



Bring this completed paper to class with you on
Sunday, Dec. 3rd or Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023.

Name _____

A Grateful Heart

This month of November is a perfect time to find ways to cultivate expressions of gratitude. Below are 3 simple activities you can do with your family to celebrate the Thanksgiving spirit. Each one will nourish the sense of appreciation, inspiration, and awe that come in tandem with a grateful heart. For your faith in action this week, please choose ONE and have fun! Have a happy and blessed Thanksgiving.

We invite you to join us on Thanksgiving Day for Mass at 10AM.

More fun: Join us in making a new family tradition and join us in making an Advent Wreath on Sunday, Dec. 3rd after classes! Register online now to secure your space and materials for this beautiful seasonal family project.

Cultivate Gratitude by Sharing Blessings with Others: Challenge each member of your family to commit five conscious acts of kindness throughout the course of one day. These need not be big things. Simply holding the door open for someone, paying for someone's coffee, or sincerely complimenting a friend or coworker will do the trick. The only catch is that these actions must be premeditated. In other words, you cannot look back over the day and declare generous actions "conscious kindness". Every family member must decide prior to acting that the behavior will be an intentional measure of kindness. After doing this for one day, compare notes on what each family member did and the feelings generated by their actions. Inevitably, gratitude for the blessings in one's own life, as well as thankfulness for the ability to bring joy to others, will become conversation starters. As psychologist Shawn Achor writes in his book, *The Happiness Advantage*, "A long line of empirical research, including one study of over 2,000 people, has shown that acts of altruism—giving to friends and strangers alike—decrease stress and strongly contribute to enhanced mental health." Once your family experiences the benefits of conscious kindness, you may decide to make it a regular family activity.

Create a Thankfulness Centerpiece: For the young and the young at heart, a tangible thankfulness tree can bring gratitude to life. This can also serve as a lovely centerpiece for your Thanksgiving table, perhaps even offering guests the opportunity to participate in its creation. Here are the basic instructions:

- Begin by going outside and finding some long, thin branches (you can also find these at a crafts store). Spray paint them a color of your choice and place them in a tall vase.
- Next, cut circles the size of a silver dollar out of card stock. Punch a hole in the top of each circle and lace a pretty ribbon through each one.
- Have the members of your family write one thing that they are grateful for on a circle and then hang it from one of the branches. Thanksgiving visitors may be invited to participate in this expression of gratitude as well.

Write a Family Gratitude Poem: A gratitude poem is a fun way to engage the entire family, even those who are not local. Begin by writing a single line of poetry that expresses something for which you are grateful. For example, "The sun that warms my face." Then pass your line of poetry to the next person, who will compose a line themselves. For extra fun, the second person might end their line with a rhyming word, such as, "The goodness of God's grace." The poem can be started at the family dinner table and then emailed to out-of-town relatives so that they can add their line of gratitude too. The end result is a fun, festive family poem. Not only will the poem remind you of your family's abundant blessings, you will likely expand your gratitude for those who share the adventure with you.

******Please take a moment to write a little about what your family chose and share more about it on the back of this paper.******