



Unit: Writing
Skill 22: Correspondence
Activity A: Thank You Notes

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion, writing.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding how and when to write a thank you message.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

30-40 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Paper or note cards for writing.
- Pencils or pens.

Do Ahead:

Collect some samples of thank you notes that you have written or received to share as examples.

Source:

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BACKGROUND:

Did you recall a time in your life when you were young and your mom made you write a thank you note for a gift you received? Why? Why was it important to acknowledge the person who gave you the gift in writing? What does a written message of thanks symbolize?

We all appreciate being acknowledged, and in particular, we like being thanked for a kind effort or gesture. When do you need to write a thank you note? As a leader, why is it important to know when and how to thank others for their contributions?

Suppose you are leading a group of youth and the group received a donation from a local business for your fundraising event. This is a perfect opportunity for a written thank you. You can write it directly as the group's leader, or you can organize members of the group, especially the youth themselves, to write notes and present them to the donor.

Suppose you are a project team leader at work, and one of the office support staff stays late to help you and your team finish up an important task by your deadline? This is another great opportunity to send a written thank you message. Write a simple note expressing your thanks, and have the team members sign it if possible.

In both of these examples, what will those written thank you messages accomplish? Not only will they convey your appreciation, but the thank you messages will make you and your group stand out from the rest. That donor will remember being thanked and be more willing to donate to your group again in the future. That support staff will remember that you took the time to notice their extra effort, and will be much more willing to help again when needed.

WHAT TO DO:

Have participants divide into small groups of 3-5 people, or conduct as an individual exercise if you prefer. Have the groups identify at least 10 situations where a written thank you would be appropriate. Then ask each group to take 5-8 minutes to write a thank you note or letter for one of their situations. Then bring the groups together and have each group share their thank you message and why the situation warranted such a message. At the end, have the groups share their lists of situations too.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What kinds of situations did your group list, and why did the situations need to have a written thank you message developed?

Skill 22: Correspondence

Activity B: Thank you Notes

Notes:

- What kinds of thank you messages got written?
- Were there creative approaches to writing thank you's?
- What should a thank you message include?
- How soon after the action should the thank you be sent? When is it too late?

Apply:

- Have you ever written a thank you message? Besides getting gifts from friends or family, what other situations in your life??
- Can you think of situations where you should have written a thank you note and didn't? What happened?
- How long does it take to write a simple thank you message?
- What lasting impacts does that act of writing your thanks have in the long term?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework: Think of a situation in your own life where a written thank you message is appropriate. Write it! Send it to the person, and then share the results in a brief paragraph.

Resources And Web Links: