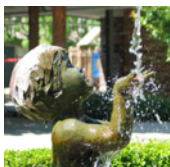
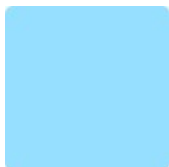
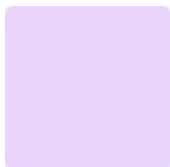




Pearls for Parents

FRC Bi-weekly Newsletter
November 26, 2009



Parenting Pearl #1: *Something to think about*

Gratitude is the Best Attitude

The month of November brings the topic of thankfulness to the forefront of our minds and also provides the perfect opportunity to teach children about gratitude. As adults, we know how easy it is to want what we don't have and take for granted what has already been given to us. Children can also struggle with greed and discontentment.

Every parent encounters moments where their children are taken over by the "gimmies" and are desperate to have the latest and greatest. Gratitude is tough to come by when children, who are naturally self-centered, live in a culture of abundance and entitlement. But we must encourage and cultivate this quality if we want our kids to appreciate what they have and enjoy the important things in life. They will not develop hearts of gratitude or value their possessions or experiences if their every wish is granted. On the contrary, children who are overindulged lose their gratitude. They must be given the opportunity to wait and the ability to long for something. It is also good for kids to experience the joy of giving rather than receiving. By focusing on others and the needs of others, children can learn how to appreciate those around them.

Helping kids understand and feel grateful takes time and perseverance but it is a skill that can be cultivated. The best way to teach children to be appreciative is by living your own life with gratitude. If you want to raise grateful children, don't forget to be a "gratitude" role model!

(tip source: Teaching Kids to Care)

Parenting Pearl #2: *Something to do*

Gratitude Rituals: ways your family can express thankfulness on a regular basis

- 1. Counting Your Blessing:** At dinnertime, go around the table and have each family member share one or two things for which they are grateful. You can also do this ritual at bedtime. While tucking your children into bed ask them, "What are you grateful for today?" For younger kids you can ask, "Tell me 3 good things about your day."
- 2. Thank-You Notes:** Get in the habit of helping your children write thank-you cards. If your kids battle against writing them, try establishing a rule that before they can use the gift, they have to thank the person. If they are too young to write, they can draw pictures or print their name. The point is not how much they can do, but to reinforce that it is polite to thank someone for a gift or kind act. *(tip source: Bay Area Parent Magazine and Non Mead)*
- 3. Gratitude Letter:** This ritual allows children to appreciate the people that are in their lives. Have your children think of someone for whom they are grateful. They can write a letter, (or tell you what to write), explaining why they appreciate that person. Take them to deliver the letter. If they can read, have them read the letter, or the person receiving the letter can read it outloud. *(tip source: <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/tools.php>)*
- 4. Anonymous Gratitude Packages:** Have your children help make a anonymous homemade gift package for someone they appreciate or love. Baskets can include homemade or baked items, flowers from your garden, or a handmade thank you note. Your children can even help secretly deliver the package.
- 5. Appreciate Your Children:** Show genuine thankfulness for your children and allow them to experience receiving gratitude. It's easy to focus on the negative with kids, so make it a priority to comment when they do kind things for you or others. You can even send them a written thank-you note. If you offer it sincerely to them, they will learn the skills of gratitude and be encouraged to do the same. *(tip source: 10-Minute Life Lessons for Kids)*
- 6. Give to Others:** If you want to teach your children the importance of giving, allow them to use their leadership and judgment in the process of helping others. Children can go through their belongings periodically to gather unused items. Make it a habit when your kids receive a new toy, to encourage them to pick out one of their own toys to give to someone in need. It's harder for them to appreciate a new toy or gift when their room is already

overflowing with toys. (tip source: *The Blessings of a Skinned Knee*)

7. Random Acts of Kindness: Let your children be involved in random acts of kindness. Children can offer to help a neighbor with chores or simple yard work. As a family, pick up trash in the neighborhood or parks. Bake goodies with your kids and deliver them to neighbors or friends. Give them a few coins to share whenever someone asks or have them be a part of paying for a stranger's coffee or toll booth fee.

