



Soulful Home

Finding the Sacred in
Everyday Spaces



Nurturing Gratitude
November 2025

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A Blessing of Gratitude

The Welcome Mat

What Does it Mean to be a Family of Gratitude?

I don't know about you, but when my kids were little, I carried around a mental checklist of things I wanted to teach them and milestones I hoped they'd reach. Manners were high on the list. I remember vividly teaching them to say *please* and *thank you*—and feeling so much pride the first time they said it on their own, without any prompting, during those early toddler years.

But when they grew from toddlers into kindergartners, already fluent in “thank you,” I found myself pausing. Had I done this the right way? Had I truly taught them gratitude, or just put them on autopilot? Was “thank you” simply the expected response, rather than a genuine expression of appreciation? No parent is perfect—we are all learning as we go. And this was a learning moment for me. While I was proud of their politeness, I was worried that they were missing something deeper. My role wasn't just to raise polite children, but to nurture grateful ones.

And then I began to notice they already *were* grateful. Kids have a way of spotting the smallest wonders—a funny-shaped cloud, a shiny rock, the way rain puddles ripple when you jump in them. At first, I brushed these off as distractions from our busy days. But then I realized: this was gratitude. This was the very thing I was afraid they didn't have. My children reminded me that gratitude often begins with noticing what is right in front of us. It isn't just about the big milestones or perfectly mastered manners—it's about slowing down and appreciating the ordinary gifts woven into our everyday lives.

Now that my kids are in their preteen and teen years, this lesson has stayed with me. And as we move into November—a month when many of us pause for Thanksgiving, when the days grow shorter and call us to reflect, when the year's end comes into sight—this memory plays on repeat.

Because here's the truth: gratitude is more than saying “thank you.” It's a spiritual practice. It helps us notice life's gifts, both large and small, and it shapes how we move through the world.

When we choose to live as a family of gratitude, we pause to notice the good around us—even in ordinary moments. These practices root us in appreciation and remind us that life, even with its challenges, is still full of gifts.

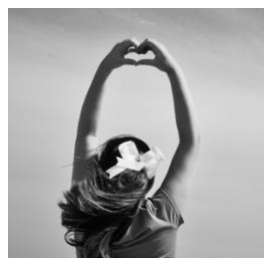
Being a family of gratitude doesn't mean ignoring struggles or pretending everything is easy. It means noticing beauty and kindness alongside the hard parts, and letting those moments strengthen us. When we nurture gratitude



together, we raise children who see the world as interconnected, abundant, and worth caring for.

So, this November, I invite you to wonder together: *What does gratitude look like in our family?* How might you carry gratitude outward, offering kindness and care as a way of giving thanks for the many gifts of life? May gratitude be both a blessing we give and a blessing we receive this month. And may it guide us into the winter with hearts open and full.

Blessed be,
April



At the Table

Exploring Gratitude Through Discussions

The At the Table section engages the theme through question-driven family discussions. The questions are designed to be used at a family gathering, most often dinner, but also during a quiet moment in the living room, before a board game night, or while driving in the car. This section strengthens family bonds as members learn more about each other through evocative questions.

How To Go About It

The most straightforward approach is to have parents and/or caregivers read off the questions they believe will resonate most with family members, and then have everyone take turns answering. Another fun way to do this is to create a family question jar. To make this easier, we've listed all the questions below at the end of this packet with dotted lines you can cut along to make "question strips." You can then pull out the question jar and have family members choose a question/strip a few times each week.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the *smallest* thing you've been thankful for?
2. What is the *biggest* thing you've been thankful for?
3. Who is the most grateful person you know? What makes you choose them?
4. Can you think of a time recently when you said "thank you" and it made someone else smile?
5. Is it easier to be thankful for big things (like birthdays, vacations) or small things (like a hug, a snack, sunshine)? Why?
6. Who is someone from the past (an ancestor, a historical figure, or someone who has died) that you feel grateful for?
7. What is a part of nature you are most thankful for? How can we show it care?
8. How does gratitude change the way we feel inside?
9. What's a time when someone recently thanked you? How did that feel?
10. How could we practice gratitude together as a family every day?
11. What's a challenge you've faced recently that you're actually grateful for, because it taught you something or helped you grow?
12. Can you think of someone who has influenced the person you are today? How could you show gratitude to them?
13. How does noticing small daily things you're thankful for change your perspective on stressful or frustrating moments?
14. How can you take your gratitude beyond words—through actions, art, or service?



