



*Brought to you by YOUR Organization*

Welcome to the Parenting Hub!

**November 2022**

**Channeling Gratitude:**

**Fostering Gratefulness within Your Family**



*Parent Connex<sup>TM</sup> is under the Beech Acres Parenting Center umbrella of programs.  
Serving children and all the adults in their lives for over 170 years.*

**November** is a time of  
**Thanksgiving** for many  
families.

But **GRATITUDE** is a  
strength that can be  
used all year round!

In this presentation, you will  
learn:

- Why gratitude is good for you.
- How to practice gratitude and model gratefulness to your child.

“

“WHAT SEPARATES  
PRIVILEGE FROM  
ENTITLEMENT IS  
GRATITUDE.”

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brene brown

## Helping our children be grateful can be hard!

The next few slides are about gratitude, why it is important and how to foster it in your family.

### Take a moment to think about you and your family's strength of gratitude:

- Would you say that overall, you use this strength?
- How are you modeling gratitude to your child/children?
- What practices could help you strengthen your gratitude muscle?

# Why Gratitude Is Good for You

- Research shows that gratitude is the key to joy. The benefits of a gratitude practice include improved **sleep quality, improved emotional regulation, increased feelings of happiness and positive mood, a sense of hope for the future, reduced stress and burn out, and increased resilience.**
- When we express gratitude, our brain release dopamine and serotonin, 2 neurotransmitters responsible for helping us feel good emotionally.



**MIND & BODY** | Articles & More

## How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain

New research is starting to explore how gratitude works to improve our mental health.

BY **JOSHUA BROWN, JOEL WONG** | JUNE 6, 2017

### How It Works: Calm the Nervous System

“Physiological changes associated with gratitude are typically a reduction in blood pressure and increase in vagal tone, which is taken as an index of increased parasympathetic influence on the peripheral nervous system,” says Dr. Emiliana Simon-Thomas, Science Director at the Greater Good Science Center. The parasympathetic nervous system (the part of the nervous system that allows our body to “rest and digest”) can help you conserve energy by slowing the heart rate, stimulating digestion, and contributing to overall relaxation.

