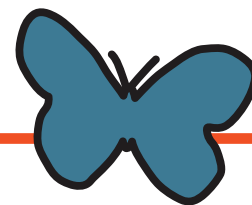


GRATITUDE

Leader's Guide for Ages 9-10



Dear Team Leader,

Thank you for your dedication to helping children learn and grow, and for supporting *On Our Sleeves* in its mission to provide free educational resources to every community in America. We are proud to have your organization as a member of the *On Our Sleeves* Alliance to help break the silence surrounding children's mental health.

This free *On Our Sleeves* educational program provides activities for children ages 9–10 that focus on gratitude. Developed by the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired in partnership with mental health professionals from *On Our Sleeves*, this program is designed to help children notice, appreciate, and acknowledge the good things in their lives through gratitude, and how this practice can help lead to a positive outlook on life. This program also includes a take-home letter for families to reinforce these messages and promote greater awareness of social and emotional health.

We hope you will share this program with youth group leaders in your organization. And please take a moment to share your thoughts on this program at ymiclassroom.com/feedback-oosalliance. We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,
The *On Our Sleeves* team

TARGET AUDIENCE

Children ages 9-10 and their families

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Promote the mental health and well-being of children by helping them practice gratitude.
- Encourage children to think deeply and express their gratitude, verbally and in writing, for the good things in their lives, including people, places, and things.
- Encourage understanding of how gratitude affects thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Provide resources and tips for talking with children about mental health and wellness.

About the *On Our Sleeves* Alliance

The *On Our Sleeves* Alliance represents the diverse and powerful voices committed to breaking the silence surrounding children's mental health and taking action. The Alliance works together to share best practices and advance *On Our Sleeves'* mission to provide every community in America with access to free, evidence-informed resources necessary for breaking stigmas around children's mental health and educating families and advocates. Together, we empower the mental health and wellness of every child in America and support families. Learn more at OnOurSleeves.org.

How to Use This Program

Make copies of the activity sheet for your group and prepare any materials needed. The discussion portion of the activity should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The activity sheet is to be completed over the course of the week and can be assigned as homework or can be completed in class as suits your schedule. Have the children share the completed activity sheets with their families, along with a copy of the take-home letter. You might also email the letter to parents/caregivers.

Materials Needed

Main Activity: Copies of the activity sheet, blank lined paper, pencils and markers. Have additional copies of the activity master on hand for children who may choose to continue keeping a Gratitude Journal on their own.

Extension Activities: Blank paper, index cards.

I Am Grateful! Activity Sheet

- ▶ Write the word "gratitude" on the board and ask the children to share what they think it means. Build on the group's ideas to explain that gratitude means to pay attention and notice the good things in life—whether they are big or small—and to be thankful and appreciative of them. This includes relationships, experiences and things around us—not just objects.
- ▶ Have the children use a blank sheet of paper to list three different things for which they are grateful. Remind them that they can be grateful for something small, like being able to play with their best friend at recess, or something big, like having a house to live in. They might also be grateful for less personal things, such as something in the natural world such as the snow, sunshine, or flowers. The children may also list feelings such as peaceful, happy, calm, joyful, secure, hopeful, positive, etc.
- ▶ Pair the children and have them share their lists. Then have them make two new lists: one to record words that describe how it feels when expressing gratitude, and another list to record how it feels to receive gratitude from others. The partners may divide the responsibility for recording these new lists. After the children have completed their paired work, bring the class together and have groups share and discuss the feelings they listed, listening carefully to compare these feelings.
- ▶ Conclude the discussion by explaining to the children that gratitude is an emotion that can help us feel good and often leads to happier, healthier lives. For example, being grateful often involves people in our lives who do kind or thoughtful acts, which means both feeling and expressing gratitude strengthens our relationships with others. Explain that practicing gratitude can help us feel energized and often, more creative. It also contributes to a positive mindset that helps support our mental health.
- ▶ Distribute the activity sheet and review directions with the children. Explain that keeping a gratitude journal will help them become more mindful of small and big moments in their week that make their lives better. Encourage the children to record something new each day. Offer to provide additional copies of the activity master to the children to continue practicing gratitude to support their mental and physical health.

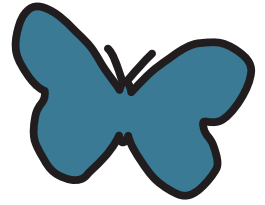
Extension Activities

- ▶ Select a board or wall space in the classroom for a "We Are Grateful" wall display. Provide paper, pencils, and markers for the children to write and draw about people, places, things, etc., in their lives they are grateful for and why. Draw the children's attention to the board on a weekly basis to allow sharing and discussion of the children's personal experiences in practicing gratitude.
- ▶ Have the children share ideas about groups in their school or neighborhood community to whom they would like to express their gratitude. Have the children write letters or cards and deliver them to these groups, if possible, to show their appreciation.

