



Gratitude 3: When to Be Grateful



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 – When to Be Grateful

1. When should you be grateful?

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

- People can be grateful when someone shows them kindness
- A lot of people may be grateful if they are helped by someone in some way
- Many people try to be grateful everyday because it can be easier to be grateful when you recognize all of the many things in life to be thankful for

2. What do you think the difference between giving thanks and accepting thanks is? Is one more important than the other?

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

- Giving thanks is appreciating an act of kindness from someone else

- Accepting thanks is acknowledging someone else's gratitude towards your kindness
- Both accepting thanks and giving thanks are equally important. Some people feel that in order to do one, you have to know how to do the other

3. Do you think gratitude can sometimes be taken for granted?

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

- People can sometimes expect certain things in their lives, leading them to forget to be grateful. For example, if you have a bed to sleep in every night, you may not realize that not everyone has that same gift
- Certain people have a hard time accepting thanks, this can sometimes lead to others forgetting to appreciate a kind act

4. Gratitude is a common theme in many different faiths. Why do you think that is?

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

- Many people feel that gratitude is directly linked to happiness. Happiness is something that most faiths recognize and celebrate
- A lot of faiths teach us to practice gratitude because they feel everything good comes from god

Activity - Option 1: The Gratitude Challenge

Materials Needed:

Multi-colored Paper

Scissors

Hole Punch

Yarn

Markers or Crayons

Directions:

- Use the scissors to cut the different pieces of paper into little squares. Around 5×5 would work, but you can go a bit smaller if you would like
- Think about why you are grateful and what you are grateful for.

- Once you have these images in mind, draw your gratitude on your paper as a picture or use words
- Punch a little hole at the top of the paper and string your yarn through
- Take your picture of what you are grateful for and find somewhere to hang it. This could be your meeting space, a tree outside, the refrigerator, a wall...anywhere you'd like
- Invite the kids to repeat this activity once a week or once a month, so you will have a beautiful display in pictures and words representing your gratitude

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

Follow Up Discussion:

How did it feel to write your gratitude down in words or draw it in a picture? Sometimes we can forget what we are grateful for or we can forget to recognize the gratitude because the things we are grateful for are always there. Thinking of a new reason to be grateful and seeing the symbol of that gratitude hanging on a wall or tree is a great reminder of how blessed we are. It can also be a reminder of the love and kindness we can give 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 *When to Be Grateful*, 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, then read the meditation script]*

Close your eyes and let your muscles relax into the floor. 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.

Anytime is the right time for gratitude because there is so much to be grateful for ... not just for things you have, but for being helped, loved, and supported. We set aside a holiday every year for just that reason: Thanksgiving Day. But you don't have to wait until November to be grateful. Everyday can be a Thanksgiving Day. No matter where you are, you can always take a moment to say "thank you" or show your gratitude through an action. You don't have to wait to write a thank you note. You can show your gratitude in the very moment something good comes into your life. See a beautiful sunset? Thank the god of your being right then and there for the wonderful world created for you. Have a good day at school? Thank your teacher before you leave. If a friend helps you out of a jam, help them when they need help. The time to be grateful is whenever you see or experience something good, no matter how big or how small. All good is worthy of gratitude. Take a moment now to think of something that you are grateful for in this moment. *[Long pause.]* You can keep track of all the good in your life by starting a Gratitude Journal. At the end of each day, just write down two or three things you were grateful for that day. You'll be amazed at how many good things you have to be thankful for.

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!