

Name _____

I AM GRATEFUL!

Name and draw a picture of people, places and things for which you are grateful!

1. I am grateful for _____.
(name someone)

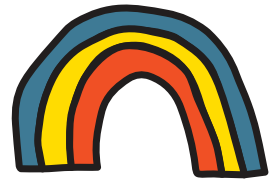
2. I am grateful for _____.
(name a place)

3. I am grateful for _____.
(a special moment)

4. I am grateful for _____.
(something you do every day)

Think of someone in your life for whom you are very grateful. Use the space below to write a special note of gratitude to them. Don't forget to draw a picture to go with your note!

I want to show gratitude to _____
because _____.



Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Mental health professionals from *On Our Sleeves*, the movement for children's mental health, have teamed up with the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired to create activities for schools and youth organizations to support children's mental health and social and emotional development. This includes encouraging children and families to make positive choices to promote overall health. Your child's organization is a member of the *On Our Sleeves* Alliance to help break the silence around children's mental health. Your child has been learning about practicing gratitude, a habit that supports mental health by helping to build a positive outlook in life.

Why Is Gratitude Important?

Gratitude is the practice of being intentionally thankful and appreciative of the good in life, including people, places, or things. Research shows that people who practice gratitude are:

- ▶ Healthier and happier.
- ▶ Have stronger social connections.
- ▶ Feel better about themselves.
- ▶ Sleep better and feel more energized.

More Than Just a Thank You

Practicing gratitude looks different at different ages. Young children may be excited about a longed-for toy given by a family member and can be encouraged to express love or thankfulness for that toy. However, an older child can think more deeply about how the family member thought to bring them a gift—a gift that was wanted—and can understand how this gift was an expression of love, offering a more heartfelt thank you as a result.

Gratitude in Action

Practicing gratitude can be easy to integrate into your daily life and has many benefits for your child's mental well-being. Try the ideas below to practice gratitude at home and support mind, body, and spirit.

- ▶ **Set the Example.** Model the practice of gratitude for your child. Share things you are grateful for, say "please" and "thank you" to others, look for everyday moments that offer opportunities to express gratitude, such as the color of the sky, for example.
- ▶ **Table Talk.** Start a tradition at the dinner table where each family member shares one thing they are grateful for about their day and why.
- ▶ **Nature Connections.** Take a neighborhood walk, visit a local or state park, or view the night sky together with the intention of looking for and naming things in the natural world to be grateful for.
- ▶ **Thank You Notes.** Make and send thank you notes to family members and friends. Don't forget notes to people in your community whose work touches you in some way, such as your family's mail carrier, dentist, grocery store clerk, veterinarian . . . the list could be endless!
- ▶ **Gaming It.** Play a fun and simple gratitude game by naming something for each letter of the alphabet to be thankful for. Or, ask your child to name five people in their lives, four things they see, three things they can hear, two things they can touch, and one thing they can smell for which they are grateful.
- ▶ **Go Big.** Volunteer at or donate to an organization or cause that is near to your family's heart. For example, donate to a local pet shelter, serve meals at a local shelter, donate profits from a yard sale to promote earth-friendly causes, etc.

Mindfulness and Gratitude

Mindfulness is the act of careful noticing. Gratitude and mindfulness work well together because, with careful noticing, we can better acknowledge moments where we can practice gratitude. Encourage mindful gratitude with simple activities such as pausing with your child during a happy occasion or moment to notice and appreciate it by naming feelings, people, or other things that are good about that moment.

Mindfulness and gratitude together are powerful mental health tools for parents. They support children by helping reduce stress and anxiety and encouraging social connection. They also contribute to establishing a sense of calm and developing an appreciation for slowing down and being fully present in the moment.

For more ideas and information on how to help your child learn more about practicing gratitude and its positive impact on mental health, visit OnOurSleeves.org.

Sincerely,
The *On Our Sleeves* team