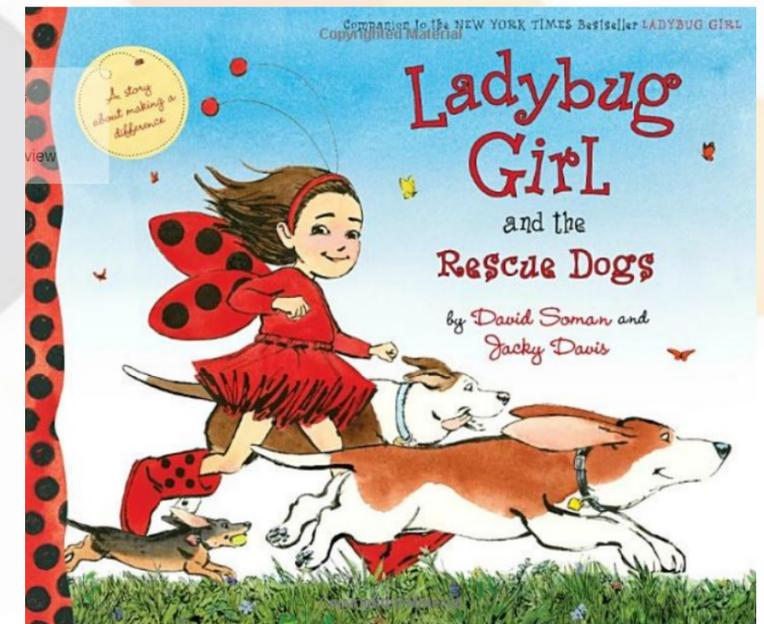
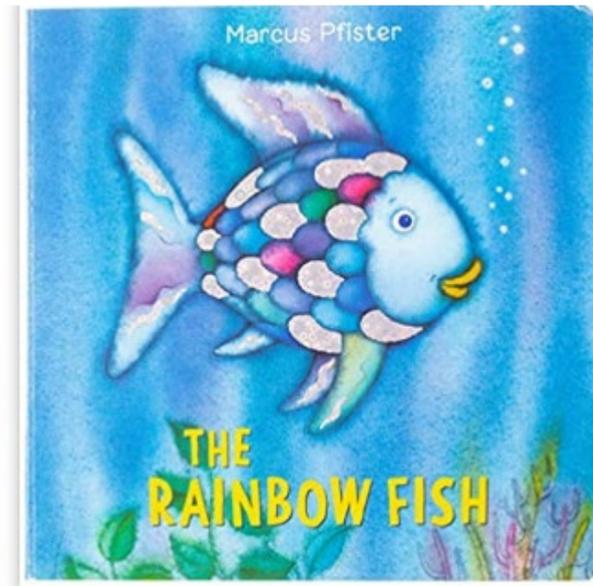
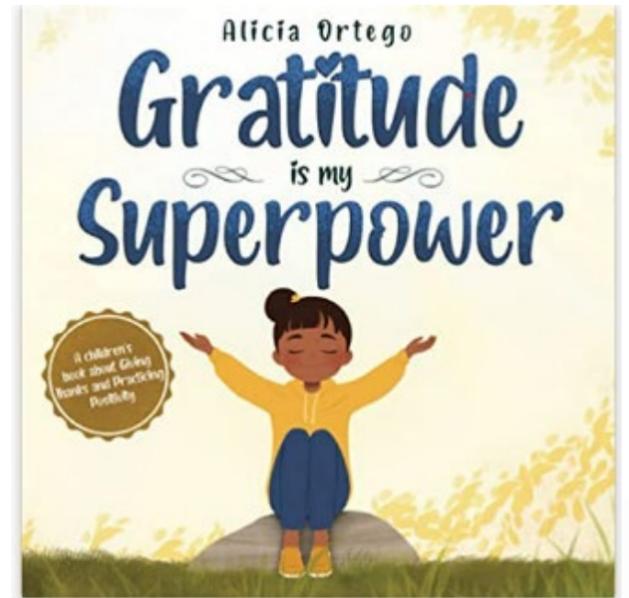


# Young Children:

Toddlers and preschoolers learn through play and their environment.

You can begin teaching gratitude at this age by...

1. Being an example: Express gratitude for your child.
2. Avoid complaining, say thank you as much as possible.
3. Include them in any gifts during Teacher Appreciation Days.
4. Read books to your child about gratitude and talk about what being thankful means.
5. Encourage them to draw pictures as thank you notes after their birthday or holidays.





# Young Children



Set an Intention to be mindful of and verbalize what you are grateful for.

*"Thank you for putting your clothes in the hamper."*

*"I'm so thankful Grandma could help us out today."*

*"I'm grateful we can have dinner together."*

Notice beauty and wonder in the little things around you. It helps foster gratitude and teaches mindfulness.

*"Look at the pretty leaves on the trees."*

*"Wow, look at the sky!"*

*"I see a neat bird on that bush."*

Try a gratitude scavenger hunt.

Make a list of 10 things your family is grateful for and go look for them at home, in nature, or anywhere!

Bring in a branch, grab some construction paper and build a Gratitude Tree.

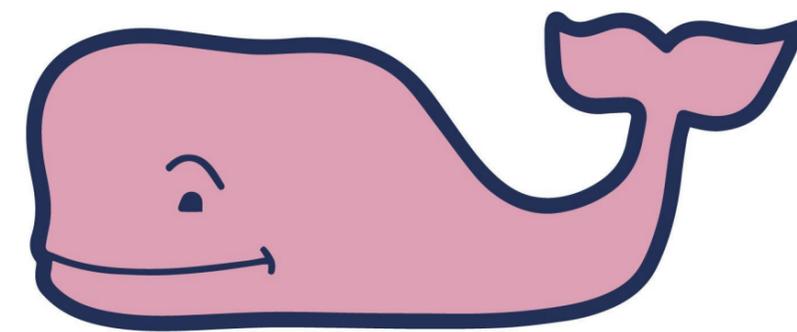
<https://beechacres.org/gratitude-tree-activity/>



## School Age

**Teach delayed gratification.** It helps teach self-regulation and self-control. Children tend to have immediate access to most things they want. Waiting for something increases their appreciation of it.