Resources

- ▶ *On Our Sleeves:* OnOurSleeves.org
- ▶ *On Our Sleeves—Gratitude:* OnOurSleeves.org/mental-wellness-tools-guides/helping-kids-stay-positive/gratitude-in-kids
- ▶ *YMI microsite:* ymiclassroom.com/oosalliance

Name _____



I AM GRATEFUL!

Use the space provided in the Gratitude Journal below to record at least three things that you are thankful for on each day of the week. Focus on details of events, people, places or things each day. The goal is to keep your mind open for new and different entries for each day of the week.

Remember that practicing gratitude helps us look for the good things in our lives. This can help us feel calmer and more connected to others.

MONDAY

- _____
- _____
- _____

TUESDAY

- _____
- _____
- _____

WEDNESDAY

- _____
- _____
- _____

THURSDAY

- _____
- _____
- _____

FRIDAY

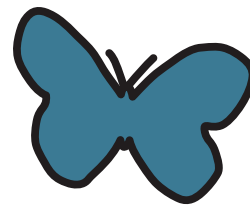
- _____
- _____
- _____

SATURDAY

- _____
- _____
- _____

SUNDAY

- _____
- _____
- _____



Nombre _____

¡ESTOY AGRADECIDO!

Utiliza el espacio proporcionado en el Diario de Gratitud a continuación para anotar al menos tres cosas por las que te sientes agradecido cada día de la semana. Concéntrate en los detalles de eventos, personas, lugares o cosas de cada día. El objetivo es mantener la mente abierta para anotar cosas nuevas y diferentes cada día de la semana.

Recuerda que practicar la gratitud nos ayuda a buscar las cosas buenas de nuestra vida. Esto puede ayudarnos a sentirnos más tranquilos y más conectados con los demás.

LUNES	• _____ • _____ • _____
MARTES	• _____ • _____ • _____
MIÉRCOLES	• _____ • _____ • _____
JUEVES	• _____ • _____ • _____
VIERNES	• _____ • _____ • _____
SÁBADO	• _____ • _____ • _____
DOMINGO	• _____ • _____ • _____



Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Mental health professionals from *On Our Sleeves*, the movement for children's mental health, have teamed up with the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired to create activities for schools and youth organizations to support children's mental health and social and emotional development. This includes encouraging children and families to make positive choices to promote overall health. Your child's organization is a member of the *On Our Sleeves* Alliance to help break the silence around children's mental health.

Your child has been learning about practicing gratitude, a habit that supports mental health by helping to build a positive outlook in life.

Why Is Gratitude Important?

Gratitude is the practice of being intentionally thankful and appreciative of the good in life, including people, places, or things. Research shows that people who practice gratitude are:

- ▶ Healthier and happier.
- ▶ Have stronger social connections.
- ▶ Feel better about themselves.
- ▶ Sleep better and feel more energized.

More Than Just a Thank You

Practicing gratitude looks different at different ages. Young children may be excited about a longed-for toy given by a family member and can be encouraged to express love or thankfulness for that toy. However, an older child can think more deeply about how the family member thought to bring them a gift—a gift that was wanted—and can understand how this gift was an expression of love, offering a more heartfelt thank you as a result.

Gratitude in Action

Practicing gratitude can be easy to integrate into your daily life and has many benefits for your child's mental well-being. Try the ideas below to practice gratitude at home and support mind, body, and spirit.

- ▶ **Set the Example.** Model the practice of gratitude for your child. Share things you are grateful for, say "please" and "thank you" to others, look for everyday moments that offer opportunities to express gratitude, such as the color of the sky, for example.
- ▶ **Table Talk.** Start a tradition at the dinner table where each family member shares one thing they are grateful for about their day and why.
- ▶ **Nature Connections.** Take a neighborhood walk, visit a local or state park, or view the night sky together with the intention of looking for and naming things in the natural world to be grateful for.
- ▶ **Thank You Notes.** Make and send thank you notes to family members and friends. Don't forget notes to people in your community whose work touches you in some way, such as your family's mail carrier, dentist, grocery store clerk, veterinarian . . . the list could be endless!
- ▶ **Gaming It.** Play a fun and simple gratitude game by naming something for each letter of the alphabet to be thankful for. Or, ask your child to name five people in their lives, four things they see, three things they can hear, two things they can touch, and one thing they can smell for which they are grateful.
- ▶ **Go Big.** Volunteer at or donate to an organization or cause that is near to your family's heart. For example, donate to a local pet shelter, serve meals at a local shelter, donate profits from a yard sale to promote earth-friendly causes, etc.

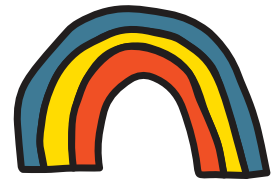
Mindfulness and Gratitude

Mindfulness is the act of careful noticing. Gratitude and mindfulness work well together because, with careful noticing, we can better acknowledge moments where we can practice gratitude. Encourage mindful gratitude with simple activities such as pausing with your child during a happy occasion or moment to notice and appreciate it by naming feelings, people, or other things that are good about that moment.

Mindfulness and gratitude together are powerful mental health tools for parents. They support children by helping reduce stress and anxiety and encouraging social connection. They also contribute to establishing a sense of calm and developing an appreciation for slowing down and being fully present in the moment.

