**The Virtue of THANKFULNESS: Discussion and Reflections for Parents**

**What is thankfulness?**

Thankfulness is gratitude for all the bounties of life. Expressing thanks connects us to others and brings them joy. Each day, we find a moment to count our blessings. Reflecting on the treasures in our lives lifts our spirits. Thankfulness soothes our sadness and restores our hope. It gives us perspective. As we practice thankfulness, we attract more and more blessings, because thanksgiving is conducive to bounty. Thankfulness is a path to contentment.

**Why Practice Thankfulness?**

Without thankfulness people would stay focused on negativity. They would do nothing but whine and complain. They would miss the beauty of life and the power of learning, especially during difficult times.

No matter how difficult or dark things become, there is always light. There is something to learn in every painful situation. In fact, sometimes when you look back at a really hard test in your life and realize what you learned, that is when you feel the most grateful of all.

Thanksgiving is conducive to bounty. When you open your heart by giving thanks to the Creator, you create more room for the flow of good things to come. Thankfulness leads to optimism. And when you expect the best, you often find it.

**How Do You Practice It?**

You practice thankfulness by noticing the beauty around you and within you. Then let yourself feel the gratitude in your heart.

Count your blessings often, especially when you are having a hard time. Find the lessons in all things for they are the true gifts of this life. Avoid envy because it can destroy your trust. The moment you envy someone else, you are rejecting the gifts that are yours.

If you want to practice thankfulness, learn to receive. It is blessed to give, and it is blessed to receive. Everyone needs to have the opportunity to give, including the people who care for you. Be optimistic by being receptive to life rather than allowing fear or worry to control you.

To practice thankfulness, appreciate little things -- a flower by the road, the stars at night, a challenge met, a laugh with a friend, a sorrow shared. To be truly thankful, don't wait for a dream to be fulfilled. Celebrate the moment.

**Virtues Reflection Questions**

* What relationships or people are you thankful for and what is it about them that you appreciate?
* Who would you like to thank? How would you like to thank them?
* What things in your life are you most thankful for?
* What is someone lie who rarely, if ever, experiences gratitude?
* When is it hardest for you to be thankful?
* What would help you to be thankful at times like that?
* What are you most thankful for about yourself?
* Describe a difficult time in your life and name the lesson or virtue you learned from it.

Affirmation

I am thankful for the many gifts within me and around me today.

I celebrate each moment by opening myself to beauty and to learning.

I expect the best.

**Quotable Quotes:**

"Have an attitude of gratitude."

- Alcoholics Anonymous Slogan

"For what has been - - thanks! For what shall be - - yes!"

- Dag Hammerskold

"Every morning, when we wake up, we have 24 brand new hours to live. What a precious gift!"

- Thich Nhat Han

"Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are."

- Mary Jean Iron

"We receive more than we can ever give."

- Sir Thomas More

"The more we give, the more will come to us."

- Peggy Jenkins