

# THE FOX THEATRE FOR FAMILIES AT HOME

## GRATITUDE POPCORN



### Overview:

Get the gratitude flowing—or in this case, popping—through this high-energy activity. While pretending to be popping corn, participants will practice gratitude and then use mindfulness to observe the power of such intentional thinking on their mood. Getting to see that they can purposefully shift their mental state in positive directions can have major ramifications for participants' future wellbeing.

### Background:

- Age appropriateness: 3 years old and up
- Time frame: 2-5 minutes
- Skills explored: gratitude, intentional thinking, mindfulness

### The Activity:

#### Opening

1. "Let's all go and stand in an open space."  
*A loosely-spaced "clump" of participants is better than a circle or big spread.*

#### Round 1: Popping Practice

2. "Now squat down, pretending to be popcorn kernels. I'll sweep my arm from one side of the group to the other. When my arm sweeps past you, pretend that your kernel is popping by jumping up to standing."

#### Round 2: First Gratitude Pop

3. "Squat back down into kernels. Raise both hands in the air, and then place one hand over your eyes and the other hand over your heart."  
*Participants have the option of fully covering their eyes or simply shielding them, so they can keep their eyes open if that feels safer.*
4. "Holding this position, call to mind something nice in your life (or at home) that you appreciate."



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5. "Uncover your eyes. Once again, I'm going to sweep my arm from one side of the group to the other. When it passes you, 'pop' like before—but this time when you jump to standing also say out loud the nice detail of your life you just thought about."

### Round 3: Second Gratitude Pop

6. *This will be the like round 2, but this time participants call to mind and pop with another detail of their life (or their homes) that they appreciate.*

### Round 4: Buttering with Betters

7. "Squat back down into kernels, with one hand over your eyes and one hand over your heart. Do a mindful check-in, noticing how you feel now after having done this whole activity. Compared to before the activity, see if you feel better, the same, or worse."
8. "I'm going to sweep my arm across the group once more. This time, when it passes you, 'pop' and say whichever word seems true for how you feel: 'better,' 'same,' or 'worse.'"

### Unpacking: Digesting the Better Buttered Popcorn

9. Lead a discussion exploring the following:
  - Simply taking a few seconds to call to mind something nice in our lives—a moment of gratitude—can often help us feel better in the moment.
  - When practiced repeatedly, gratitude can help train our minds to notice the good more readily, helping us to feel good more of the time.

*Activities courtesy of The Mindfulness Education Exchange.*

*For more information about school and youth programming, visit [www.mindfuledex.com](http://www.mindfuledex.com).*

