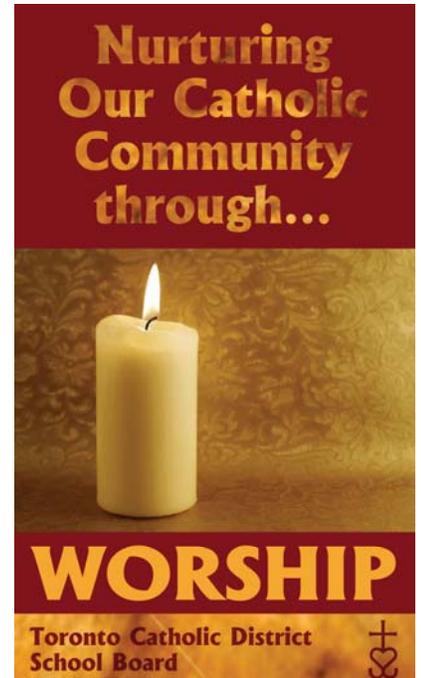


Discussion Starters/ Reflection Ideas/ Activities

- ✚ Keep a Daily Gratitude Journal. Every day before you go to bed, write down five things that you can be grateful for that day. In *Simple Abundance*, Sarah Ban Breathnach describes this journal exercise as a transformative process: "As the months pass and you fill your journal with blessings, an inner shift in your reality will occur."
- ✚ King Faisal of Saudi Arabia displayed a flask of petroleum on his desk with a card saying "Allah's Bounty." What would you put on your desk as a constant reminder of gratitude?
- ✚ Share a story about an experience that at first seemed unpleasant, negative, or even traumatic, which in time you came to understand as a blessing.
- ✚ Be a blessing by performing a service to a neighbour or a shut-in — doing a chore, running an errand, or delivering groceries.
- ✚ Create a Gratitude Calendar for use in your household daily. Set up a schedule of blessing emphases in a date book, perhaps having a different focus for each month: (1) People We've Known, (2) People We Do Not Know but Admire (living and dead), (3) Artists, (4) Service Providers, (5) Spiritual and Other Communities, (6) Our Bodies, (7) Places, (8) Animals, (9) Nature, (10) Food and Drink, (11) Things, (12) Opportunities.
- ✚ This breath prayer is from a poem by German poet Rainer Maria Rilke.



Breathing in: To praise . . .
Breathing out: is the whole thing.

Meditation Activity

Some of our most profound experiences of gratitude occur when we find ourselves in a beautiful place in nature. This exercise is adapted from one offered by Belleruth Naparstek in her book *Your Sixth Sense: Unlocking the Power of Your Intuition*.

Settling fully into your body . . . as you take a nice, deep, full, cleansing breath . . . and breathing out as fully as possible . . . now imagining a place . . . preferably outdoors . . . where you feel safe and peaceful . . . and looking around you . . . feeling whatever you're sitting against or lying upon . . . and listening to the sounds of the place . . . and smelling its rich fragrance . . . And feeling your heart fill with gratitude for such stunning beauty . . . each beat of your heart drumming out its strong, steady gratitude . . . saluting all the beauty all around you . . . each beat pulsing out its thanks . . . resonating outward in slow and gentle waves . . . reaching into every corner of this place . . . offering a blessing. . . and feeling the place respond with its own powerful, loving pulse . . . answering you that you are welcome . . . back and forth . . . pulse to pulse perfectly synchronized . . . where the giver becomes the receiver . . . and the receiver becomes the source . . .

And so, whenever you are ready . . . you can very gently allow yourself back into the room . . . knowing in a deep place that you are better for this . . . And so you are.