



Priceless Parenting SM

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Priceless Parenting Newsletter December 2008

Happy Holidays!

The air is once again filled with holiday excitement and anticipation - especially if you have children in your home! For parents the holidays provide many wonderful opportunities including the opportunity to teach children about expressing appreciation. Showing gratitude is an important social skill every child needs to learn. This newsletter focuses on how we can help our children master this essential social grace.

Teaching children to express gratitude

We are responsible for teaching our children to say "please" and "thank you". This basic social skill is critical in showing respect for others. However, many older children have not fully developed this skill and it causes problems.

For example, one aunt explained how hard she worked to find neat gifts for her three nephews. When opening the gifts they would often say things like "I don't really like this." or "This isn't what I wanted." The aunt's feelings were definitely hurt by these remarks. The parents did not step in to help their sons learn that these types of responses were completely inappropriate.

At another holiday gathering children were wildly opening gifts without paying much attention to who the gift was from never mind actually thanking the person for the gift. The children threw aside each gift and anxiously started tearing the wrapping from the next gift. Again the parents failed to set up appropriate rules or expectations for the gift opening.

It's critical to teach our children how to politely handle situations involving gifts. It can be helpful for parents to sit down with their kids ahead of time and discuss the importance of showing their thankfulness. Discussing and practicing what to say under various situations can help prepare children to act graciously even when receiving a gift they really aren't excited about. It can also be helpful to agree on a gentle reminder signal, like a light touch on the ear, if a child forgets to say thanks.

Sometimes parents express appreciation for something their children have received instead of guiding their children to say thank you. When parents do this, children do not learn that it is their responsibility to say thank you for things they've received. Children who do not learn to show these basic courtesies are often disrespectful in a number of other ways.

The holidays provide many opportunities for children to practice expressing their appreciation. This holiday season give your children the gift of learning to express their gratitude!

This Month's Challenge: Gratitude Journal

Parenting Gift Idea

Purchase the Priceless Parenting class for some lucky parent on your list! [Contact us to arrange for a gift certificate.](#)



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A mom from Minnesota recently completed a 30 day gratitude journal. Each day she wrote down something she was grateful for and [posted it on her blog](#). What a wonderful idea! With all the negative news in the world, it's more important than ever to take time to focus on all the good things in our lives.

This month's challenge is to create a gratitude journal. It doesn't have to be fancy ... just a notebook next to your bed where you can jot down one thing you are grateful for each day. It's fine to miss a day ... keep going until you have 30 entries!

Last Month's Challenge: Spending Time Together

Last month you were challenged to carve out time to do something special with your children. One thing we did as a family was spent an evening playing Whist together. It was a fun, close card game ... even though the guys managed to win!

May you have many wonderful experiences this holiday season!

Warm Regards,

Kathy Slattengren