

TEACHING OUR KIDS TO BE THANKFUL

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Every day is a new day. And each day, we are called to rejoice and give thanks for what God has done, what he does, and what he will do. Like us adults, when children are happy and things are going well, it's easy to give thanks. When there are problems or our kids feel sad, grumpy, confused, or angry, it isn't easy to give thanks.

So how can we teach our children to "give thanks in all circumstances" ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#))?



Wake up and thank God for the new day. Sometimes, our days can get hectic. It's hard to slow down and think about what God has done for us, so it's good to start our days by thanking God. As soon as you wake up, practice saying, "Thank you, God," aloud with your child, or look for opportunities at the morning breakfast table or in the car ride to school to praise God. This morning repetition reminds us that every day is something new to be thankful for!

Practice saying "Thank You." We all know how to say "thank you." But let's practice giving gratitude more consciously and thoughtfully. Encourage your child to express gratitude to different people each week. It can be someone at school, family, or church. They can also learn to write a simple thank you note. One way to regularly practice saying thank you to God is to ask around the supper table, "What was one good thing about your day?" It can be anything you felt that God blessed you with, even if it isn't the best thing ever. You can also go around the table and model your answers to your children.

Make a list of what they are thankful for today. Make your list as well. Aim for 2-3 minutes of writing and 3-4 minutes of sharing. Remind them that their gratitude doesn't have to be about a big, dramatic event. They can thank God for small things, like waking up in time for school. When there's an upsetting event, discuss what happened with your child and look for positives they can be thankful for. This thankfulness list gets your child thinking about how God works in their life. And as the list gets longer, they'll review it and see much to be grateful for!

Bless others. God has done great things for us. As a thankful response, we can serve and show God's love to others. That means our kids can serve, too! And there are so many opportunities to serve! Some families sponsor families through agencies like World Vision or World Renew and post updates on their fridges as reminders. Locally, help an older neighbor with some outside tasks or contact a women's shelter to see their needs. At church, leave an encouraging note or gift card for a youth leader or Sunday school teacher. Encourage your child to bless other family members with kindness and service.

Being thankful daily is an excellent practice to cultivate. It keeps our eyes trained on God and reminds us to be grateful to him, no matter what. It takes practice and patience to be consciously thankful every day. Remember this encouragement from 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV): "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article: [Living Daily in Gratitude](#).

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