At Play

Playing With Gratitude as a Family

At Play suggests games, crafts, and activities to help families experience the theme through joy and fun.

This Month's Treasure Hunt – Gratitude Detective

This month's treasure hunt, inspired by Mary Oliver, is all about discovering the small things we are grateful for and that bring us joy. Each week try to zoom in on something small in your life that you are thankful for (a dandelion, a pet's paw, a laugh with a friend, the smell of cookies, etc.). Collect them in a "Gratitude Chest" with drawings, notes, or photos so that, by the end of the month, you'll have a whole collection of everyday gifts to celebrate together.

1. Begin by gathering your supplies

- Markers, crayons, pencils
- A jar, box, or envelope to collect the magnifying glasses (your "treasure chest")

2. Each family member draws 4 separate magnifying glasses on 4 separate pieces of paper.

3. Searching for Treasure

- Each day, family members look for a tiny "gratitude treasure" in their world—a smell, sound, touch, taste, or sight that makes them smile, as well as big "gratitude treasure"
- At least once during the week, draw/write it in one of your magnifying glass sheets.
- On a family night (or Sunday dinner), share your "magnifying glasses" and add them to the treasure chest.

4. Bonus Challenge

Hide blank magnifying glasses around the house labeled "Gratitude Clues." Whoever finds one has to stop and write/draw a little gratitude treasure right then!

5. Closing Celebration (End of the Month)

- Open your treasure chest and spread out all the magnifying glasses
- Notice the variety—big and small treasures.
- Each family member chooses their favorite to share again.
- Close by saying together: "We've learned that gratitude grows when we notice life's little treasures. The more we look, the more we find."



Additional At Play Options

Option A: Thank You Cards

Gather as a family with craft supplies and invite everyone to think of someone they would like to thank— for a gift, a kind word or action, or simply for being part of their life. If you can't think of a "missed thank-you" (times when maybe you should have said thank you but didn't), try writing to someone you don't usually send a thank-you note to a teacher, a coach, a dentist, a sibling, or even a neighbor, and make and deliver thank-you cards.

Option B: My Gratitude Soup: Create Your Own

An arts and crafts version of the best-selling [Gratitude Soup](#) (see At the Bedside) that allows your child to make their own gratitude soup and teaches children about gratitude with a fun coloring and collage book.

Option C: Family Game Night

Gather the family (and friends) for a fun game night! Soul Matters has heard from many sources that the following games will surely get everyone flexing their **Gratitude** muscles! So give them a try this month and see if you agree!

- [Yeti In My Gratitude Spaghetti](#) (4+) - Transform your Yeti In My Spaghetti game to a gratitude game! Each time you pull out a piece of spaghetti, make a gratitude statement. The first person to make the Yeti fall loses the game.
- [Jenga Gratitude](#) (5+) - Write gratitude statements or gratitude prompts on Jenga blocks. Have the family and friends take turns removing a block and sharing, answering the grateful prompt on their chosen block. Then, place the block on top of the stack again (just like playing the regular Jenga game). The game ends when the stack falls.
- [Tapple](#): (5+) - Choose a category: "Things I'm thankful for" (or make it specific: people, foods, places, nature, community, etc.) List as many things as possible you're thankful for, using the letters of the alphabet.



At the Bedside and in the Book Nook

At The Bedside & In the Nook suggests books that help families engage the monthly themes with their imagination. This story-centered section honors the unique way stories enrich our sense of what's possible, expand our empathy, and build our identities.

