



How to Help Your Child Be More Thankful



Paul said he learned to be content whether things were good or bad. (Philippians 4:11-13) How can we help our kids *learn* to be thankful?

Model thankfulness. In reality, we could say that about everything. What we *do* speaks louder than what we say. Are you thankful or do they see you complaining about what you don't have?

Teach them to say thank you and to write a thank you note. Role-play gift giving and let them practice saying thank you as they look the gift giver in the eye. If they drag their feet writing a thank you note, put away the gift until the thank you note has been written.

Keep track of blessings.

- Have a gratitude jar. Place slips of paper and a pencil beside a jar and write the blessing and add it to the jar.
- Tape four or five pieces of copy paper together and write each letter of the alphabet on the paper vertically. Write your blessings beside each letter. (I – Ice cream)
- Cut copy or construction paper in strips (1 inch wide by length of paper). Write one thing you are thankful for on each strip and see how quickly and how long it can grow.
- Take the *100 Gifts Challenge* and think of 100 things that you are glad God has given to/provided for you? Write the numbers 1-100 on the paper and keep a running list. Every time anyone thinks of something they are glad they have, add it to the list. Don't forget to add simple things: jelly for toast, running water, clean socks, etc.

Squelch complaining. Complaining can easily become a habit, so help kids learn to be content by making a new rule: **For every complaint, they must say 3 good things.**

Complaint: *Why do we always have mashed potatoes? I don't like lumpy potatoes.*

3 good things:

- *I'm glad we have peas. They're my favorite.*
- *I'm happy that we have food to eat.*
- *I'm glad that Mom makes us dinner.*

Give to others. It really is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 20:35). Ask them to donate their good used toys. Pack a shoebox for a child in need with Samaritan's Purse. (www.samaritanspurse.org)

P.S. Don't give them everything they want.