

GRATITUDE SURVEY

Below is a short Gratitude Survey that will give you an idea of how grateful you are. For scoring and comparisons with other groups of people, go to www.authentichappiness.org where you will find this and similar instruments.

Or, use the scoring key and comparisons shown below.

DIRECTIONS: Please rate each of these items according to the following scale:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Slightly agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly agree

- _____ 1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.
- _____ 2. If I had to list everything I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.
- _____ 3. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.
- _____ 4. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.
- _____ 5. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.
- _____ 6. Long periods of time can go by before I feel grateful for something or to someone.

➤ **Score your Gratitude Survey.**

1. Add up your scores for the positive questions: items 1, 2, 3, and 5.
2. Reverse your scores for the negative questions: items 4 and 6 (for example, if you scored 7, give yourself 1; if you scored 6, give yourself 2).
3. Add the reversed scores for items 4 and 6 to the total from Step 1. This is your total Gratitude Score. It should be between 6 and 42.

➤ **What does your score mean?**

In terms of gratitude, if you scored 35 or below, you are in the bottom one-fourth of people who have taken this survey.

If you scored 38 or below, you are in the bottom one-half of people who have taken this survey.

If you scored between 39 and 41, you are in the top one-fourth and, if you scored 42, you are in the top one-eighth.

Women tend to score slightly higher than men and older people tend to score higher than younger people.

➤ **If you don't like your score, what can you do about it?**

If your score is lower than you thought or than you would like, don't accept a permanent state of ingratitude! Practice exercising your "gratitude muscles. Here's how:

1. At the end of each day, spend a few minutes writing down 3 to 5 things that happened that day for which you feel grateful or thankful. These should be events which you did not earn.
2. At the end of each day, think of 2 or 3 people who have more difficulties in life than you do. Spend some time feeling grateful for what you have.
3. Think of all the things you have received from your involvement with our Parish. Spend some time feeling grateful for this.
4. Select one important person from your past who has made a major positive difference in your life and to whom you have never fully expressed your thanks. Write a one-page testimonial to this person, thanking him/her for this gift.
5. Invite this person to your home or go to this person's home. Bring the testimonial with you and read it to the other person slowly and with eye contact. Let the other person react. Discuss the event and why the person is important to you.
6. Show your gratitude to God and to your neighbors by becoming more involved in serving others. "For it is in giving that we receive..." (St. Francis of Assisi).

GRATITUDE, FOSTERING OUR CONNECTION TO GOD

"We have been given possession of an unshakable kingdom. Let us therefore be grateful and use our gratitude to worship God in the way that pleases him, in reverence and fear." (Hebrews 12:28)

*"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."
(Melody Beattie)*

"If the only prayer you ever say is 'thank you,' it will be enough. (Meister Eckhardt)

❖ **What is Gratitude?**

It is the foundation of all other virtues. It helps us focus on others rather than on ourselves. It allows us to look at what we have rather than on what we don't have. It is *transformational* (helping us to move towards new and higher ways of being and relating) rather than *conservational* (encouraging us to hoard what we have, both spiritually and materially).

❖ **But how many of us truly practice it?**

How many of us, each day, give thanks to God for our unearned and undeserved gifts? Remember, of the ten cured lepers, only one returned to thank Jesus. And most of our prayers, inside or outside of church, are prayers of petition - asking for what we don't have - rather than prayers of praise or thanksgiving for what we do have.

For centuries, religions have tried to increase people's sense of gratitude as an important path in spiritual development. Gratitude fosters our connection with God. However, psychological research has now shown that people who show such characteristics as gratitude, forgiveness, and optimism are more psychologically healthy than those who don't. **It will help you spiritually and psychologically to make an effort to foster a sense of gratitude in your life.** The psychologist Robert Emmons has suggested keeping gratitude journals on a daily basis.

❖ **But if gratitude is so good for us, why don't we do more of it?**

One of the reasons may be the constant cultural messages that bombard us ("You deserve the best, " "Have it your way"). The sense of entitlement thus fostered ("I deserve it!) hampers expressions of gratitude. Also, people may tend towards expressions of entitlement as a way of building self-esteem ("I got what I have because I'm so good!"). There may even have been evolutionary processes that favored the survival of those who were pessimistic and guarded - they were more likely to survive long enough to contribute to the human gene pool.

❖ **Gratitude is a choice!**

On the back of this sheet is a short **Gratitude Survey** that gives you an idea of how grateful you are. For scoring and comparisons with other groups of people, go to www.authentic happiness.org, where you will find this and similar instruments. A scoring key and comparisons are printed on the reverse of this sheet. And, practice the following exercise: Each day, write down 3 - 5 specific things (unearned gifts) that have happened for which you feel grateful. Or, for something really difficult, spend ten minutes wishing for good things to happen to the person you dislike most!

❖ **Gratitude** can transform your life if you train your "gratitude muscles" as you would train your body. Try it, it will help you!

**Try the GRATITUDE SURVEY
on the back of this sheet!**