



GRATITUDE

Values for Living—Cadet Character Development Forum (For Online Delivery)

INTRODUCTION

Each Values for Living helps Civil Air Patrol members explore a virtue from multiple angles and practice that virtue through a hands-on activity. The combination of analysis and practice helps members internalize the virtue so it stays with them beyond the end of the squadron meeting.

Gratitude is more than a feeling. Gratitude is a choice. Choosing to be grateful means choosing to focus on positives and opportunities. Choosing to be grateful means praising the good in other people and in every situation. When we choose to be grateful, we encourage ourselves and others in the pursuit of excellence.

PRECLASS CHECKLIST

Prior preparation is essential to success. Please prepare the following well ahead of time:

- All media installed and checked out
- Phase Three cadet orientation/training completed
- Participation awards such as candy or granola bar treats available
- Room arrangements complete

ATTENTION GETTER

LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (5-10 MINUTES.)

Option 1: Media Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCV-mEsASLA>

This video from the John Templeton Foundation explains some of the benefits of gratitude and recommends practices for developing gratitude. (1:30)

Option 2: Media clip: ***The Science of Gratitude***.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMdlCcGZYwU>

This is another short video on the benefits of gratitude and recommended practices. (2:07)
A downloadable video file is also available with course materials.¹

¹ Video, *The Science of Gratitude*, used by permission. <https://www.tremendo.us/>

Option 3: Media Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sokh9e2WGC>

This PBS video describes the effect of gratitude on the brain, the body, and relationships. (3:13)

Option 4: Personal story

The facilitator may share personal story about how expressing gratitude made a difference in his or her life.

UNDERSTANDING THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

ONLINE GROUP OR SMALL GROUP FACILITATED BY PHASE III CADET (15 MINUTES.)

Gratitude benefits us by improving our health, sleep, happiness, and relationships. Let's consider how our gratitude affects others.

- Think of the last time you offered someone a sincere thank you. Why did you thank that person? How did your expression of gratitude affect that person?
- How do you feel when you are not thanked for your hard work?
- What is it like to work or study with someone who is ungrateful?
- Why do you think people do not always show their gratitude?
- What prevents you from expressing gratitude to others?
- Who in your life might not know how much you appreciate him or her?

APPLICATION OF THE BEHAVIOR TO THEIR LIVES

LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (15 MINUTES)

- How does gratitude help you live out the Core Values?
- What is the difference between being grateful and repaying a debt?
- How can you be grateful even when you don't "feel" grateful?
- Receiving graciously is a good first step toward living with gratitude.
 - How do you graciously receive a compliment?
 - How do you graciously receive a promotion?
 - How do you graciously receive a gift?
- When we embrace gratitude, we can graciously receive even challenging things.
 - How can you be grateful for failing a test?
 - How can you be grateful for a rude person?
 - How can you be grateful for being stuck in traffic?
 - How can you be grateful for the COVID-19 pandemic?

ACTIVITY

LED BY SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS OR ONLINE INSTRUCTOR (10-15 MINUTES.)

You may conduct these activities in small groups or in a single large group according to the needs of your unit.

Option 1: Gratitude Assessments

Spend a few minutes to complete a gratitude self-assessment.

- Units with access to many computers or meeting virtually can use an online Gratitude Quiz. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/gratitude
- Units meeting in person can use the CG-6 Gratitude Questionnaire. <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/gratitudequestionnaire6.pdf>²
- Ask the participants to share their results.
 - Which questions were most difficult to answer?
 - Based on the assessment, what practices could you adopt or change to become more grateful?

Option 2: Gratitude Challenge

Almost no one under the age of 30 likes writing thank you notes. We have good news! There can be other ways of expressing gratitude.

Divide your participants into small teams and appoint a judge or panel of judges. Give each team five minutes to list as many ways of expressing gratitude as they can imagine. Judges will score each team's list and eliminate duplicate items (for example, "saying thank you" and "saying thank you very much"). The team that produces the longest list in five minutes wins! Have one of the judges read the winning list to the unit.

Option 3: Gratitude Journaling

What exactly goes into a gratitude journal? Could you start one today, at this very meeting? Of course! These questions are adapted from *The Five Minute Journal*.³ List three items for each prompt.

- I am grateful for...
- What kind of person do I want to be today?
- What amazing things happened today?
- How can I make tomorrow even better?

That's all there is to it! These questions give you a chance to remember the good things in your life. They also encourage you to look for opportunities to make things even better. In just a few minutes each, you can develop an "attitude of gratitude."

² Note that this questionnaire includes two reverse-scored questions to control for bias. More information on the GQ-6 is available at <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/resources/questionnaires-researchers/gratitude-questionnaire>.

³ These authors shared some of their questions in an online article. <https://www.intelligentchange.com/blogs/news/the-five-minute-journal-questions>. Facilitators may use alternative worksheets according to the needs of their units. Example: <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/why-im-grateful.pdf>.

Option 4: Finding the Silver Lining in Adversity

Break the cadets into small groups and conduct a contest to find the most miserable personal experience for which they can be grateful. Explain that they have to be willing to talk about the good that came from that suffering and share it with their small group. The winner of each small group then shares with the squadron and the squadron votes on which of the finalists has the best story. Winner gets a prize.

LESSON SUMMARY AND WRAP-UP

LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (2 MINUTES)

Gratitude is more than a feeling. You cannot choose your feelings. You can, however, choose to be grateful by saying thank you and acknowledging a job well done. You can choose to be grateful by finding lessons learned in every failure and opportunities in every setback. Gratitude is a choice. It won't always be easy, but you can always choose to be grateful.

If you remember nothing else from this lesson, remember this: gratitude encourages excellence. By choosing to recognize the good in others and in every situation, you will bring out the best in others and the best in yourself.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer." – Maya Angelou

"The way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement."
– Charles Schwab

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."
– William Arthur Ward

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them." – John F. Kennedy

"Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some." – Charles Dickens

"The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated." – William James

"In everything give thanks." – Paul of Tarsus

"Silent gratitude isn't worth very much to anyone." – Gertrude Stein

"Keep your eyes open and try to catch people in your company doing something right, then praise them for it." – Tom Hopkins

"If the only prayer you say in your entire life is 'thank you,' it will be enough." – Meister Eckhart

"It is the height of malevolence to refuse to recognize a kindness." – Seneca