For more ideas and information on how to help your child learn more about practicing gratitude and its positive impact on mental health, visit OnOurSleeves.org.

Sincerely,
The *On Our Sleeves* team



Estimados padres y cuidadores:

Los profesionales de salud mental de *On Our Sleeves*, el movimiento para la salud mental de los niños, se han unido a los especialistas en planes de estudio de Young Minds Inspired con el propósito de crear actividades para escuelas y organizaciones juveniles a fin de apoyar la salud mental y el desarrollo social y emocional de los niños. Esto incluye alentar a los niños y a las familias a hacer elecciones positivas para promover la salud en general.

La organización de su hijo(a) es miembro de la alianza *On Our Sleeves Alliance* cuyo fin es ayudar a romper el silencio en torno a la salud mental de los niños.

Su hijo ha estado aprendiendo a practicar la gratitud, un hábito que promueve la salud mental al ayudar a construir una perspectiva positiva en la vida.

¿Por qué es importante la gratitud?

La gratitud es la práctica de estar intencionalmente agradecido y valorar lo bueno de la vida, incluidas personas, lugares o cosas. Los estudios demuestran que las personas que practican la gratitud:

- ▶ Están más sanas y felices.
- ▶ Tienen conexiones sociales más fuertes.
- ▶ Se sienten mejor consigo mismas.
- ▶ Duermen mejor y se sienten con más energía.

Más que un simple “Gracias”

Practicar la gratitud se ve diferente en función de la edad. Los niños pequeños pueden sentirse entusiasmados cuando un familiar les da un juguete muy deseado y se les puede alentar a que expresen amor o agradecimiento por ese juguete. Sin embargo, un niño más mayor puede pensar más profundamente en la manera en que ese familiar ha pensado en hacerle un regalo —un regalo que él quería— y puede comprender que ese regalo constituye una expresión de amor, y en consecuencia expresar un agradecimiento más sentido.

La gratitud en acción

Practicar la gratitud puede ser fácil de integrar en nuestra vida diaria y tiene muchos beneficios para el bienestar mental de su hijo. Intente las ideas a continuación para practicar la gratitud en casa y favorecer la mente, el cuerpo y el espíritu.

- ▶ **Dé ejemplo.** Sea un modelo de práctica de gratitud para su hijo. Comparta cosas por las que se siente agradecido, diga “por favor” y “gracias” a los demás, busque momentos cotidianos que ofrezcan oportunidades para expresar gratitud, como el color del cielo, por ejemplo.
- ▶ **En la mesa.** Cuando estén en la mesa, inicie una tradición en la que cada miembro de la familia debe compartir una cosa por la que se sienta agradecido de su día y por qué.
- ▶ **Conexión con la naturaleza.** Salgan de paseo por el barrio, visiten un parque local o estatal, o contemplen el cielo juntos con la intención de buscar y nombrar cosas en la naturaleza por las que estar agradecido.
- ▶ **Notas de agradecimiento.** Haga y envíe notas de agradecimiento a familiares y amigos. No olvide hacer notas para las personas de su comunidad cuyo trabajo le afecta de alguna manera, como el cartero, el dentista, el empleado de la tienda de comestibles o el veterinario. . . ¡la lista podría ser interminable!
- ▶ **No olvide jugar.** Jueguen juntos a un juego de gratitud sencillo y divertido que consiste en nombrar algo por lo que estar agradecido que empiece por cada letra del alfabeto. O pídale a su hijo que nombre a cinco personas en su vida, cuatro cosas que vea, tres cosas que pueda escuchar, dos cosas que pueda tocar y una cosa que pueda oler por las que se sienta agradecido.
- ▶ **Apunte alto.** Ofrezcase como voluntario o haga una donación a una organización o causa cercana al corazón de su familia. Por ejemplo, hacer una donación a un refugio local para mascotas, servir comidas en un refugio local, donar las ganancias de una venta de garaje para promover causas ecológicas, etc.

Mindfulness y gratitud

El mindfulness es el acto de observar detenidamente. La gratitud y el mindfulness funcionan bien juntos porque, con una observación detenida, podemos reconocer mejor los momentos en los que podemos practicar la gratitud. Fomente la gratitud consciente con actividades sencillas, como hacer un alto con su hijo durante una ocasión o un momento feliz para ser conscientes y valorarlo poniéndole nombre a sentimientos, personas u otras cosas buenas de ese momento.

La combinación del mindfulness y la gratitud constituye una poderosa herramienta de salud mental para los padres. Ambos ayudan a los niños a reducir el estrés y la ansiedad y fomentan la conexión social. También contribuyen a establecer una sensación de calma y a desarrollar una apreciación de desaceleración y de estar plenamente presentes en cada momento.

Para obtener más ideas e información sobre cómo ayudar a su hijo a aprender más sobre practicar la gratitud y su impacto positivo en la salud mental, visite OnOurSleeves.org.

Atentamente,
El equipo de *On Our Sleeves*