

The United Thank Offering Presents:



A November Gratitude Journey for Families



Thirty Days of Gratitude Practices to Help Families Live More Grateful Lives

Weekly Gratitude Deep Dive for Families:

Introduction and Science Behind the Deep Dive

Are you looking to do a bit more with gratitude with your family? This activity, meant as a weekly discussion or journal, is perfect for older kids who you want to help develop gratitude as a lifelong practice. It can be used with the gratitude tree (which helps notice something good each day) or on its own.

[A 2018 study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) on raising grateful children found that it was easiest to teach children gratitude if it was broken down into four actions:

- “What we **NOTICE** in our lives for which we can be grateful
- How we **THINK** about why we have been given those things
- How we **FEEL** about the things we have been given
- What we **DO** to express appreciation in turn”

Our deep dive journal pages will help guide you and your child(ren) through these actions to help all of us better understand and practice the skills associated with gratitude.

Each week, the journal page will ask you to reflect on one of the following five areas:

1. Nature
2. Community
3. Ourselves
4. Others
5. Home

If you choose to follow the order listed above and use the gratitude tree craft, you’ll find that the number of leaves corresponds to the number of days in each week of November so you can even focus the leaves on the above themes if you would like.

On the next few pages, you’ll find questions to help you discuss these topics using “notice, think, feel, do.” There will also be ideas of things you can do to show gratitude in that area to further expand your deep dive practice. Please note: the journal pages are intentionally without dates or page numbers. While we suggest a flow to the pages below, you can do them in any order and at any time that makes sense to you and for your schedule as a family.



Sample journal page to help give ideas on how to use the weekly pages.

This week, let's give thanks for Nature

Notice

Rain & Thunderstorms
Snow
National Parks

Think

because we need water to live
so we can see cool things and experience nature

Feel

peaceful
- small pine trees
- feel wind

Do

pick up trash
tell others to visit



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Week One: November 1-4, 2023

This week we give thanks for the blessings found in nature.

Overview

The first gift God gave to us was creation. We often forget how important the world around us is to our survival and the survival of others. Sometimes we think we're too busy to notice the joy creation brings. This week, we pause to give thanks for all of the wonder and joy found in nature and to remember that we are an important part of creation and have the task of caring for it, loving it, and ensuring its survival.

Discussion Ideas for Giving Thanks for Nature

Notice I wonder what your favorite things about nature are? Can you tell me what your favorite animal (plant, park, etc.) is and why? What is the nature around us now like?

Think I wonder how these things that we wrote down are a gift to us.

Feel Think back to your favorite place in nature that you shared with me. Can you tell me how this place feels? I wonder what you can see/smell/touch in this place that brings you joy?

Do I wonder what we can do to show our gratitude for these parts of nature that we are thankful for. (NOTE: these can be anything from saying thank you the next time you visit or writing a letter to representatives about endangered species, whatever you come up with as an action item is great.)

Bonus Activity:

One way we can show our gratitude for nature is by adding to it. Take your child to find a plant to adopt (or seeds they can plant and grow) and care for over the winter months. If you live in a warm area, consider picking up trash on a walk or volunteering for a day at a local nature center.



This week,
let's give thanks for Nature

Notice

Think

Feel

Do



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Week Two: November 5-11, 2023

This week we give thanks for the blessings found in our community.

Overview

Where we live contributes so much to what our lives are like. Whether you live in a big city or a rural community, there are so many things to be thankful for around the place where you live. This week, you're invited to take a closer look at all of the things in your community that you're grateful for and why these are important. It can be as simple as noticing all of the places you like to go to noticing the people who make those places special.

Discussion Ideas for Giving Thanks for Our Community

Notice I wonder what your favorite things are about the community we live in? Can you tell me what your favorite places are and why? I wonder if there are people in our community who we may not know personally but who make our community special?

Think I wonder how these things that we wrote down are a gift to us.

Feel I wonder what you feel in your body when you're in our community?

Do What are some ways we can show our gratitude for the parts of our community that we are thankful for and for the people who make our community special? (NOTE: this can be anything from saying thank you the next time you visit your favorite restaurant to challenging your family to practice gratitude more while at the store—whatever you come up with as an action item is great.)

Bonus Activity

One way we can show our gratitude is by letting people know about it. Today we're going to write a letter to our mayor and let them know about this list of things that we are grateful for about our community. (Note: this is a great activity for kids, because they might have to research who the mayor is and what they do before they can write the letter. Also, letter writing is a skill, and this is a great chance to learn about what makes up a formal letter.)



This week, let's give
thanks for Our Community

Notice

Think

Feel

Do



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Week Three: November 12-18, 2023

This week we give thanks for the blessings found in who we are as a person.

Overview

One of the most overlooked forms of gratitude is giving thanks for ourselves. Our bodies are amazing things that can do so much. This week, we want you to focus on giving thanks for all of the things you are able to do, from running to having strong enough eyes to read late into the night to your sense of humor. Let's give thanks for all of the amazing things that make you, you!

Discussion Ideas for Giving Thanks for Ourselves

- Notice** I wonder what your favorite things about yourself are? What are your favorite things about your personality? What is one of the things your body is best at?
- Think** Can you think of how what you notice about yourself might be more than a gift to you? How do these things make you a gift to others?
- Feel** How do you feel when you are doing something you're really good at and love to do? How do you feel when someone notices these amazing things about you?
- Do** I wonder what you might do to show your gratitude for yourself this week? How do you think you could say thank you to your body for all of the amazing things it can do? Some ideas might include making a fun and healthy snack to fuel our bodies, reading a book to fuel our minds, or doing a craft to fuel creativity.