- **Encourage Planning.** Help kids create a plan for things they want and create short- and long-term goals. For example, if they want to buy a toy, create a plan to earn the money, prioritize the toy over other things they may want to buy, and celebrate when the goal is reached.
- **Set healthy boundaries.** For example, “All of my friends have phones! Why can’t I have one?” Acknowledge the feeling—it might be jealousy, or they may feel it is unfair. Explain that we all have different values and priorities. In our family, phones are something you get when \_\_\_\_\_.



**crocs**<sup>™</sup>





## School Age

- **Responsibility.** Teach responsibility using chores. By participating in chores, kids learn what is required to run a household and can raise their awareness of what's being done for them, which can increase gratitude.
- **Be an example.** By practicing gratitude, yourself. Shift your language from *"I have to"* to *"I get to"* (i.e., *"I have to go to the grocery store."* becomes *"I get to go to the store to buy what we need."*)
- **Avoid complaining.** It's ok to acknowledge a feeling of annoyance or frustration with something, but don't stay stuck on it and follow it up with gratitude. (i.e., *"Traffic is annoying, but I'm grateful to have some extra time in the car with you to talk."*)
- **Practice makes perfect.** Remind them after each practice to thank the coach. Ask them to write thank you notes after birthdays or holidays.



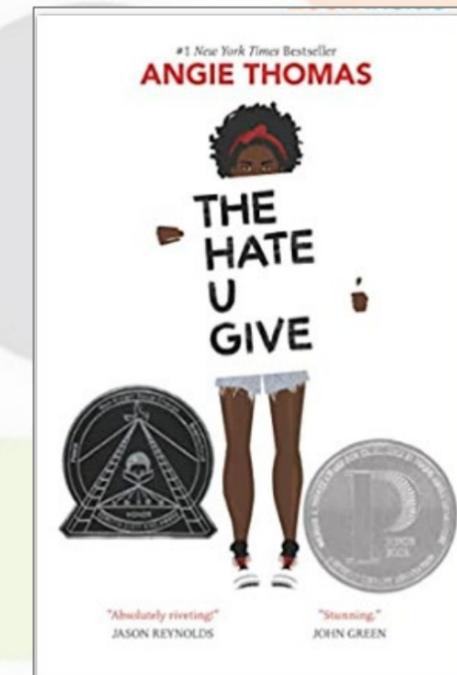


# Adolescents and Teenagers

- Continue with strategies used for younger children.
- Consider incorporating volunteerism and exposing them to different lives, cultures, and situations.
- Expose them to books and movies about lives and experiences different from theirs. Consider starting a book or movie club and getting a group of teens and parents together to discuss.



