DEMONSTRATING GRATITUDE

A YEAR FULL OF THANK-YOU DAYS

ED U. GATOR’S GRANDPA IS GRATEFUL

OPRAH WINFREY LOVES BOOKS
Everybody likes to have fun, and what’s more fun than celebrating something special? On New Year’s Eve, the whole world celebrates the end of one year, and the start of a brand new one. You can imagine what a tremendous New Year’s Eve party there’ll be in the year 2000! Many holidays throughout the year celebrate a person, or an event. Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and Grandparent’s Day are good examples of “gratitude” days, or days when we say thanks and show our appreciation for special people in our lives. On Veteran’s Day we show gratitude for the men and women who have defended this country around the world. On President’s Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we take time to remember the great leaders of our country who struggled for our rights and freedoms. On Arbor Day and Earth Day we show our appreciation for the earth and its natural resources. There’s no end to the people and things that deserve our gratitude!

A great way to show gratitude is to give somebody flowers, a present or a thoughtful card. But there’s a much easier way to show gratitude that doesn’t cost a dime! Being polite and saying “thank you” and “you’re welcome” shows gratitude. Being loyal and faithful to your friends and family shows gratitude. Just treating other people, young and old, with respect shows gratitude. Handshakes, hugs and kind words show gratitude, and make other people grateful to you! And you know what’s the best part? You don’t have to wait for a birthday or Thanksgiving or the Fourth of July to say thanks. You can spread a little gratitude all year long!

Activity:

Think of a good friend who might deserve an “I’m GRATEFUL FOR YOU DAY.” Then decide what you could do for your friend that would show your gratitude and appreciation.
DEMONSTRATING GRATITUDE • 3

Hi, loyal friends! Ed here. Last Thursday in school, we celebrated Teacher Appreciation Day. It didn't sound like much fun when Ms. Gloria first announced it, but the more I thought about how much I'd learned from Mr. Salam Ander this year, the more I felt like thanking him. For two days, I racked my brain trying to think of a cool way to show my gratitude. Then it hit me! I decided to take a photograph of the whole class and give it to Mr. Ander. Other kids came up with great ideas, too. Alice made Mr. Ander a neat paper weight for his desk. Franklin made him a batch of chocolate chip cookies, Mr. Ander's favorite! Gabe bought Mr. Ander a really nice journal, and Will gave him a button that said "TEACHER OF THE YEAR!" It turned out to be a lot of fun showing gratitude, and Mr. Ander seemed grateful to us for our gifts and kind words. Thursday afternoon he sent us home without any homework!

Well, the feeling of gratitude must have been in the air that day. After dinner, Gramps did something that really surprised the whole family. He sat us down in the living room and told us one by one how much he appreciated us. He said he was grateful for our comfortable house. He told us he was thankful for our feeding him, and taking care of him when he was flat on his back. He said he was especially grateful to us for putting up with his crankiness and grumpiness all these years. Then he did something I've never seen him do. He started crying! We all stood up, gathered around Gramps, and gave him a big warm family hug. Dad told him how much we appreciated him, too.

Before I fell asleep that night, I laid in bed and thought about Gramps, Mr. Ander, Mom and Dad and even El. I thought about my good friends at school, too. I realized I can be grateful for a bunch of special people in my life. But it's funny, I might not have thought about it if Ms. Gloria hadn't come up with the "Appreciation Day" idea. I'm grateful she did!

QUESTIONS:

1) What were some of the ways Ed's classmates showed their gratitude for Mr. Ander? What kinds of things could you do on a "TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY"?

2) How did showing gratitude for Mr. Ander go both ways?

3) What was Gramps thankful to Ed's family for?

4) What did Ed think about before bed?

5) Who are the people you're grateful for in your life? In what ways do you show them your appreciation?
HALLMARK NEEDS YOU

Directions: Greeting card companies hire people to think of clever things to put on cards. Some people buy cards just to tell someone else “thanks” for something. On the lines below, see if you can come up with your own original “grateful greetings.” If you get stuck, think about somebody special in your life. What nice things would you say to that person that would convey your appreciation?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

DESIGN YOUR OWN GRATEFUL GREETING CARD

Directions: Pick your favorite line from the activity above, and design a whole card to go with it. Use crayons, markers, glue, confetti, glitter, stickers or whatever strikes your fancy! Then, when you’re done, give it to someone who deserves your kind words and hard work!
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: The newspaper is filled with advertisements for all kinds of products. With a special person in mind, look through the paper and try to find something that you would get for that person if you could. Of course, it’s not necessary to really buy it. As the saying goes, it’s the thought that counts!

HOW AM I GRATEFUL? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

Directions: Think about a close friend, a parent, a grandparent, a neighbor or a teacher. On the lines below, make a list of those things you really appreciate about that person.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
About the last thing Seth wanted to do on a beautiful spring Saturday was go to his cousin’s wedding. He wasn’t looking forward to sitting through a long ceremony, or standing around bored at the reception, eating food with funny names and listening to some silly band play old timey songs that his parents liked. And Seth liked wearing a fancy suit least of all. He was pretty upset about missing a baseball game, and he grumbled and moped the whole way to the church.

