

THE GRATITUDE JAR

We live in busy times, always rushing around and racing onto the next thing.

Ask your family,

- In our busy lives, how much time do our family spend checking social media on our phones, tablets and computers? What are we checking for?

Sometimes we check social media sites to check in on other's lives. Sometimes that can make us jealous of others. Do other families seem to have more fun, have trendier clothes, live in a bigger house, drive a better car...?

When we do this we can sometimes forget to stop and notice the important, little things around us. The little things in our own lives.

Many of us have been forced to slow down right now. We are spending more time in our homes or outside doing exercise. We are all spending more time with our families.

There is no better time than now to stop and notice the AMAZING, WONDERFUL and UNIQUE things around us.

Ask your family:

- What is gratitude?
- When was the last time we showed gratitude to each other?

Turn to a member of your family, sit really still and look in their eyes. Spend just one minute (it doesn't sound long) telling them why you are grateful to have them in your life. Perhaps they give the best hugs, they make you laugh or they make the best cheese sandwiches ever? Whatever they do for you, that you are grateful for, tell them. It can be anything.

It's tricky to keep looking in somebody's eye but, as we keep saying, you will get better with practice. Be strict, time one minute.

Then swap over. Be a good listener – try hard not to interrupt.

Ask your family:

- How do you feel now?

We predict your family will be feeling great. That's because they have connected, shown empathy and released two special chemicals oxytocin and serotonin, that help us feel positive and energised. Don't worry if some of your family felt awkward, embarrassed or shy, that's natural too and very common. **Keep trying this exercise and we promise, with practice, it will get easier.**

Stop for a moment and look out of the window.

Ask your family:

- What can we see to be grateful for?

It might be the warm sunshine, the refreshing rain, wonderful neighbours...there are so many things to be grateful for, we just don't always stop to notice them.

Mother Teresa said, 'Be thankful for the small things; it is in them that your strength lies.'

This week you may want to keep the GRATITUDE going in your family. **You could make a GRATITUDE JAR.** Get an empty jar (or box), put some strips of paper close by and whenever a member of your family feels grateful they can write or draw it on the paper and pop it in the box. Choose a time, once a week or once a month when you open the jar together and read everything your family was grateful for. You will be amazed how much there is.



Or if you want to connect with family and friends in other homes why not set up a **WhatsApp Gratitude Group**? Ask older and younger relatives and friends to each post three things they are grateful for every day or every week. It will make an uplifting read and keep you all connected.



'Enjoy the little things for one day you may look back and realise they were the **BIG things' Robert Brault**