

Mission Connections: Special Catechetical Leaders Edition

Youth Connecting in Mission

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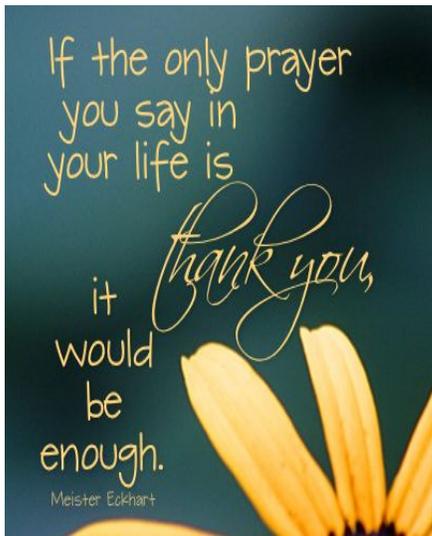
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<http://mission.stcdio.org>

Gratitude

I read an article some time back that still hangs on my bulletin board by my desk. Though it was written nearly five years ago, I imagine the information still applies today. The article was entitled “*How Gratitude Can Change Your Life.*” In it, the author outlined various research that has been done on quality of life. Measurements for quality of life included areas such as resilience, peace, happiness, relationships and health—all of which have been linked to **gratitude!**

In one study, a focus group was invited to keep a gratitude journal, writing down only that which they were grateful for each day. Here are just a few of the benefits this regular practice of gratitude had on the group, compared to others:



- Bounced back more quickly from diversity
- More creative
- Stronger immune system & health
- Stronger relationships
- Reduces stress
- Less depression
- More likely to help others (*my favorite!)
- Higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, energy & optimism
- Made greater progress towards achieving personal goals

- Improve happiness levels by 25%

That’s right—did you know that your body has a natural “happiness level,” the set-point from which you rise (when something positive happens) and fall (when you experience something perceived as bad)? And that a regular practice of gratitude has been found to increase that point, so that even after something bad happens, you naturally return to feeling happier than those who don’t have something bad happen—all because of *gratitude!*

But what impressed me the most is that the article doesn’t paint a “rose colored glasses” only approach to life. “**To say we feel grateful is not to say that everything in our lives is necessarily great. It just means we are aware of our blessings,**” the author states. “Once you become oriented toward looking for things to be grateful for, you will find that you begin to appreciate simple pleasures and things that you previously took for granted. Gratitude should not be just a reaction to getting what you want, but an all-the-time gratitude, the kind where you notice the little things.”

As we near our nation’s holiday of gratitude and gather to feast on food and relationships, I invite us to keep this article in mind. Offering thanks for the blessings we have, even amidst trials and sometimes suffering, is not only something we do one Thursday in November. It is something we are called to as a way of life, to *make a daily practice of gratitude.* Doing so can make us happier, healthier, build relationships, and (my personal favorite) help us help others more. In other words, *living every day as Thanksgiving can help make our world a better place!*

Now that is something to be thankful for!

Don't Forget:



November 13-17: World Wise Schools Week

Nov 16: Give to the Max Day; visit givemn.org and look for “Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Inc.” to support mission.

Nov 23: **Wishing you a Blessed Thanksgiving!**

November 26: World Day of the Poor

November 27: Watch for Advent Toy Contest info; due Dec. 21st.

December 1: Mission Office Open House & Sale; stop in between 9am-4pm for free samples and 10% off all fair trade and gifts!



Give it a Try!

Try incorporating these resources and activities into your ministry.



Mission Education Resources:

World Wise Schools is a program that promotes global learning through lesson plans, activities and events—all based on Peace Corps Volunteer experiences. Check out the resources they provide at www.peacecorps.gov/educators, or contact the Mission Office for speakers and resources that share the experiences of those in our own diocese, as we all work together to become more “World Wise.”

This Sunday is “**World Day of the Poor;**” instituted by Pope Francis, it is a reminder to the church that we are called to *ACT* upon our blessings on behalf of those in need. You can find Pope Francis’ message for this first ever World Day of the Poor on

our website at: www.stcdio.org/mission

Mission Activity Idea:

Information will be coming soon for the **Advent Toy Contest**, in which students are invited to make homemade toys or games using only common or recycled materials. Though we are only able to offer prizes to our Catholic Schools at this time, we encourage parishes and other groups to join in the fun too. Do this as a group, or make it a contest yourself as a great way to remind our young people that so many of their peers around the world don’t have the luxury of wish lists and nice gifts this Christmas. *Be sure to share what you come up with!*