Bear Says Thanks

by Jessica Love (suggested for kids 3-6)

A gentle and warm animal story that celebrates gratitude and friendship..

Invitation to Connect: *Parents, ask your children why they are grateful for their friends.*

Winter's Gifts

by Kaitlin B. Curtice (suggested for kids 3-8)

What can winter teach us? For one young Potawatomi girl, Dani, and her family, winter teaches us about rest, patience, and care. Can she help her classmates welcome Mother Earth's gifts of winter with gratitude?

Invitation to Connect: *Parents use this as an opportunity to talk with your kids about what part of nature they (and you) are grateful for and why*

Gratitude Soup

by Olive Rosewood (suggested for kids 5-9)

Violet the Fairy mixes “gratitude soup” by thinking of all the things she’s grateful for—inviting kids to imagine their own gratitude recipes.

Invitation to Connect: *Parents use this as an opportunity to talk about the ingredients in your family’s “gratitude soup.” What everyday blessings make life taste good? Have each family member add their own “ingredient” (big or small) to the recipe—whether it’s a hug, pancakes, sunshine, or time together.*

James and the Giant Peach

by Roald Dahl (suggested for kids 8-10)

“A story of an orphaned boy who befriends seven magical bugs he meets inside an equally magical peach is an amusing parable for when your kiddo’s attitude is lacking in gratitude.”

Invitation to Connect: *Parents leave this book out for your kids as an opportunity to reflect on their own attitude of gratitude.*

White Bird: A Wonder Story

by R.J. Palacio (suggested for kids 8-12)

“When Julian from the beloved Wonder world is assigned to write a school report about his family history, he interviews his grandmother, who tells him of growing up in France during WWII and receiving life-saving shelter from a boy she and her friends had previously snubbed. A poignant and beautiful graphic novel that inspires gratitude for friendship, forgiveness, and everyday heroism.”

Invitation to Connect: *Parents leave this book out for your kids as an opportunity to reflect on their own friendships and gratitude.*



In Front of the Screen

Watching Meaningful Movies Together

In Front of the Screen offers families ways to connect with the monthly theme and each other through movies and TV shows.

Bluey – "Hammerbarn" (Season 2, Episode 19) (G)

In this episode, Bluey and Bingo visit Hammerbarn, a large home improvement store, and want everything they see. When they are unable to buy everything, Mum reminds them that nothing lasts forever, and they should be thankful for what they have.

Invitation to Connect: After watching, talk about how it feels to not always get what you want and how to be grateful for what you have.

Encanto (PG)

Snuggle up as a family and watch this musical movie about gratitude for family, the gifts everyone brings, and how love works even when things aren't perfect.

Invitation to Connect: Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to talk with your kids about what their gifts are and why you are grateful for them.

Paddington in Peru (PG)

A heartwarming story and the next chapter in Paddington Bear's adventures that explores what "home" means, family love, and gratitude for kindness over material wealth.

Invitation to Connect: Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to talk with your kids about what home means to them and what kindnesses they are grateful for.

Forrest Gump (PG-13)

A great movie for older kids (12+), it reminds us that life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get. But whatever life gives you, take every opportunity and make the most of it.

Invitation to Connect: Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to have a family discussion. Click on this link for some questions to get you started:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IryLNKYJe_27inyvqLvnPODDIGHJcsUzzMlh2LU8FZg/edit?usp=sharing

CODA (PG-13)

A coming-of-age story for older kids (13+), about a young girl who is the only hearing member of a deaf family, highlighting gratitude for family bonds and the importance of communication.

Invitation to Connect: Parents, use this movie as an opportunity to have a family discussion. Click on this link for some questions to get you started:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IryLNKYJe_27inyvqLvnPODDIGHJcsUzzMlh2LU8FZg/edit?usp=sharing



In the Toolbox

Strategies to Help Our Kids and Ourselves Navigate the Complicated Stuff

In the Toolbox offers parents resources to better understand the well-established and newly emerging challenges of being a child today. It's all about equipping parents to be better guides and companions for their kids.

