

How to be Thankful: 9 Popular Family Gratitude Practices to Try



THIS GUIDE MAY CONTAIN AFFILIATE LINKS. THIS MEANS THAT IF YOU MAKE A PURCHASE USING ONE OF MY LINKS, I WILL EARN A SMALL COMMISSION. BUT DON'T WORRY, THERE IS NO ADDITIONAL COST TO YOU.

Studies have shown how having a gratitude practice can positively affect both our mental and physical health in many ways. These include:

- Feeling happier and more optimistic
- Reducing stress and increasing our ability to cope with challenging situations
- Suffering from fewer physical problems
- Improving sleep
- Increasing self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience
- Reducing depression, anger and aggression

A gratitude practice can also enable a family to build strong and lasting relationships, helping them to appreciate each other and all they have. Thankful families are more likely to be contented, generous and kind to others.

There are so many fun ways your family can learn to appreciate all the wonderful things in their lives. Here are some of the most popular family gratitude practices which you could try:

Gratitude Jar

All you need is a **big mason jar** placed in a prominent position in your home. Keep some slips of paper and some pens next to it. Encourage your family to write little notes to record all they are grateful for and place them in the jar.

Choose a special time to sit together and share the contents of your gratitude jar. This could be on the last day of each month or perhaps on birthdays, at Thanksgiving, Diwali or Christmas.

Gratitude Journal

Why not try a family gratitude journal, into which you each write all that you are grateful for? You could just use a plain notebook for this, or if you need some help, buy a **family gratitude journal** with prompts to give you ideas. Choose some special times throughout the year to sit together and reflect on all that you have written.

Gratitude board

Put up a simple **pinboard** somewhere in your home onto which your family can pin reminders of anything for which they are grateful. This could be a note, a photo or even a ticket to a concert they have been to. It's heart-warming to watch this collection build up over time and will make you all smile each time you catch sight of it.

Gratitude Tree

Like a gratitude board, this is another way for your family to display everything they are thankful for visually. Place a small branch or selection of twigs in a vase. Cut out paper leaves in various colours and place them by the 'tree'. Encourage your family to write what they are grateful for on these and tie them to the tree with ribbon. They could also attach photos or small drawings to remind them of all the wonderful things they have in their lives.

Be Grateful at Mealtimes

Come together each evening around the table to share a meal. As you eat, take turns to share something for which you are grateful. This could be an event that has happened during the day, a person in your life or perhaps something you have received.

Sometimes having some gratitude prompts can help people reflect more deeply about the many positive aspects of their life. Try having a selection on your table to inspire your family. These might include:

- Describe something good that happened today
- Name someone who makes you smile
- What is your favourite hobby, and why?
- Who makes you feel loved, and why?
- Where is your favourite place to be and why?
- Name someone who helps you.
- What do you like to do with your family, and why?
- Name an animal you feel grateful for
- What tastes nice?
- What talent or skill do you have that you are grateful for?

- Which teachers are you thankful for?
- What do your parents do for you?
- What do you love about your siblings?
- What do you love the smell of?

Gratitude at Bedtime

Another lovely time to practise gratitude is at bedtime. As you tuck your little ones in, take a moment to talk to them about all that you both have to be grateful for that day. Incorporate this into their bedtime routine so that it follows on from a story or brushing their teeth.

Encourage older kids to keep a personal [kid's gratitude journal](#). Suggest they spend just a couple of minutes each night recording what they are thankful for before going to sleep.

Journaling is a practice you could develop too, and there are plenty of [beautiful gratitude journals for adults](#) to choose from. Alternatively, just lie in bed and reflect on all you have to be thankful for at the end of the day before you drift off to sleep.

Thankful Placeholders

This is a lovely idea to use on special occasions such as an Easter meal or perhaps a family birthday. Create an oversized placeholder card for each person attending by folding a piece of A4 card in half. Write their name on the front and place it at their space at the table, along with a pen.

Once everyone is seated, pass the cards around the table. Encourage everyone to write something positive inside each card about the person named on it. This could be what they appreciate about them or why they are grateful for them.

These cards will be special keepsakes for everyone to take away. Full of positivity and encouragement, they will make each person feel loved and cherished.

Gratitude Walk

Some people may find it easier to reflect on all they are grateful for while out for a walk. So, head outdoors together and take the opportunity to chat about all the good things in your lives.

Gratitude Pebbles

Select some small smooth pebbles. Carefully decorate each one with the name of a member of your family.

Bring everyone together and discuss how important each of them is to the strength and stability of your family unit. Give them each the pebble with their name on it and ask them to carry it with them in their pocket. Every time they put their hand in their pocket and feel the pebble, ask them to remember their family, life, and all they have to be grateful for.

Alternatively, you could swap pebbles. Ask everyone to reflect on all that they are grateful for about the person named on their stone whenever they notice it in their pocket. Change these around every few days to help your family develop a real appreciation of one another.

Top tips on getting the most out of a family gratitude practice:

Model it

If you want your kids to develop a genuine gratitude practice, you need to model it yourself. Watching you in action is the best way for them to learn. So, make sure you openly express all that you are grateful for. Be sure to say thank you and mean it when someone does something nice for you, and your kids will quickly learn to do the same.

Commit to it!

To enjoy the full benefits of a gratitude practice, you need to put in the effort as a family and stick with it. Find ways to build your practice into your daily routine. Setting a time each day for this can be helpful. Try taking a moment to focus on gratitude while sitting around the dinner table, or perhaps bedtime is more practical – choose a time that works best for you and stick to it.

Get started!

It could be all too easy to read this guide and think about the benefits of a gratitude practice but never actually get started. Committing to anything new can be challenging, but you just need to dive in and get going. You can always adapt and improve as you go. But don't wait – you won't regret it!

Create a habit

Ask each member of your family to contribute to the family gratitude practice at least once a day – in this way, it will soon become a natural part of everyday life.

Make it meaningful

Ask your family to consider their contributions carefully and only add things which they truly appreciate. There is no point in simply going through the motions without much thought. Encourage them to stop and reflect on what they are thankful for to get the full benefit of those grateful feelings.