

"Virtues to Live by"

Before You Begin – An overview for teachers

Thankfulness Definition and Biblical Sources

Thankfulness

"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."

(Psalm 106:1)

Definition

You show you are grateful for all that you have.

You are grateful for all the people you know and all the things that happen around you each day. You grow in wonder about the world and see the world and your life as a gift from God. You accept the gifts you have and use your gifts to benefit others. Being thankful helps you to be generous to others.

Biblical sources

"Be thankful." (Colossians 3:15)

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." (Colossians 4:2)

"I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds." (Psalm 9:1)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6)

"For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." (1 Timothy 4:4-5)

"Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Catholic Source

Obedience to God's commandments should flow from a personal relationship with the Father and from a place of gratitude for the good things he has done in one's life.

"The Christian life is above all the grateful response to a generous Father."

"Gratitude is a characteristic trait of the heart visited by the Holy Spirit; to obey God we must first remember his benefits."

"Whoever does not let those benefits fall into oblivion, is oriented towards good virtue and to every work of justice," Pope Francis said, quoting St. Basil.

Francis asked Catholics to perform a small exercise, asking themselves, in the silence of their hearts, "How much has God done for me? How many beautiful things has God done for me?"

Christians must exercise their memories to remember “how generous is our Heavenly Father!” he continued, criticizing Christians who focus only on following “duties,” while reporting that they do not have a personal relationship with God, “our Father.” Pope Francis

Why Practice Thankfulness?

When you open your heart by giving thanks to God our creator, you create more space for more good things to come. When you look for all the blessings in your life you begin to feel more grateful and thankful for all the wonderful gifts we are given daily. We begin to see more beauty in the world. Thankfulness often leads to optimism. Often when you expect the best, you often find it.

How do we Practice Thankfulness?

A good way to practice thankfulness is by taking time to notice the beauty around you and within yourself. Appreciate the little things in life – water to drink, a flower in the garden or along the roadside, the sunrise and sunset, the trees moving in the breeze etc. Count your blessings every day, especially when you are facing difficulties. We can learn something new in every situation and we should be grateful for all opportunities to learn and grow. Live in the present moment and live it to the full - try not to think too much about the past and future. Try not to compare your life with others – be grateful for all you have.

Key Words:

Thankyou, grateful, appreciate, content, delighted , pleased, satisfied.

1 Peter 1:3-12

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope, and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away.

They are for you, who through faith are kept safe by God's power for the salvation which is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer.

Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure.

Then you will receive praise and glory and honor on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed.

You love him, although you have not seen him, and you believe in him, although you do not now see him. So you rejoice with a great and glorious joy which words cannot express, because you are receiving the salvation of your souls, which is the purpose of your faith in him.

It was concerning this salvation that the prophets made careful search and investigation, and they prophesied about this gift which God would give you.

They tried to find out when the time would be and how it would come. This was the time to which Christ's Spirit in them was pointing, in predicting the sufferings that Christ would have to endure and the glory that would follow.

God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own benefit, but for yours, as they spoke about those things which you have now heard from the messengers who announced the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. These are things which even the angels would like to understand.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving - Psalm 138

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart;
I sing praise to you before the gods.
I face your holy Temple,
bow down, and praise your name
because of your constant love and faithfulness,
because you have shown that your name and your commands are supreme. ^[b]
You answered me when I called to you;
with your strength you strengthened me.

All the kings in the world will praise you, Lord,
because they have heard your promises.
They will sing about what you have done
and about your great glory.
Even though you are so high above,
you care for the lowly,
and the proud cannot hide from you.

When I am surrounded by troubles,
you keep me safe.
You oppose my angry enemies
and save me by your power.
You will do everything you have promised;
Lord, your love is eternal.
Complete the work that you have begun.

Signs you are Thankfulness:

I can say thank you to God
I take time to appreciate the awe and wonder in God's creation
I show God I am thankful to Him by cherishing the gifts of His creation
I am thankful for all the gifts in me and around me
I count my blessings every day and remember to praise God for them
I know that all I have is a gift from God

Other ideas:

Gratitude Circle – Children clasp their hands in front of them and form a basket shape. Child says, 'In my gratitude basket I have eg. my brother, my puppy.'

Poster – draw a poster / collage of things & people for which you are thankful

Reflection Questions:

Who would you like to thank? How would you like to thank them?

What things in your life are you most thankful for?

When is it hardest for you to be thankful?

Think of a difficult time in your life and think about what lesson or virtue you learned from it.

Quotes:

"This is a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before." Maya Angelou

"In ordinary life, we hardly realise that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude." Alfred North Whitehead

'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

' Every morning, when we wake up, we have twenty-four brand new hours to live. What a precious gift!' Thich Nhat Han

"Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude." A.A. Milne