Resource One: A Grateful Family is a Happy Family

<https://sunshine-parenting.com/a-grateful-family-is-a-happy-family-5-practices/>

“Creating a grateful family culture is a challenge in our entitled, indulgent age. Yet research has confirmed what we intuitively know – Practicing gratitude and being grateful are keys to a happier life.”

Resource Two: Scarcity Mindset in Kids: Help Kids Embrace Abundance

<https://www.storybook-app.com/en/wellness/scarcity-mindset-in-kids>

“In today's world, it's easy for children to develop a scarcity mindset, where they feel there's never enough. This mindset can limit their potential and happiness. This article will help you discover practical strategies for helping children overcome a scarcity mindset and embrace abundance. Learn how to cultivate positive thinking properly.

Resource Three: Teaching Kids To Appreciate ~ Don't Just Be Sad It's Over!

<https://hereforyouforthem.com/blog/2019/8/8/teaching-kids-to-appreciate-dont-just-be-sad-its-over>

“How many times have you had a lovely experience out with your child, they are having a lovely time at the park, fun fair, or at a friend's house, and then when it's time to go they become sad, begin crying, and any sense of appreciation goes out of the window?...

Resource Four: Gratitude HD - Moving Art™

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj2ofrX7jAk&t=112s>

“A Moving Art original short. This inspirational video was well-received at TED conferences, and filmmaker Louie Schwartzberg motivates those around him as happiness is revealed. Spoken word and music montage created and composed by Gary Malkin. Narration written and spoken by Brother David Steindl-Rast.”

Resource Five: Seven Ways To Help Kids Build An Attitude Of Gratitude

<https://www.akronchildrens.org/inside/2024/09/20/seven-ways-to-help-your-kids-build-an-attitude-of-gratitude/>

“Gratitude is about focusing on what's good in our lives and being thankful for the things we have. Gratitude is pausing to notice and appreciate the things we often take for granted. Gratitude is about taking a moment to reflect on how fortunate we are when something good happens — whether big or small. With Thanksgiving around the corner, it's a good time to sit down with our families to reflect and be thankful for our many blessings. It's beneficial not just for raising polite, pleasant children, but perhaps more importantly for your kids' physical and emotional well-being, as well.”



On the Porch

Connecting and Sharing Stories with [Your Village](#)

On the Porch uses thoughtful questions to open space for you and your parenting partners or parent/caregiver friends to connect more deeply with each other and think more deeply about how the monthly theme has shown up in your life and can show up in a more intentional way.

How to Go About It

Bring these questions with you when the time comes to hang out with your co-parent or parenting/caregiver buddy. Treat the questions less as a quiz and more like doorways inviting you into the world of mutual storytelling and memory. Go through them all or pick a few that call to you the most.

Questions

1. When you think about gratitude as a spiritual practice, what does that mean to you? What do you want it to mean to your children?
2. How do you personally practice gratitude in your daily life, and how has it shaped you?
3. What are some ways you've seen your children naturally express gratitude? How has that inspired changes in the way you travel through the world?
4. How can we help our kids go beyond polite "thank yous" to cultivating a deeper sense of appreciation?
5. In what ways can gratitude connect us to our UU values of interconnectedness and respect for the earth?
6. Have you ever struggled with gratitude—or felt resistance to it?
7. What family rituals or traditions have helped gratitude take root in your home?
8. What's one small gratitude practice you'd like to try or strengthen in your family this month?
9. Have you ever experienced gratitude as a source of resilience during hard times?
10. How has parenting deepened your sense of gratitude?
11. Would living more simply help you feel more grateful?
12. What kinds of gratitude practices do you hope your child will carry with them into adulthood?
13. What messages about gratitude did you receive growing up—and how are you continuing or rewriting those messages in your own parenting?



