



NOVEMBER

# LET'S CELEBRATE THE VIRTUE OF GRATITUDE

**T**hanksgiving is November 24 in the United States. The act of giving thanks is deeply rooted in the Christian faith: many of the psalms are songs of thanksgiving; Jesus often gave thanks to his Father; and *eucharist* comes from a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving." The Lord's Supper was given this name because of the Jewish meal prayers of blessing and thanksgiving (see [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) #1328).

**Gratitude** is the virtue that prompts us to give thanks to God and one another. This month, make it your family's mission to practice gratitude toward God and one another.

## AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you grow in the virtue of gratitude. Try to incorporate this intention into your family's daily prayer this month.
- St. Theresa of Avila says that gratitude flows from the virtue of humility. Instead of focusing on what you *don't* have, practice celebrating all the good things you have been given.
- Practice valuing spiritual goods (love, joy, friendship) more than material goods. Unlike material goods, spiritual treasures are ours forever.
- Pray the [Daily Examen](#) as a way of noticing all that your family has to be thankful for.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN

## RELATIONSHIP

### Let's Practice Saying "Thank You"

Pope Francis has [urged families to practice saying "thank you"](#) to one another instead of taking one another for granted. This simple habit can increase your family's happiness, and it's a powerful tool in your mission as Christian disciples, too.

This month, make it your family's mission to say "thank you" to one another, especially for the things you usually take for granted. If you like, use the **Pocket-Sized Thank You Cards** CatholicHOM resource to leave thank-you notes for one another throughout the month. (Or use slips of notepaper.)

Collect these cards and review them as a family at the end of the month. Have each person share what his or her favorite thank you was. How did this practice change your family?

To help launch your month of practicing "thanks-giving," spend some time as a family brainstorming the sorts of things you can thank one another for. List them here and display the list as a reminder of your family's mission.

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# RITUALS

## Pray: Counting Our Blessings

This month, incorporate **prayers of gratitude** into your family prayer time. Using a notebook or poster paper, keep track of everything your family offers thanks for. Make this list part of your Thanksgiving Day meal prayer. Search the web for “gratitude journal” for more ideas.

Here’s a bonus mission: When you go to Mass this month, listen for the prayers of thanksgiving that open the Liturgy of the Eucharist. After Mass, see who can remember what those words were. (Parents can get a sneak peek by [searching for “Eucharistic prayers”](#) online.)

## Pray: The Feast of All Souls

November 2 is the **Feast of All Souls**. On this day (and throughout November), it is traditional to pray for the dead, especially deceased friends and family. (Look for [Why Do Catholics Pray for the Dead?](#) on BustedHalo.com for more about this practice.)

This month, display pictures of deceased family members in your home and remember to pray for them during your family prayer time. The website of the U.S. Catholic bishops has many [prayers for the dead](#) that you can use.

## Talk: Family & Friends Forever

While you’re praying for deceased family and friends this month, take the opportunity to tell stories about this “extended family.” Death changes our relationships with loved ones who have died, but it doesn’t end them. Through our shared baptism in Christ, we continue to be members of God’s family. We call this family that endures beyond death the **Communion of Saints**.

- ? How many generations back can you trace your family?
- ? What stories about these people have been handed down to you?

## Play: Family Fun for November

How will your family play together this month? Here are some ideas.

- November 1 is the **Solemnity of All Saints**. Celebrate by attending Mass and by listing your favorite saints. Which one should be the patron of your family this year?
- Explore **God’s creation** this fall! Use a plant identification app (such as PictureThis, Leafsnap, or PlantNet) to identify tree leaves. Use the Merlin app from Cornell Labs to identify the songs of migrating birds.
- Look up ways of **saying thank you** in other languages and use them during your month of gratitude. For example: *asante* (Swahili), *tack* (Swedish), *manana* (Pashto).

# REACHING OUT

## Bringing Gratitude into the World

This month, practice your family’s mission to the world by extending thanks to the people you meet every day. This might include teachers, mail carriers, service workers, health care workers, store clerks, church workers. Kick things off by brainstorming a list of people to thank.

**Bonus:** Carry the CatholicHOM **Pocket-Sized Thank You Cards** (or other note cards) with you when you go out. Give the cards to the people you meet when you thank them for their service.

## Being Salt and Light

The weekend of November 12–13 is the annual collection for the **Catholic Campaign for Human Development**. As part of your family’s mission to think about those in need, look at the resources on the CCHD website [We Are Salt and Light](#). Share some of the stories you find there, and talk as a family about how you feel called to contribute to these efforts.