## Key Club

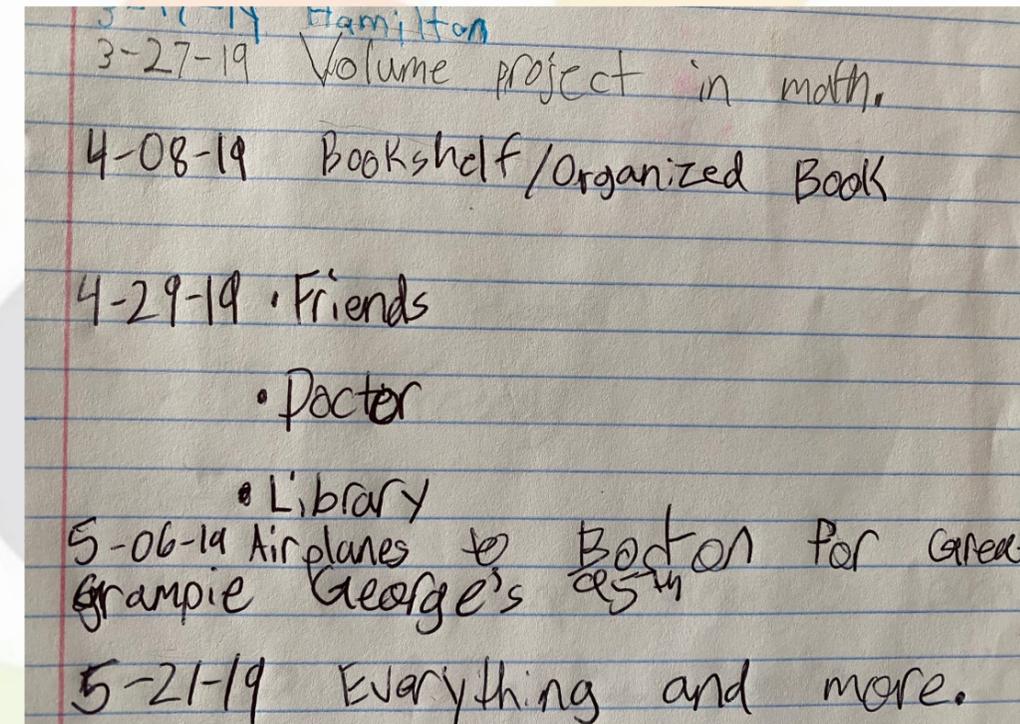
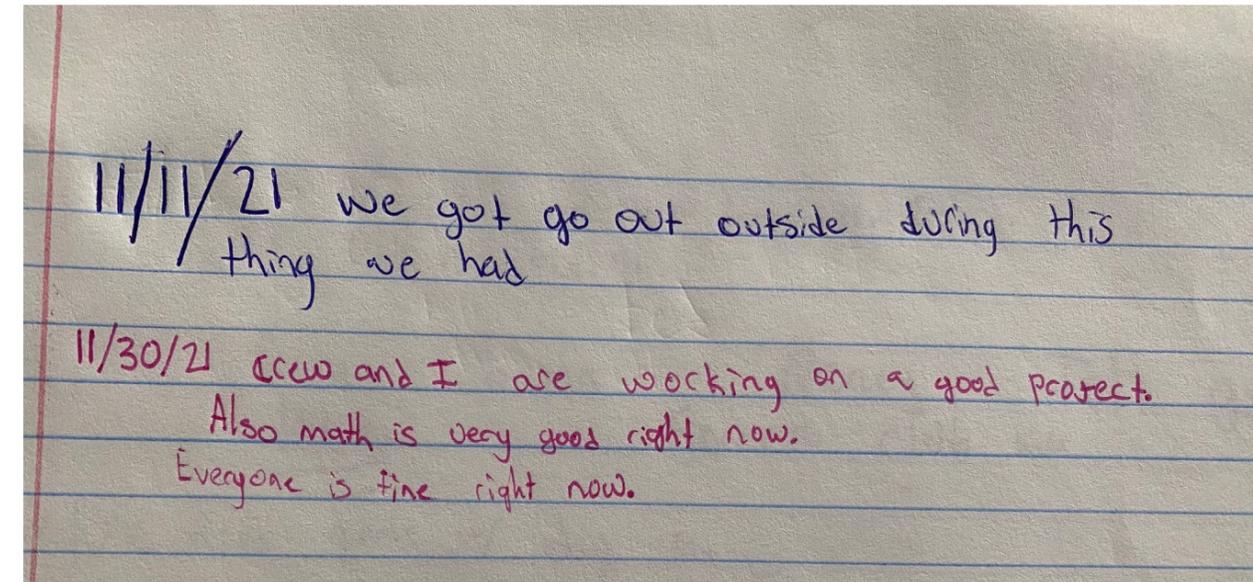