Alongside the Chalice

Family spiritual practices and rituals are crucial for kids, youth, and adults. While lighting a chalice at home is a beautiful family practice, it can often be the only explicit UU identity practice we bring into our homes. So our Alongside the Chalice section offers a different UU practice, observance, or ritual for families to try out each month, with the hope that a few stick and become woven into the repeated and treasured rhythms of family life.

The Earth Centered Gratitude Practice

This spiritual practice of noticing the gifts of the Earth and returning that gift with care is a simple way to connect gratitude with action. It reminds us that saying “thank you” is powerful—and showing care makes gratitude even stronger. Each week, you’ll pause to say “thank you” for something in creation and take a small action of love to honor it as a way to nurture gratitude, deepen connection, and remember that the Earth and all its beings are sacred.

Instructions

- Each week of the month, pick a gift of the earth you’re thankful for. It could be water, trees, the sun, your pet, flowers, fresh air, or even your favorite fruit.
- To keep it at the front of your attention, , pause daily at dinner or before bed to say out loud (or in your heart), “Thank you, _____.”
- Identify and then, during the week, do one small action together as a family to care for that gift. For example:
 - If you choose water, turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth.
 - If you choose trees, pick up litter so the ground stays healthy.
 - If you chose birds, put out some birdseed or just listen quietly to their songs.
 - If you choose your pet, give them extra gentle care and attention.
- Keep a Gratitude Care Journal or Drawing. At the end of the week, have everyone in the family draw or write one sentence about an aspect they most appreciated about the action you picked. Also discuss the past week, using questions like:
 - “What felt the best — saying thank you or taking care?”
 - “Did showing care make you feel even more grateful?”

Family Gratitude Altar for Our Ancestors

This practice is about exploring how gratitude nurtures us by helping us remember the gifts of those who came before us. Many cultures and religions have special days in the fall when people honor loved ones who have died. One way they do this is by creating an altar—a special space to pause, give thanks, and feel connected.

What is an Altar?

An altar is a sacred place where people connect with their faith, offer prayers, and honor what is most important to them. In many cultures, families build altars to remember ancestors and to give thanks for the lives that shaped their own.



Building the Altar Together

Lay out a cloth or scarf as your altar base. As a family, place these items one by one, reflecting on their meaning:

- A Chalice
- A Photo or Drawing – This stands for someone special: a grandparent, friend, or ancestor. Say their name aloud and give thanks for their life.
- A Bowl of Water – Water reminds us that life flows from those who came before us. *In Pagan and Wiccan traditions, water is used at Samhain (Oct 31–Nov 1) to honor ancestors.*
- A Leaf or Flower – A leaf or flower reminds us of beauty, renewal, and the gifts our loved ones leave behind. *On Día de los Muertos (Nov 1–2), families in Mexico and Latin America use bright marigolds to guide ancestors home.*
- A Candle – The flame reminds us that love continues to shine in our hearts, even after someone is gone. *In many Christian traditions, on All Souls Day (Nov 2), candles are lit to remember those who have died.*

Altar Chalice Lighting Words

Parent or child lights the chalice and says:

*“Today we light our chalice in gratitude—
for the lives that came before us,
for the love that still surrounds us,
and for the memories that guide our way.”*

Closing Blessing Words

All together, holding hands or touching the altar:

*“We give thanks for our ancestors.
Their stories live in our hearts,
their love lives in our actions,
and their spirit shines in our world.
May we walk with gratitude,
today and always.”*

Attitude of Gratitude Yoga

For many, yoga is a beautiful form of centering, active meditation, and spiritual practice. Have fun trying these gratitude yoga sequences as a guide, embracing the idea of gratitude through movement.