8. Enjoy the Simple Pleasure: Focus on what is really important instead of the stuff you don't have. Play games together as a family. Make homemade gifts. Spend time outside with your kids. Lay in the grass and watch the clouds. Enjoy the beauty around you. Be silly and laugh together.

Staff Spotlight



Caroli Johnson
Executive Assistant
to Director
(Office Lady)

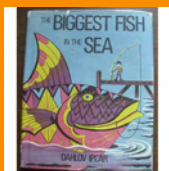
**I've been working at the
Children's Center for:**
11 years
(since the beginning)

My Fun Fact:
I am down to 50 pairs of
shoes

**My Favorite
Children's Books:**
The Selfish Crocodile
by Faustin Charles and
Michael Terry
and

The Biggest Fish in the Sea
by Dahlov Ipcar

and many, many more!



*"My favorite part of this job
is getting to read to the
children."*

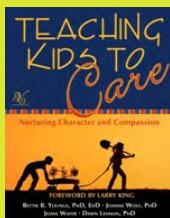
Dates to Remember

Monday Nov 30, 2009
School resumes

Nov 30- Dec 11, 2009
Children's Center Toy Drive

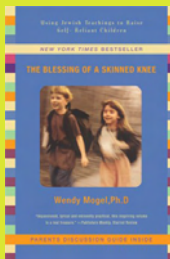
Thursday Dec 17, 2009

Reading Corner



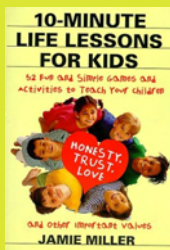
**Teaching Kids to Care:
Nurturing Character and Compassion**
by Bettie Youngs, Joanne Wolf, Joani Wafer, and Dawn
Lehman

The authors of this book stress that parents need to encourage and help their children develop caring hearts. One of the core values discussed in the book is gratitude. They emphasize that gratitude is essential to cultivating a caring heart and talk about ways to help children experience the effects of gratefulness. They also give parents ideas for making gratitude a part of everyday life.



The Blessings of a Skinned Knee
by Wendy Mogel

Wendy Mogel uses Jewish traditions to guide parents in raising self-reliant and ethical children. She talks about nine different "blessings" that help instill and uphold important values in children. One of the blessings she discusses is the blessing of longing. When children experience longing they strengthen their capacity for gratitude. She writes, "Parents cannot and should not try to eliminate longing in a child. Instead, we must teach our children how to redirect their longing, accept "no" graciously, and appreciate the blessings they do have."



10-Minute Life Lessons for Kids
by Jamie Miller

Jamie Miller has created fun games and activities parents can do with their children to teach important values. Gratitude is one of the 12 virtues discussed in the book. There are four specific activities that help teach gratitude in a concrete way and provide a springboard for discussion.

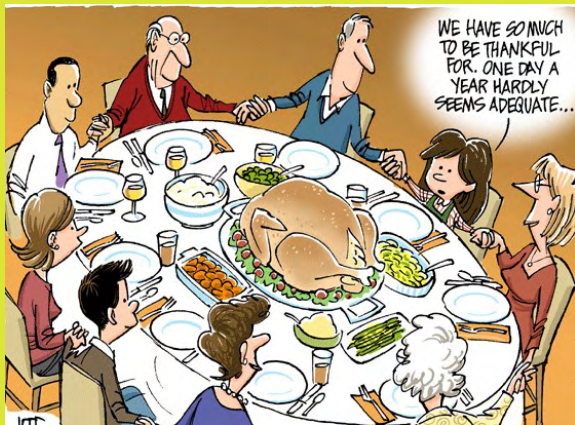
Christmas Performance
10am and 2pm

Friday Dec 18, 2009
Christmas Performance
10am and 2pm

[Online School Calendar](#)

For a list of other books in the FRC library [click here.](#)

Words to Inspire



"The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than those who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving."

-H.U. Westermayer

This email was sent to you by:

The Family Resource Center

Children's Center Preschool at Los Altos United Methodist Church
655 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024 www.childrenscenterpreschool.org

[Archives](#): link to past newsletters