Just for Kids!

"Gratefulness" vs. Unthankfulness

"Letting others know by my words and actions how they have benefited my life."

I will:

- show my parents and teachers that I appreciate them.
- write "Thank You" notes.
- take care of my things.
- be content with what I have.
- count my benefits rather than my burdens.

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What is Gratefulness?

The word gratefulness comes from the Latin word "gratus," which means free, willing, quick. A grateful person shows appreciation quickly when someone does something for him, as well as having a constant attitude of thankfulness for everything people do for him.

A grateful person develops the habit of seeing the good that is possible in times that are hard. He remains aware of all the good things that have come to him and expresses thanks for them often.

A grateful person remains content with what he has instead of focusing of what he doesn't have, and he takes care of the things he already has as a way of showing gratefulness.

What does gratefulness look like?

What does gratefulness look like?
1. Thanking Mom for dinner
2. Taking care of my old baseball glove, even though I would rather have a new one.
3. When my dog dies, being thankful for the wonderful pet he was and for the good times I had with him.
4. Writing a note with my picture in it to my school bus driver thanking him for being so cheerful every day.
5. When I am disappointed that our baseball team lost, expressing thankfulness to the coach and team members for the good time we had.

Gratefulness in Nature

Abe Lincoln

When Abraham Lincoln was seven years old, his family moved from Kentucky to Little Pigeon Creek in southern Indiana. Abe's father cleared some land for them to build a log cabin, but their first house was only a three-sided shelter so they could burn a fire all the time to keep away bears and wolves. Their temporary home was very cold, but Abe asked his sister to be patient until he and his father could finish the cabin.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Although living in the three-sided shelter was hard, Abe did not complain but was content with what he had.

After Abe and Pa finished building the cabin, some of their relatives came to live by them. An aunt, uncle, and a cousin moved into the little three-sided shelter while building their own cabin, just as the Lincoln family had. The next summer brought tragedy when both his aunt and uncle died, then Abe's mother became ill herself and within two weeks also died. Abe was only ten years old. Years later, Abe would say that all he was or hoped to be, he owed to his "angel of a mother."

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe showed his appreciation and gratefulness for his mother.

After Abe's mother died, his father traveled back to Kentucky and left Abe, Sarah, and their cousin Dennis for over a month. Finally their Pa arrived back home. But he wasn't alone. He brought with him a new wife, two new sisters and a brother.
Sarah and Abe began to like this new mother and the way she did things. Pa and Abe decided it would be a good idea to patch up the cracks in the walls of the cabin where the wind blew in and build a wooden floor over the dirt one. Abe knew he would never forget his real mother, but he was thankful for the new one his father had brought to their home.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe learned to take care of the few things he and his family owned.

Abe had attended school when they lived in Kentucky. Although they were only able to go for a few months, Abe learned quickly how to read, write, and do arithmetic. They practiced writing letters on wooden shingles and began to practice writing letters and thank-you notes to family members.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Mrs. Lincoln taught her family the importance of a written "Thank You" note.

Several years later, Sarah announced that she was going to marry a neighbor, Aaron Grigsby. Within a year came the news that Sarah and Aaron were expecting their first baby. However, both Sarah and the baby died before the birth. After the funeral, Aaron told Abe, Well, we didn't have much time together, but it was blessed and joyous!" Abe was so thankful for that, even though he missed his sister terribly.

Did you spot the "I Will"? Abe saw the benefits of his sister's life rather than the pain of her death.

Because Abraham Lincoln chose to be grateful during hard circumstances instead of bitter, he was able to remain positive while President of the U.S. during the Civil War.

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Memory Work

I will show appreciation
To my authorities.
I will write them notes of gratefulness
For all they've done for me.

I will be content with what I have
And never gripe or groan.
I will count my many benefits
And care for what I own.

Commitments are important steps
To guard us from disaster.
And just to show we know them well,
Let's say them even faster!

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