

Adult Forum: Gratitude

In this trying, anxious and difficult time, it may be helpful to take a step back and survey the *real* blessings in life that come from Christ and our community. Below, find an exercise intended to invoke a sense of mindful and *active* gratitude that will hopefully buoy the spirit and prompt outreach to others might also be struggling during this time.

The exercise below is divided into stages, between which participants are asked to read selections from Scripture that are intended to evoke a sense of peace and gratitude. This lesson plan works for a single person, or group. If you are participating in this lesson as a group, have one person read aloud each citation and ask the other participants to shut their eyes and listen carefully to the Word.

Each participant should bring a piece of paper and a pencil/pen. Each prompt below is intended to be a written response.

If participating in a group, allow time in between each stage for the participants to share their thoughts and responses. But, please remind the participants that sharing is optional, given the particularly private nature of these prompts. Nobody should be forced to share. All who are able to share should be thanked by the facilitator.

Provide 3-5 minutes for each stage of the gratitude activity.

Open in prayer:

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, Page 836)

Gratitude Activities:

Reading	Activity Prompt
Luke 17: 11-19	Write down 3 things for which you feel gratitude and appreciate about your life.
Luke 12: 32-34	Write down 3 things that you realize now that you might take for granted in your life, but for which you are actually grateful.
Psalm 118: 21-24	Write down 3 things that you appreciate and value about yourself.
Psalm 100: 1-5	Write down 3 things for which you feel grateful <i>right now</i> .
Numbers 6: 24-26	Write down the names of 3 people who have had a significant, positive impression on your faith and/or life. As you are able, create a thank you message to

	<p>those 3 people. The message can be as long or as short as you feel is appropriate.</p> <p><i>If you are able, consider sending that thank you note. Maybe call the person, text-message, email, or mail them a thank you – reach out, if possible, and express your thanks.</i></p> <p><i>If that is not possible, write the person a thank you note anyway, and keep it for yourself as a reminder of the person and their contribution to you.</i></p> <p><i>Please pray to God to thank God for introducing that person into your life.</i></p>
<p>Philippians 4: 4-6</p>	<p>Now, look back at your entire list. There are a lot of blessings on your list. Now for the hard part. Examine your list and identify the ONE thing for which you are the MOST grateful at this time.</p> <p>Close your eyes and reflect on that one thing, and feel the gratitude. Try to feel it in your heart.</p> <p>Now, close your eyes and pray. Tell God about it. Give prayerful thanks to God for that ONE thing. Take your time. God is listening.</p>

Close in prayer:

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, Page 836)