



November 2009

St. Alphonsus RE Program



Lemont, Illinois

PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To show your children the many reasons they have to be thankful.
2. To help your children express gratitude through their words and actions.
3. To help your family be grateful at all times.

Encourage Year-Round Gratitude

November may be the month when we focus on being thankful, but that's an attitude we can express each day. Even during tough economic times or family hardships, we all have many blessings for which to be grateful. God gives us life and takes care of us. He loves us and sent his Son, Jesus, to die for us. He puts many special people, including our children, into our lives.

Let your children know you're grateful for them—and also that they can show gratitude to you, to other people, and to God. Here are some ideas for cultivating thankfulness throughout the year:

Live out your thankfulness. Gratitude is contagious. When your kids see you giving thanks in all circumstances, they'll learn to do the same. Remember to thank your children for everything from helping around the house to helping you grow in your own faith.



Attend Mass regularly. "Eucharist" means thanksgiving. During Mass, we have the opportunity to ask God for what we need, promise God that we will do what He wants us to do, and thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us. As you worship with your children, point out all the ways that God's people give thanks. Nurturing an attitude of gratitude in our children contributes to their health and well-being.

Lead children in thank-you activities. Together, brainstorm people in our parish or community who'd appreciate an unexpected thank you. Then come up with creative, meaningful ways to say thanks joyfully. Children can deliver thanks with cards, a prayer, a skit, a song, or even a PowerPoint presentation. Be sure to thank kids for their enthusiasm and contributions.

An Abundance of Thanks

In a survey at smartgirl.org, more than 400 preteen girls spoke up about what they're most thankful for. Top responses, in order, were parents, friends, health, siblings, grandparents, and pets. Girls said they chose those people and things because they make them feel happy and safe. Girls then completed the statement "I feel guilty for being thankful for..." with these answers: money, Internet, television, clothes, makeup, music, and video games.

Parenting Insights

Turn on children's "gratitude lights" with these tips from *Children's Ministry Magazine*:

1. **Encourage the language of thankfulness.** If children neglect to show gratitude, prompt them with words such as "What can you say to your friend for sharing?"
2. **At unexpected times, give small gifts.** Let children know you think of them often and always thank God for them.
3. **Affirm children's feelings of gratitude.** When you observe physical demonstrations such as eyes that light up, say, "I can see how much you're thankful for that."
4. **Model thankfulness in the little things.** Thank your children for picking up something you drop or for being patient with a sibling.

OpenTheBook

**“Enter his gates with thanksgiving.... Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.”
Psalm 100:4-5**

God deserves our praises not just because he blesses us but because of who he is: our good, mighty, just, and loving God.

Teachable Moments

- 1. Cornucopia of Thanks—** Together, choose some items that remind your family to be thankful (an apple, a toy car, a stuffed animal, a key, a school paper). Place them in a cornucopia or basket so family members can think about God's blessings often.
- 2. Thankfulness Makes “Sense”**—Serve a special snack while playing soft music and using potpourri. Then have children use their five senses to notice some blessings that they usually take for granted.
- 3. Don't “Leaf” Anything Out**—Cut out leaf shapes on colorful construction paper. Then have family members write about people or things for which they're grateful. Tape the stems onto string to make a festive garland filled with reminders of gratefulness.



Remember our theme for this year...
Understanding & Living the Mass

Use the pamphlet you received at the beginning of the year, “Why Do We ‘Have To’ Go To Mass” to help your child understand..

Most of us have so many blessings that we often take them for granted. Ask these questions to help your children consider all the ways that God meets their needs:

1. What people and things are most important or special to you? How would your life be different without them?
2. Name 10 blessings or gifts God has given you since this morning. Which ones are easiest to remember to thank him for, and why?
3. Why is it important to express gratitude to people who do nice things for us? Describe how hearing “thank you” makes you feel.
4. How often do you thank God for his blessings? What are some ways we can let him know we appreciate what he does for us?

Family Experience: The Art of Thankfulness

As adults we realize the importance of expressing thanks, but do we instill this expression into our children? Too often we say the “thank you” for our children, or we rush from thing to thing assuming that the many adults who volunteer their time to serve our kids know that we are thankful. Sometimes we even go so far as to complain about the way an adult handles things forgetting that he or she is a volunteer whose everyday life is every bit as busy as our own.

November is the obvious time to focus your family on giving thanks. This year plan a day early in November with your children to write notes for all of the helpful people in your children's lives – school teachers, Sunday School teachers, coaches, babysitters, neighbors, and more. Keep it simple so even very young children can help. Then, “go nuts” thanking people! Your child can help put together a small bag of nuts to add to the notes and accompany you to hand deliver them. That is an experience that he or she will remember.

