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Gratefulness Game

In this game, several children go through the alphabet naming something they are grateful for. Each person has to repeat the items that have already been named, as well as naming an item for the next letter. Instead of competing, help the ones who can't remember the items named until all the alphabet is finished.

GRATEFULNESS IN NATURE

The Porcupine

A porcupine is very nearsighted. In fact, it cannot see much farther than a few feet ahead. However, the porcupine is so smart that it finds its way through the forest by its sense of smell. It leaves scent posts wherever it goes and constantly sniffs the breeze to tell where it is.

Occasionally, out of curiosity, it even follows the scent of people as they walk through the woods.

Porcupines crave salt and will eat almost anything that has salt on it. Hiking boots with salty perspiration, porch steps with salt to melt the snow, ax handles, shovels, and even hand railings are all subject to the cravings of the porcupine.

Just about everyone fears porcupines because of its dangerous "armor". Now porcupines aren't mean; they're just extremely dangerous! The porcupine doesn't actually shoot its quills, but its lightning-quick tail moves so fast it looks as though the quills fly through the air. When a quill enters the flesh of an animal, the barbs at the tip of each quill expand, making the quill very hard to pull out. If not removed, the quill works itself deeper and deeper, possibly even working its way out the other side!

No one ever wants to hug or pet a porcupine. No one hopes to cuddle a porcupine or dreams of snuggling up next to one! Now, it's not because porcupines are ugly; they just have a lot of quills. In fact, each one has about 33,000 quills.

A porcupine's babies are called porcupettes. They are about the size of a softball when they are born. That may not seem very large, but it would be equal to your little brother or sister weighing 80 pounds at birth. Can you imagine trying to carry around your newborn brother or sister if they weighed that much?

To make matters even more difficult, porcupettes are fully quilled at birth. That's right–33,000 sharp quills! The porcupette is born in a thick sack to protect its mother. The mother must chew a hole through the wrapping or the porcupette can't escape and will die.

Even though a porcupine can only waddle through the woods sniffing its way from place to place, it sings with all its heart. If you're walking through the forest and you hear this sound, YUUUMMM OOOOO EEEEE UUUMMM, you can be pretty sure that it is a porcupine. Though it can't sing very well, and its life is far from exciting, a porcupine always finds time to be grateful, standing on its hind legs, swaying back and forth, singing with all of its heart. Let's try that together!

Like the porcupine, our gratefulness is not a matter of life's circumstances, but rather, it is a matter of choice. When you don't get a hug or when people misunderstand you, remember that the same is true for the porcupine. We must choose to be grateful in the good times and the bad. Why not join the porcupine and sing with all of your heart? YUUUMM OOOOO EEEEE UUUMMM!

--written by Kelly Sorge; concept by: **Character First**