# Cultivating Gratitude as a Family

There are 3 stages of gratitude:

1. Recognizing what we are grateful for
2. Acknowledging it
3. Take a moment to appreciate it

- Map out where gratitude falls on each family members strengths list. Strength spot when someone in the family is displaying gratitude. Create a family challenge around catching each other being grateful.
- Buy gratitude journals for each family member to create a daily gratitude routine. For younger kids, you can write it for them, but they can add pictures. You can share at dinner or when the family is together. You can also write it down.
- Create a gratitude tree: <https://beechacres.org/gratitude-tree-activity/>
- Be intentional and point out things daily that bring you joy with your children. Stay in that moment for at least 60 seconds to truly capture the feelings of joy and gratitude.





# How are we doing?

Your voice matters. Please scan the QR code for a quick survey.



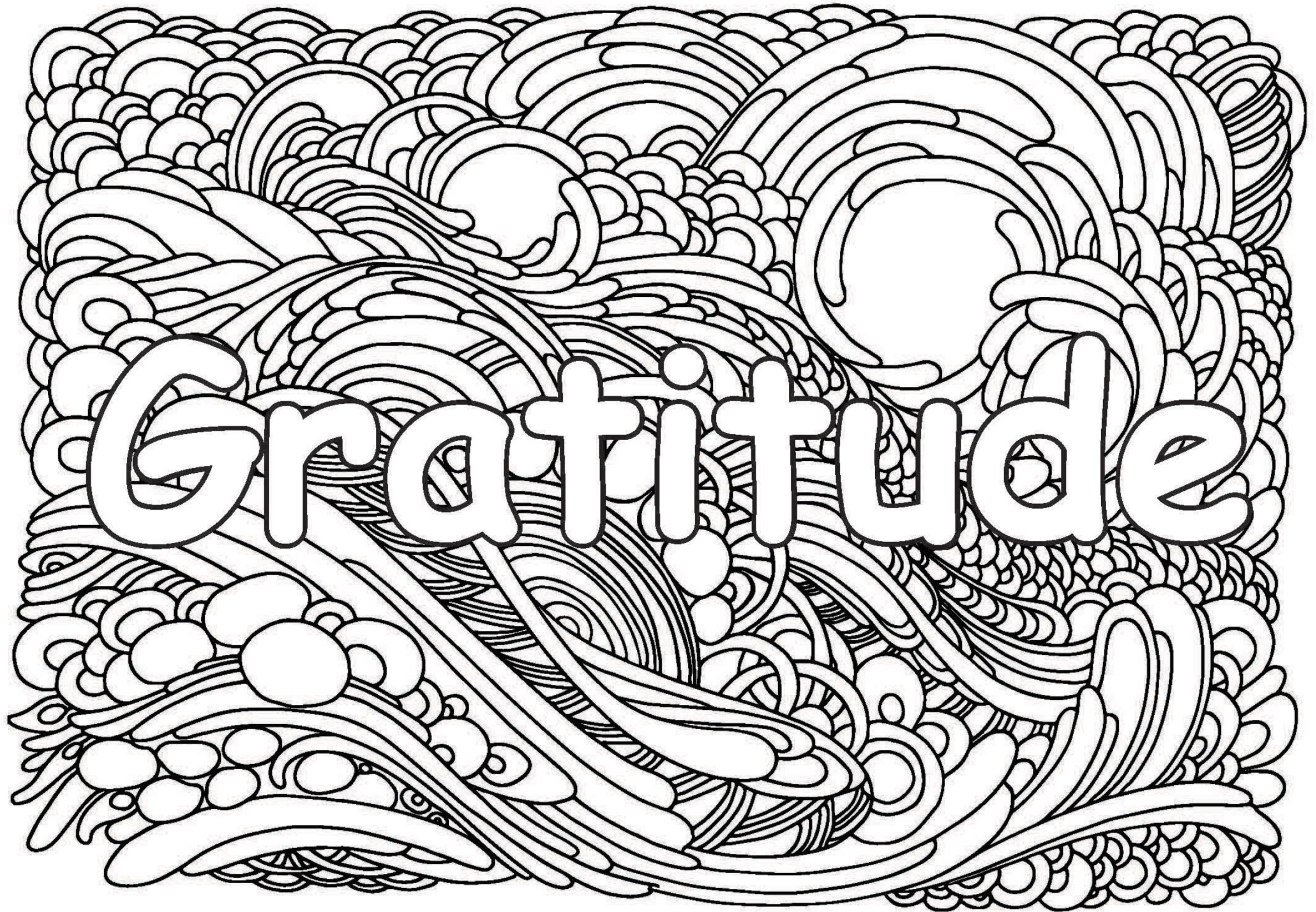
## Help us do better!