Bonus Activity

Many of us have heard of a "yes day" and may have even attempted it. A "yes day" is where kids get to direct the activities and parents are to go along with the plans. The bonus activity for this week is to think about what your child has just told you about love and is grateful for themselves. Designate a day (or part of one) to celebrate the amazing person they are and the gift they are to your family.



This week, let's give
thanks for Ourselves

Notice

Think

Feel

Do



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Week Four: November 19-25, 2023

This week we give thanks for the blessings found in others.

Overview

This week we invite you to focus on your “family” (a term that means your chosen family made up of family and friends)- the wonderful community that surrounds you and forms your support network. Reflect on all of the people who surround you and give thanks for their presence in your life and the gifts that they bring into your life.

Discussion Ideas for Giving Thanks for Others

Notice

I wonder if you have a favorite person or people?

Think

I wonder what it is about this person or these people that makes them important to you?

Feel

I wonder what it feels like when you are around these people?

Do

I wonder what we can do to show our gratitude for these people this week. (NOTE: this week, the bonus activity may be a great answer to this question. Another might be a way to share with them how grateful we are for them as a part of our Thanksgiving celebration (if having or attending one).)

Bonus Activity

One of the best ways to help children understand the importance of gratitude is when they experience the joy of someone being surprised by their gift of gratitude. To help with this, we've created a special fill-in-the-blanks thank-you card to help kids thank people in their lives not for something they gave them, but for the gift that person is to them. You can find the downloadable card and more at www.unitedthankoffering.com/november.



This week, let's give
thanks for Others

Notice

Think

Feel

Do



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Week Five: November 26-30, 2023

This week we give thanks for the blessings found in whatever place we call home.

Overview

This week we wrap up our deep dive by giving thanks for our home and the things within it. This is a great way to help kids begin to think about Advent and prepare for Christmas. Society fills our kids with messages of consumerism, but what if we begin the Christmas season with noticing the abundance we already have?

Discussion Ideas for Giving Thanks for Our Home

Notice I wonder if you have a favorite thing about our home? Do you have a favorite thing in it?

Think I wonder how the things that we wrote down are a gift to us? What about those things we may not need anymore; can we give thanks for how they were a gift to us too? What might that look like? (repurposing, reusing, rehoming, etc.)

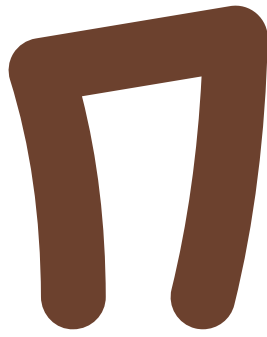
Feel When you think about our home, I wonder what feelings, smells, sights, or sounds come to mind? When you think about your favorite things in our home, what feelings do you have about them?

Do I wonder if you have any ideas about how to show our gratitude for our home and the things in it? (Note: this can be a discussion about how we take care of our home and our belongings. It can also be a chance to talk about giving away gently used items so they can bring joy and gratitude to someone else.)

Bonus Activity

Depending on the age of your child, as soon as Thanksgiving is over they may already be thinking about their Christmas list. As a way to help children take in all of the lessons from this gratitude deep dive, we've created a fill-in-the-blank Christmas list that encourages them to think about their wants and needs and about sharing with others. You can find the Christmas list at

www.unitedthankoffering.com/Christmas along with our gratitude centered Christmas cards.



This week, let's give
thanks for Our Home

Notice

Think

Feel

Do



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Congratulations on practicing gratitude in November!

Here are a few ideas if you want to keep the practices going.

The United Thank Offering is an organization that welcomes everyone who wants to live a more grateful life. UTO was started in the late 1800s as a way to help Episcopalians not only live more grateful lives, but to then make small financial “thank” offerings to share their blessing with others. UTO still does this work today—we help people practice gratitude, encourage the giving of thank offerings, and then we give away 100% of those offerings to help others throughout The Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion. We hope that you’ve enjoyed these resources and that you’ll continue with us on the journey of living more grateful lives. Below are some ways to continue the connections with UTO.

UTO offers coloring sheets and a color-your-own Blue Box created by Illustrated Ministries. You can download them at www.unitedthankoffering.com/color. One of the things we suggest is using your **UTO Blue Box as a journal**. Each day, write down one thing you are thankful for and put it in the box. At the end of the year open it up and remember all of the good things that happened in the past year. Studies show that keeping a daily gratitude journal improves sleep and overall well-being, so this is a great way to continue your fall leaves beyond autumn. **Join us again in Lent**, when we also have special materials to help families focus on gratitude. You can find materials at www.unitedthankoffering.com/lent.

If you found this program to be a blessing in your life, we hope that you’ll consider making a thank offering which will become a blessing for others. 100% of what is donated in 2023 will go to support projects that welcome the stranger, those that society has left out or left behind. You can learn more about where all of the thank offerings have gone since 1883 at www.unitedthankoffering.com/grants and you can support UTO at www.unitedthankoffering.com/give. We’ve also included a helpful QR code sheet with codes for all of the links.

Please keep in touch! You can follow us on social media (we’re on Facebook and Instagram), sign up for our newsletters, or simply send us a note. One of the things we’ve found over the years is that the community of UTO members is a great support to living a more grateful life in our modern times. We offer book clubs, webinars, and more to support individuals committed to living a more grateful life. We would also love your feedback and ideas about this or any materials you wish we’d create to support you and your family in practicing gratitude.

Thank you so much for inviting us to be a part of your gratitude journey, and we look forward to continuing to travel together towards a more grateful world.

The UTO Board and Staff