

Activities

for *Don't Thank Me,*
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Gratitude, or *hakaras hatov*, is one of the most important principles in Judaism. In fact, the word “*Yehudi*” comes from the Hebrew word for appreciation, *hoda'ah*. Since ultimately everything can be traced back to Hashem as the source of all good, being grateful is not only polite, it is actually an integral part of a proper Jewish perspective on life.

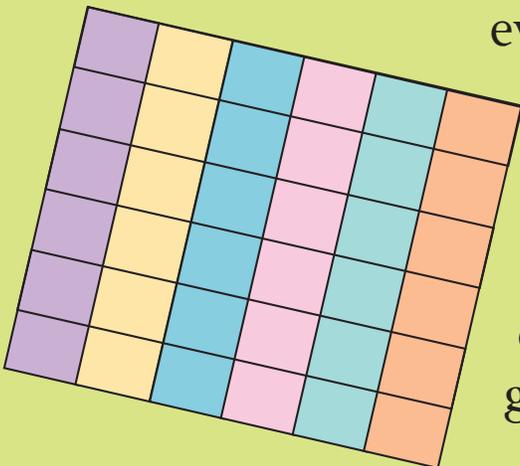
Here are some extension activities to do with your children or students to help instill or increase a sense of gratitude.

Activities for *Don't Thank Me*

- 1. GRATITUDE JAR:** Keep a jar in a central location in your home. Place scrap papers and pens, pencils, crayons, or markers by its side. Encourage all family members to write down anytime they feel grateful for something or someone in their life and then place their note in the jar. Designate a time that the family will open up the notes and read them together. Some families might like to do this at the Shabbos table each week, while others might prefer to mark a date on the calendar to celebrate gratitude.



- 2. GRATITUDE GAME:** Create a chart of six categories of appreciation: people, places, foods, things, events, and miscellaneous. Assign a color to each category. Take a regular dice and place a corresponding colored sticker on each side. Take turns rolling the dice. When you roll, check the chart and share something you are grateful for within that category.



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3. ABC'S OF GRATITUDE: List the things you are grateful for alphabetically, each letter getting its own page. You can compile this into a special alphabetical book of gratitude, or make it into a more competitive game in which you score points for each unique idea on your list.



Alternatively, you can put letters into a hat and on your turn, pick out a letter and think of something you are grateful for that begins with that letter. Take turns until all the letters are used up (activity taken from happysciencemom.com).

4. CONVERSATION STARTER: What would you do without it? Let your children appreciate what they have by brainstorming what life would be like without certain things that we take for granted.



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- 5. DO LIKE YEHUDA:** Short of going on a field trip with your child (although you can definitely do that too!), make a list and work backwards until you get to Hashem.



- 6. SMILE IT FORWARD:** Choose someone to show appreciation to. It can be a teacher, parent, friend, bus driver... Deliver a thank-you card along with a cute smiley picture and directions for that person to “smile it forward.” The recipient becomes the giver in an endless chain. Try to track the travels of the smile and see where it has gone.