Our vision is a world where every child's natural strengths are nurtured so they realize their endless potential – use your **strength of honesty** to help us get there.

Answer 4 quick questions by scanning the QR code and enter to win a family game night package!



Take a mindful moment to talk about Gratitude while you color with your child.



# Strength Spotting your family!

Take the complete survey at

<https://www.viacharacter.org/>

Does **gratitude** fall in any of your family members' top strengths?

*\*You may notice a few character strengths have different names as we made it more kid-friendly...  
Social Intelligence = Friendship*



**Appreciation of Beauty**  
I value and respect the unique qualities in everything I see around me.



**Bravery**  
I take on challenges and speak up for what is right.



**Creativity**  
I can think of lots of ways to solve problems and use my imagination.



**Curiosity**  
I explore the world around me with an open mind and ask questions often.



**Fairness**  
I believe everyone should have the same opportunities.



**Forgiveness**  
I believe that everyone deserves a second chance. I can let things go.



**Friendship**  
I get along well with others and my friends can count on me.



**Gratitude**  
I appreciate the good things that happen to me.



**Honesty**  
I am open and truthful.



**Hope**  
I feel positive when I think about the future.



**Humility**  
I let my accomplishments speak for themselves.



**Humor**  
I like bringing a smile to others.



**Kindness**  
I am helpful and nice to others.



**Leadership**  
People value my opinion and look to me for direction.



**Love**  
I value my close relationships with others.



**Love of Learning**  
I get excited about discovering new things.



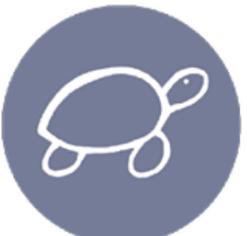
**Perseverance**  
I work hard to achieve my goals and don't give up.



**Perspective**  
I can see other people's points of view and offer good advice.



**Judgment**  
I am open-minded and think through my decisions.



**Prudence**  
I carefully and thoughtfully approach situations I encounter.



**Self-Control**  
I can stop, wait and manage my emotions.



**Sense of Meaning**  
I am discovering my purpose and place in the world.



**Teamwork**  
I like being part of a team and doing my share.



**Zest**  
I approach daily life with energy and excitement.

# Connect with us!

## Families Report a Positive Change in Just 3 Sessions and it LASTS 3 Months Later

After 3 Sessions	3 Months Later... Effect is Still Felt
 Satisfaction as a Parent ✓	 Satisfaction as a Parent ✓
 Self-Confidence in their Parenting ✓	 Self-Confidence in their Parenting ✓
 Relationship with their Child ✓	 Relationship with their Child ✓
 Improved Self-Care ✓	 Improved Self-Care ✓
 Overall Score ✓	 Overall Score ✓

General Population  
Statistically Significant Changes  
Seen at 95% Confidence Interval  
and p value <0.001

If you are interested in something more personal, feel free to contact Katie Helmes at [khelmes@beechacres.org](mailto:khelmes@beechacres.org) to set-up a **virtual** session with a Child Development expert.

In just 3 sessions, their approach has been proven to strengthen the parent/child relationship – with the effect lasting at least 3 months later.

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