

Reprinted from the Christian Science Monitor, August 29, 2000.  
Republished with permission of the Christian Science Publishing  
Society. All rights reserved.

## The gratitude game

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.B.

Have you played it? It's a game for one person or for a carload.

Someone begins, "I'm grateful to God for. ..." And he or she shares something. Then the next person gives gratitude for something. This goes on for 5 minutes or until you reach your destination, whichever comes first. There's no loser. Everyone is a winner. Everyone feels happy after expressing gratitude. And sometimes you discover amazing things.

My 5-year-old granddaughter and I played the gratitude game when she visited us. I found out she was grateful for her friend Josh, and "the other Josh." She was grateful to go swimming at the pool. She was grateful to have a daddy who played with her. And for a nice mommy.

Playing the gratitude game with her, I realized how grateful I was for my mother. I was grateful for a faithful husband. I was grateful for my friend Ann. I was grateful my granddaughter had visited. I was grateful that she went to church with me.

She would begin the gratitude game as soon as we settled into the car to drive somewhere. Playing it with her, I tried to be honest and not just say something fast. I really stopped to think. What was I grateful for at that moment? That our country was not at war. That we had a nice place to live. That we had plenty to eat. Playing the game made me more aware of the good things in my life.

Being grateful to God reminds me that good comes from God. Daily life isn't just a sequence of chance events. God is where blessing and goodness originate. In fact, everything that's good in your life and my life comes from

God. The Bible says that God made everything to be good (see Gen., chap. 1). Jesus brought out the concept that God is good itself. "There is none good but one, that is, God," he said (Matt. 19:17). Thinking of God as good might open up a whole new view of God.

Instead of being the source of both good and bad, God is good only. And since God is all-powerful, good is supreme. Because God is everywhere, good is always with us. Because God is all-acting, good is active in your life right now. What a change from the conventional point of view, to contemplate good as supreme, always present, and active!

A friend of mine was having a tough time seeing that there was any good in his life. We talked about gratitude and how important it is to recognize and acknowledge the signs that good is going on around us. I suggested to my friend that he take a few minutes before going to bed and write down all the good things he could think of that had happened during the day. The idea was to first see good and then be grateful for it. He didn't have anyone to play the gratitude game with, but he agreed to play on his own in this way.

Later he told me what happened. The first night he couldn't think of anything good. But he persisted until he was able to write a few things down.

The next morning he decided to look for signs of good during the day. He sat down on his front steps. A robin landed on the grass. In his words, it began "doing a little dance," preening and cleaning itself. He watched the entire show. It was delightful. He realized that if he hadn't been really looking for good, he would never have noticed the robin and would have missed what to him was a remarkable display.

That evening he filled several pages with recordings of good that had happened during the day and things he was grateful for. Gratitude had made a huge difference!

Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more. Gratitude is much more than a verbal expression of thanks. Action expresses more gratitude than speech. Mary Baker Eddy