But Seth was pleasantly surprised. The ceremony was over before he knew it, and the minister even said some funny things that made everybody laugh. The reception was outdoors, and the food turned out to be hot dogs, hamburgers and barbecued chicken! But for Seth, the biggest surprise was the band. It was a rock and roll band with drums, electric guitars and a saxophonist. He knew every song they played! At one point, he even got up and danced with his cousin. Seth was especially impressed by the saxophonist, who took long, incredible solos in many of the tunes. “That’s what I want to play!” thought Seth to himself.

For weeks, Seth couldn’t get the sound of that saxophone out of his head. One night, he asked his dad if he could take saxophone lessons. “Only if you promise to stick with it,” said his dad. Seth promised, and his dad made some phone calls to several music stores. He finally found a woman in town who taught saxophone. The very next Monday, Seth had his first music lesson. He was a little disappointed when he tried to blow into the mouthpiece and no sound came out. Mrs. Ryan, his instructor, explained to Seth about placing his lips in the right position, and about breathing right. Seth expected to be playing a song right away! Mrs. Ryan told him learning an instrument takes a lot of time, patience and practice. Seth was eager to learn how to play like that musician at the wedding, so he practiced for two hours every day. He was frustrated at first, but after awhile, sweet sounds started coming out. Then came pretty notes, and after two months, Seth was able to do his scales reasonably well. Then he learned a few easy songs. Mrs. Ryan said she was really proud of his hard work, and Seth was pretty proud of himself, too. The more notes he learned, the more he played. Seth’s dad had to remind him from time to time that his homework was important, too.

In the fall, there was a recital for all of Mrs. Ryan’s music students at the elementary school. It was Seth’s first time playing in front of an audience! For several weeks he had practiced his two solo pieces over and over again until every note was perfectly clear. When it was Seth’s time to perform he was a little nervous, especially since his whole family was there. But he stood tall, took a deep breath and played both songs without a sour note. When he was done, the sound of applause was music to his ears! Mrs. Ryan was sitting in the first row, beaming with pride.

After the recital, Seth found Mrs. Ryan in the lobby of the auditorium. He walked up and gave her a big hug. “I am so grateful to you for teaching me how to play,” he said. “I am very lucky to be your student.”

“Ah,” said Mrs. Ryan, “and I am incredibly grateful to you, for studying so hard, for learning so well, and for making me look good. I’m lucky to be your teacher!”
Oprah Winfrey has a lot for which to be thankful. Her success as a popular talk show host has made her famous all over the world. She has also achieved recognition as an actress and a producer of films and television shows. This past year, Winfrey added another component to her extensive media presence: Oprah's Book Club. Winfrey uses the club to introduce millions of readers in her television audience to some of her favorite books by some of her favorite authors. She has said, “I want to get the whole country reading again.” As in many of her other endeavors, Winfrey’s book club has been a tremendous success. Book sales for her reading selections have increased exponentially. And although some of her literary choices have been difficult to read, her loyal audience has stuck with her; and the books.

As you might expect, the authors and publishers of these books have been extremely grateful to Winfrey for giving their works her “seal of approval.” But Winfrey is just showing her gratitude to writers for her life-long love of literature. Books have always been very important to her; and through her appreciation she has motivated millions of others to relish reading. Winfrey is especially grateful to her stepmother; who encouraged her to read books as a child instead of watch television, which is, ironically, the medium that has made this reading revolution possible.

VOCABULARY:
Component: a part of something.
Endeavor: a serious attempt or effort.
Exponentially: a number multiplied by itself many times.
Ironic: when the actual result differs from the expected.
Medium: a means for communicating information to many people.
Relish: enjoy.
TIPS

1) As always, kids learn best by example. The more times they hear you and other adults say “thank you” and “you’re welcome,” the more they’ll assume these pleasantries are an integral, and everyday part of social interactions.

2) Take every opportunity to show your child how much you appreciate him. Make a big deal about his accomplishments, like his artwork, projects, completed homework or good report cards. Acknowledge his efforts, even if his attempts fall short of complete success. Give your child an occasional hug, for no reason at all!

3) Many of us choose the places we go, like banks, gas stations, restaurants and grocery stores because we appreciate the level of quality and service we receive at these locations. We show our gratitude to these people and places by becoming loyal customers. Explain to your child what keeps you coming back to these high-quality, service-oriented establishments.

4) It’s often difficult to explain to a young child about “being grateful” for siblings and friends. Try to show how the qualities of loyalty, faithfulness and respect for others contribute to gratitude.

5) Kids (and adults) have a tendency to take many things for granted. We rarely stop to appreciate the simplest things, like food, clothing or shelter, unless it’s suddenly taken away, or if we encounter someone less fortunate. Many of us have our basic needs met, and several of our wants satisfied, too. Show your child how much he truly has for which to be grateful.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

As a family, create and declare a “Family Day,” to show your gratitude and appreciation for each other. Take a day trip someplace special, or plan an activity that’s “out of the ordinary.” For some busy families, “Family Day” might be a day when nothing is planned! There’s a lot to be said for setting aside time to rest and relax, and just enjoy each other’s company and undivided attention.

RESOURCES


FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together:

______________________________
Child’s name

Family members:

______________________    ___________________
______________________    ___________________
______________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________________

Teacher/grade: ___________________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.

The Washington Times