- **Kids Yoga For Gratitude | Cosmic Kids Yoga**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJY3bMOGjR4>
- **Gratitude Yoga**
<https://www.kidsyogastories.com/gratitude-yoga-sequence/>
- **Gratitude Stretch (10min Flow)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeKAtRJa_aY



The Extra Mile

The Extra Mile section is for families who want to continue exploring the theme of the month through larger adventures, more complex projects, or simply through additional modalities not otherwise included in the packets. A bit more effort, but well worth it!

Make a Snack Basket For Delivery People

Making a snack basket for delivery people (holiday thank you basket) is a great way for you to show your gratitude and give back during the holidays. This super simple act of kindness and service project is a fun family activity that can be done to help focus on the reason for the season.

Instructions

- Choose a weather-proof basket or container that can hold up to the elements when outside.
- Choose your snacks and drinks. Arrange them in your basket. (Or place snacks in resealable bags so they can just grab a Ziploc bag and go.) Set aside.
- Print or color a sign for your basket. Your sign should include a thank-you message and directions on what to do. (For example, "Please take a few snacks with you for your long day.")
- Laminate or place your sign in a protective sheet to protect it from the elements and attach it to the front of your basket.
- Place your basket by your front door (or where your deliveries are usually dropped) first thing in the morning. Don't forget to bring it in each night! (Right before bedtime is good, as deliveries run late sometimes.)
- Restock and rearrange your basket each morning before placing it outside again.



Blessing of Gratitude

Dear fellow eye openers and gratitude guiders.
This blessing is for you.

May you remember that gratitude is not a perfect word,
but a way of living, noticing, and cherishing what is.

And in that remembering, may your hearts stay open wide, and your eyes
keep seeing the ordinary miracles around you.

May your hands reach out in thanks and care, ready to nurture, support,
and celebrate those you love.

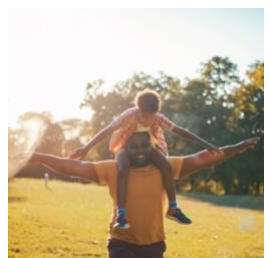
May you notice the gifts your children carry and the gifts they bring to you,
and may these moments of gratitude fill your home with warmth and
connection.

May gratitude flow through your home like sunlight—
warming you in hard seasons, brightening even ordinary days.
And may your home be a place where thankfulness grows naturally,
rooted in love, laughter, and the small wonders of each day.

May you model for your children that gratitude is a gift we give ourselves as
much as we give to others.

Blessed be, and may it be so.

~ ***April Rosario***



Question Jar Cut-Outs

*We invite you to write your own questions as well
We also remind you that questions that evoke stories are often the most impactful.*

What is the smallest thing you've been thankful for?

What is the biggest thing you've been thankful for?

Who is the most grateful person you know? What makes you choose them?

Can you think of a time recently when you said, "thank you" and it made someone else smile?

Is it easier to be thankful for big things (like birthdays, vacations) or small things (like a hug, a snack, sunshine)? Why?

Who is someone from the past (an ancestor, a historical figure, or someone who has died) that you feel grateful for?

**What is a part of nature you are most thankful for?
How can we show it care?**

How does gratitude change the way we feel inside?

**What's a time when someone recently thanked you?
How did that feel?**

How could we practice gratitude together as a family every day?

What's a challenge you've faced recently that you're actually grateful for, because it taught you something or helped you grow?

Can you think of someone who has influenced the person you are today? How could you show gratitude to them?

How does noticing small daily things you're thankful for change your perspective on stressful or frustrating moments?

How can you take your gratitude beyond words—through actions, art, or service?

Connect With More Inspiration For You and Your Family!

Parents can Join our Facebook and Instagram pages for
daily Inspiration on our themes:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/?ref=settings>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/soul_matters_circle/

Parents and youth will want to check out
our [Spotify](#) & [YouTube](#) music playlists on the monthly themes.

Credits

Soulful Home packets are prepared by

April Rosario,

Our Soul Matters Director of RE Resources and [Family Ministry Coordinator](#)

You are free to use any of this material verbatim in worship, newsletters
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