



Gratitude 2: Gratitude and Happiness



Opening Affirmations:

Before we begin our Soul Talk, we want to remind you that we are coming together to learn from one another. This means that this is a safe place to share our ideas and questions. Please take the hand of the person to the right and left side of you and share one of two possible affirmations.

“I am happy to share my ideas with you.”

[or]

“I respect and honor you and your beliefs.”

The Heart of the Soul Discussion – Gratitude and Happiness

1. How do you think gratitude can make you feel happier?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- A lot of people feel happiness when they give to others
- People can feel better when they walk around with an attitude of gratitude. Which means they are happy to be thinking about and giving to others
- When you are focusing on being grateful and kind, it can be a lot harder to let other things get you down

2. Have you ever seen someone not be grateful? How did this affect them and the people they came in contact with?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- Sometimes when people are not being grateful or kind, it can make themselves and everyone around them feel unhappy

- Sometimes people are not aware that they are not being grateful. In those times, they may need a gentle reminder from those who care about them
- People may also need to learn through example. One of the best ways to learn about gratitude is by watching others practice it

3. Have you ever felt happiness through gratitude? What happened?

[Go around the circle and have everyone take a turn answering the question]

- You may have helped a friend and gotten to feel how thankful they were and how great it felt to help them
- Perhaps you felt happy after someone did something for you
- Maybe someone let you know how grateful they were to have you for a friend

Activity - Option 1: Free Lemonade -- Because You're Awesome!

Materials Needed:

Lemonade

Cups

Table and Chairs

"Free Lemonade ... because you're awesome!" Signs

Almost everyone has bought lemonade from a child's lemonade stand, but what if you gave the lemonade away for free? The idea behind this activity is to hold a lemonade sale, but without the sale part.

Directions:

- If you do not have access to hold a lemonade stand through your home, there may be a small business or place of worship that would be willing to help support this activity
- The children can help to make the lemonade and set up their stand
- For each person who comes up to receive their free lemonade, please practice saying "Thank you for being awesome!"
- Please feel free to substitute lemonade with hot chocolate, if you are practicing gratitude during the winter months

[Feel free to play one of our recommended songs while the kids work on this activity]

Follow Up Discussion:

How did it feel to create a lemonade stand and give the lemonade away for free? Did it feel different than when you may have sold lemonade? How did your customers react? Were they surprised to be given lemonade as a gesture of kindness? Were they happy? Why do you think this is? One of the best ways to feel happiness through gratitude is by giving to others. Not only do the people you are giving to feel gratitude, but you also feel it by being kind to others.

Story Time – Activity Option 2

[In order to complete this activity, your group will need a copy of one of the suggested books. Our library has a collection of books dedicated to each Soul Talk which is updated constantly! You can visit our library at the link below. Search for the Gratitude section.] https://spiritualplaydate.com/spiritual_playdate_library

Since our Soul Talk was about *Gratitude and Happiness*, we are going to read a book out loud. As you listen, start to think about how this story relates to what we just spoke about.

Calming Exercise - Meditation

[Invite the group to find a relaxing position, take a cushion if you are working on a hard floor. They may sit or lie down to be comfortable. Speak slightly slower in a soft, soothing tone throughout, pausing briefly between sentences. You may also play soft, instrumental music in the background]

Welcome to our Meditation Time: The time where we relax and connect to the spirit in and around us. I invite you to put a cushion on the floor, and to sit cross-legged, with a nice tall back and your hands relaxed in your lap. Quietly do that now, as we begin our meditation. *[Wait until all are settled to begin, then read the meditation script]*

Close your eyes and let your muscles relax. Take a slow, deep breath in – into the center of your body... as you silently count 1, 2, 3. Now you slowly breathe out, thinking 1,2,3. Breathe in — 1, 2, 3 ... breathe out – 1, 2, 3. Keep breathing in and out slowly and steadily.

When we are grateful, we see all the good that is happening in and around us. And when we start to see good, we become aware of more good things that we hadn't

noticed before. Seeing good, makes us feel good. *[Pause]* Have you ever noticed how good feelings are like ripples in a pond? They just keep expanding out and out and out, into bigger and bigger circles. Those ripples create good energy in everyone they touch. Take a moment now to imagine a beautiful, serene pond. *[Pause]* Imagine a beautiful dragonfly touching down on the smooth surface of the water. *[Pause]* Now see the ripples expanding out and out in ever-widening circles. *[Pause]* That's how gratitude works. An attitude of gratitude raises our energetic vibration, making us healthier, more positive, and more successful at what we're doing. Gratitude can open the door to more good things coming our way. Think of something or someone you are grateful for right now ... and let that happy feeling spread to every part of your body. *[Long pause]*

Now let's take one more deep breath in – 1, 2, 3. And one more deep breath out – 1, 2, 3. Now slowly open your eyes, and end our meditation by saying “Namaste.”

[Optional: Turn off music] [Optional: Say: Please return your cushion to its starting place]

Closing - Choose One:

Closing Affirmation - Option 1:

Turn to the person to your right, look them in the eye and say “I am happy I could share this time with you and hear about your beliefs.”

Closing Prayer - Option 2:

The light of god surrounds us
The love of god enfolds us
The power of god protects us
The presence of god watches over us
Wherever we are, god is and all is well!