Continue through the formative years to say it often and remind your child to say it, too. Before long thankfulness will become the “art” it should be – something that flows and happens naturally without even realizing it. One day your child will even thank you and that will be the most special thanks you ever receive!

Here are some wonderful reading suggestions for celebrating thankfulness:

Saying Grace (Kroll)

The Berenstain Bears Give Thanks (Stan Berenstain)

Give Thanks to the Lord (Wilson)

Mary's First Thanksgiving (Wargin)

Enjoy a Thanksgiving filled with the warmth of family, the satisfaction of yummy food, and the comfort that God is with us always! We have so much for which to be thankful! Many blessings to all!

Cindy Bricker, C.E.D.



What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *Disney's A Christmas Carol* (Nov. 6)

Genre: Animated Drama, Fantasy

Rating: PG (for scary sequences and images)

Cast: Jim Carrey, Gary Oldman, Robin Wright Penn

Synopsis: Carrey tackles multiple roles in this 3D version of the Charles Dickens classic. The ghosts of Christmas past, present, and yet-to-come visit old miser Ebenezer Scrooge and take him on a journey of self-redemption. His cold heart gradually defrosts, and he becomes kinder to others.

Discussion Questions: Describe your personality: How do you usually feel about other people, and why? How does Christmas bring out the best and the worst in people? Read aloud 2 Corinthians 9:7. Explain whether you're a miser or a cheerful giver. Think of a time you've felt like a scrooge: What, if anything, convinced you to change your attitude?



What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Kris Allen

Album: *Kris Allen*

Artist Info: This 24-year-old singer-songwriter from Arkansas won season eight of *American Idol*. He's a Christian who served as his church's assistant music director and has done overseas missionary work. Auditioning for the TV show was Allen's "last hurrah" before he got "a real job."

Summary: Allen's music has a folk sound. He plays piano, acoustic guitar, and electric guitar. The first single from Allen's debut album is "Live Like We're Dying." The lyrics include, "If your life flashed before you, what would you wish you would've done?"

Discussion Questions: What impact can Allen have on the music industry? If you were in his shoes, would you sing only Christian songs? Why or why not? Read Psalm 39:4-5. How does life seem long or short? What does it mean to live like you're dying? How can we do that?



What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Our House Party</i>	Players race to design, build, and decorate a custom house. Then they show it off to the neighborhood.	E; Wii, Nintendo DS
<i>Scribblenauts</i>	In this unique puzzle game, players use a vast word library to create and use real-world objects.	E10+; Nintendo DS
<i>Uncharted 2: Among Thieves</i>	A hero's quest to discover a lost city unfolds like a summer blockbuster in this treasure-hunting adventure game.	T; PSP3

GAME RATINGS KEY: EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



Culture & Trends

What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- Today's parents keep their children on a tighter "leash" in public but give them more freedom at home, studies show. This may explain why many grandparents complain that their grandkids are out of control. (msnbc.com)
- Interactive toys and video game systems top the list of hot holiday toys. The hardest-to-find toy may be Zhu Zhu Pets and accessories.

Quick Stats

- 72% of preschoolers receive praise from their parents at least three times a day. By grade school, though, the number of kids who get this amount of parental praise drops to 51%. (U.S. Census Bureau)



- 15% of Americans now identify with no religion. Experts predict this group could surpass the largest denominations. (USA Today)

LITTLE TYKES FOR CHRIST ADVENT/CHRISTMAS



Making Room for Jesus this Christmas

Saturday, December 12th
3:00 – 4:30 PM

For children ages 3 – 6 years

Our event falls on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. So, our prep for Christmas will take on a Mexican flavor.

More details will be forthcoming.

Cost per family: \$10 - Please submit registration form and cash or check made payable to **St. Alphonsus** to the Parish Office 210 E. Logan Street

For more info, contact **Candy Hamilton (630)243-7704** candy.hamilton@comcast.net or the **RE Office (630)257-2371**

LTC Registration Form

YES, we want to attend the Little Tykes for Christ Advent Program!

Family Name: _____

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Attending: _____

Name(s)/Age(s) of Child(ren) Attending: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone No.: _____ Cell Phone No.: _____

Allergies/Medical Conditions: _____

In the event that the undersigned, or our authorized physician cannot be reached and in the judgment of the Director of Religious Education, or other staff member, there is necessity for immediate examination and/or medical treatment of our child, we hereby request and authorize any of the aforesaid personnel to obtain for our child such medical services as are deemed necessary. I agree to assume the financial responsibility for any diagnosis/treatment and for any medication deemed necessary.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____
