



Choosing Unity, Joy, and Peace: Living with a Thankful Heart

By Alice Presswood

Hi friends! Let's explore how we can bring more unity, joy, and peace into our lives by living with a thankful heart. This activity set, inspired by Ariel's blog post, is designed to help families, friends, and individuals reflect on gratitude and create meaningful ways to share God's love and peace with others. Get ready to dive into these creative activities that will brighten your heart and your home!

Activity 1: The Thankfulness Tree

Objective: Create a visual reminder of the blessings in your life and the joy of gratitude.

What You'll Need:

- A large sheet of paper or poster board
- Colored paper (or real leaves if you prefer a natural touch)
- Scissors
- Markers, pens, or crayons
- Glue or tape
- Optional: Glitter or stickers to decorate leaves

How to Do It:

1. Draw a large tree trunk and branches on the poster board.
2. Cut out leaf shapes from the colored paper. Each leaf can be unique in color and size.
3. On each leaf, write something you're thankful for (e.g., family, friends, nature, a special memory).
4. Attach the leaves to the tree to create a vibrant Thankfulness Tree.
5. Reflect on the tree together as a family or group, adding new leaves each day or week.
6. Optional: Add scripture verses about gratitude to the tree, such as 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

Discussion Prompts:

- What are some blessings you often overlook?
- How does practicing gratitude bring us closer to God and others?
- How can we share the joy of thankfulness with others?

Extension Idea: Turn the Thankfulness Tree into a "Seasonal Gratitude Tree" that changes with each holiday or season. For example, add snowflake-shaped leaves in winter or flowers in spring.

Activity 2: Unity Puzzle

Objective: Learn about unity by creating a collaborative puzzle that symbolizes working together.

What You'll Need:

- Blank puzzle templates (or cut a large piece of cardboard into puzzle pieces)
- Markers, crayons, or paint
- Stickers or other decorations
- Optional: A large poster board to mount the completed puzzle

How to Do It:

1. Distribute puzzle pieces to each participant.
2. Each person decorates their piece with something that represents them (e.g., a favorite Bible verse, a drawing of their family, or something they're thankful for).
3. Assemble the pieces to create a unified image, representing how each person's unique contributions bring the group together.
4. Reflect on how unity doesn't mean sameness—it's about celebrating our differences while working toward a shared goal.

Discussion Prompts:

- How do our unique gifts and perspectives help create unity?
- What does it mean to work together in peace?
- How can we encourage others to celebrate diversity and harmony?

Extension Idea: Frame the completed puzzle and display it as a reminder of your family's or group's commitment to unity.

Activity 3: Peaceful Jars

Objective: Reflect on God's peace and create a calming jar to remind you of His presence during stressful moments.

What You'll Need:

- Clear jars or bottles with lids
- Water
- Glitter glue or liquid soap
- Glitter, beads, or small decorations
- Optional: Stickers or paint for decoration

How to Do It:

1. Fill the jar three-quarters full with water.
2. Add glitter glue or liquid soap to create a swirling effect.
3. Add glitter and small decorations, such as beads or sequins.
4. Seal the lid tightly (use glue if necessary to avoid spills).
5. Shake the jar and watch the glitter settle, reflecting on God's peace that calms our hearts.
6. Optional: Write a Bible verse about peace (e.g., Philippians 4:7) and attach it to the jar.

Reflection Prompt: When do you feel most at peace? How does trusting God help you find calm during life's challenges?

Extension Idea: Create a "Family Peace Jar" where each member adds a note about what brings them peace. Shake the jar together during family prayer time.

Activity 4: Joy Journals

Objective: Practice daily gratitude and reflect on moments of joy.

What You'll Need:

- Notebooks or journals
- Pens, markers, or stickers
- Washi tape or decorative items (optional)

How to Do It:

1. Decorate the cover of your journal with words like "Joy," "Peace," or "Gratitude."
2. Each day, write down three things that brought you joy or made you feel thankful.
3. Include small prayers of thanks or Bible verses that inspire gratitude.
4. At the end of the week, share your favorite entries with your family or group.
5. Optional: Draw or include photos of joyful moments to make your journal more personalized.

Extension Idea: Turn your journal entries into a family "Joy Jar," where everyone contributes notes of joy and gratitude throughout the week.

Activity 5: The Unity Chain

Objective: Create a visual representation of unity by building a paper chain of blessings.

What You'll Need:

- Strips of colored paper
- Pens or markers
- Tape or glue
- Optional: Stickers or stamps for decoration

How to Do It:

1. Write something you're thankful for on each strip of paper.
2. Loop the strips together to form a chain, symbolizing how gratitude and love connect us.
3. Display the chain in your home, adding new links whenever someone wants to share a blessing.

Reflection Prompt: How does sharing gratitude bring people closer together? What does the chain remind you about God's love and unity?

Extension Idea: Use the chain to decorate a Christmas tree, mantle, or doorway, making it a year-round reminder of gratitude.

Activity 6: Acts of Kindness Calendar

Objective: Spread joy and unity by performing daily acts of kindness.

What You'll Need:

- A blank calendar or printable template
- Stickers, pens, or markers
- Optional: A rewards chart to track completed acts

How to Do It:

1. Create a calendar with a kindness challenge for each day (e.g., "Compliment someone," "Write a thank-you note," "Help with chores").
2. Decorate the calendar with uplifting messages or Bible verses.
3. Complete each act of kindness as a family or individually.
4. Reflect on how these small acts bring joy and peace to others.

Extension Idea: Keep a kindness journal alongside the calendar to document how these acts impacted you and others.

Activity 7: Candlelight Gratitude Reflection

Objective: Spend quiet time reflecting on gratitude and unity as a family.

What You'll Need:

- Candles (real or battery-operated)
- A Bible
- Soft music (optional)
- A quiet space
- A gratitude journal (optional)

How to Do It:

1. Gather in a circle and light a candle.
2. Read a Bible passage about gratitude (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances...").
3. Take turns sharing one thing you're thankful for and how it brings joy or peace.
4. End with a prayer of gratitude, asking God to help you live with a thankful heart.
5. Optional: Write reflections in a family gratitude journal.