude

As we begin a new school year, we focus on developing an attitude of gratitude. The benefits of cultivating this emotion and trait are many!

Gratitude has been shown to...

Increase, Improve & Boost:

- Happiness
- Physical and psychological health
- Sleep quality
- Immune system strength
- Relationship health
- Mental Resilience
- Academic and professional performance

Reduce:

- Pain
- Stress
- Impacts of loss
- Mental health challenges such as depression

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gratitude#why-gratitude-matters>

That sounds like a great Back-To-School list!

Gratitude is a spontaneously generated appreciation for what one has. However it has also been found to be something we can work to build and increase. With regular practice, we can build our levels of gratitude, as well as the benefits that come with it.

Gratitude is both an emotion as well as a personality trait. This means some of us are more inclined toward an attitude of gratitude than others. But just as we can influence our feeling of happiness by engaging in activities that boost this emotion, we



alphabet to come up with something to be grateful about for each letter, or come up with your own categories. Share as a class or family what you are grateful for.

◆ Reflect on Philippians 4:6-7:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Talk as a family or class about how this verse connects thankfulness/gratitude, anxiety and peace. Discuss your thoughts on how these are connected. Do you see connections in your own lives?

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can do this for gratitude as well. And it turns out that there are several important parts to doing so.

First, we focus on recognizing and affirming something positive in our lives. Then we recognize that the source of that is external to ourselves (at least partially). Regular practice of noticing these positives starts to build up this trait.

Expressing our gratitude is hugely important in relationships, whether with significant others, between parents and children, or teachers and their students. Many of us have become desensitized to hearing "Thank You" because we have been socialized to say these words without moving the needle on the gratitude meter.

Here are a few tips to boost your gratitude effectiveness:

- Make sure to express gratitude when it is truly sincere and really meaningful to you.
- Address the other person in your expression (the "you" part of "thank you") and share gratitude about that person in addition to what they did.
- Focus on and share how the other person's action benefitted you in your thankfulness.

Try these tips out with each other. See how sharing gratitude with each other can benefit each of the relationships in your family and classroom. Focus this month on building an attitude of gratitude in yourself and children in your care!

Aten, J.D. (2019) The Science of Gratitude. Retrieved from [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com).

Gordon, A. M. (2021) 3 Ways to Improve How You Say "Thank You" to Your Partner. Retrieved from [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com).

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