



FROM YOUR CFS **Wellness Specialist**



What's so great about gratitude?

The Christmas season is here, a time to celebrate the amazing gift of our Savior. It's also a season when children receive gifts from family, friends, and teachers. So how do we help kids practice gratitude in a world that screams, 'I deserve this!'? And why does having a grateful heart matter?

The primary reason we strive to be grateful is that God has commanded it. Numerous passages in the Bible encourage us to be thankful and give thanks. (Psalm 100:4 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 are just samples.) Not surprisingly, what God has established as good - living in a state of thankfulness - garners physical and mental health benefits that are supported by [research](#). Consistently praying with thanksgiving may even help reduce feelings of anxiety (Philippians 4:6).

So how do we nurture hearts of gratitude in ourselves and our children?

- 1. Start by noticing and naming God's blessings.** Comment out loud when someone shows kindness, when you enjoy a warm meal, or when you recognize the safety and comfort God provides. Kids internalize what they hear. This simple modeling shapes their outlook more than lectures ever will. An attitude of gratitude starts at home!
- 2. Try a gratitude journal,** individually or as a family. Kids can draw or write one blessing a day. Parents can do the same. This small practice teaches children to pause and recognize God's daily blessings.
- 3. End the day with thanks.** During bedtime prayers, have each person name one thing they're grateful for. That comfy pillow and cozy blanket are tangible reminders of God's comfort, protection, and love for us.
- 4. Write thank-you notes.** Taking time to express appreciation helps weaken entitlement and strengthens gratitude. Let kids choose or create their own cards, and focus on effort, not perfection.

A grateful heart doesn't deny hard things. Holidays can be stressful. Loss may feel sharper this time of year. But focusing intentionally on God's blessings leads us back to the ultimate gift: a Savior who came to live, die, and rise to win for us the undeserved gift of heaven one day. That's something to thank God for!

"Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 106:1)
