

Count Your Blessings

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Distribute craft materials to each participant.
2. Explain to the group that thinking about things they are grateful for is a way to get through tough times.
3. Instruct them to create a list of things they are grateful for.
4. Next, have them use their craft materials to illustrate one or several things on their list.
5. Encourage them to review their gratitude list and illustration weekly. They may want to update them occasionally, too.
6. Ask them to consider:
 - a. Sharing the list with the soldier when he or she comes home.
 - b. Discussing the list with the soldier in regular video or telephone conversations.
 - c. Sending a copy of the illustrations and a copy of the list in a care package to the soldier.
 - d. Inviting the soldier to do a similar activity and share the drawings with his/her child via Skype or mail.
 - e. Posting the illustrations in the kitchen or making into a calendar for the next month.
7. Offer a few individuals the chance to discuss their list, illustrations and their plan for sharing with the soldier to the class.

Process:

In positive psychology research, gratitude activities have been shown to increase positive emotions and decrease depressive symptoms. Have the class discuss what they plan to do with their list of blessings. This is a great activity to do at the end of a class that may have dealt with painful or difficult issues. Sharing their work with the soldier in the family will be a good activity to stay connected.

Conclude:

Thank the group for their participation. Encourage them to review their lists often. They may even want to make a new one weekly.

Group Size: All

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Goal: To boost morale for grandparents who are caring for their deployed son's or daughter's children

Audience: Grandparents who are caring for the children of deployed soldiers

Special Considerations: This is a great way to end a class that may have been emotionally difficult. If there are members of the same family present, you can have them work together as a team.

Resources Needed:

- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- ✓ Magazines
- ✓ Scissors