



BOWL OF BLESSINGS

A MESSAGE FROM LEEANNE
IN THE CHRISTIAN FORMATION OFFICE

Warm Greetings to All!

Tis the season to honor the saints and be grateful. There's a lot going on in our homes, our nation and our world. One thing that helps me catch my balance and center is making a bowl of "Little Things" that represent bigger things I'm grateful for. I call it My Bowl of Blessings.

My bowl of blessings in my office is a small glass bowl in front of me on my desk. I have an acorn, a stone which says peace, a stone my mother gave me from the Holy Land, an antique button from my friend with a horseshoe. A small metal heart, a love rock, wings that broke off a tiny garden fairy sculpture, a nautilus fossil, two fortune cookies. One says, "Don't be afraid of opposition; remember a kite rises against the wind." And the other says, "Love in its essence is spiritual fire." I'm adding a warm fuzzy to my bowl of blessings to remind me to be loving and share my sparkle and joy in Jesus. There's also a prayer card from Darrell Spencer's memorial service which reads:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let our gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4: 4-6.

Make a bowl of blessings to use as a centerpiece at your family table or a reminder of what you are grateful for by a bedside table or home altar or on the sink. Think about if each family member wants their own bowl or if you want to create one as a family. Consider the ages in your family and if care needs to be taken so that its contents are friendly and safe for everyone in the house that has access to it including furry kids.

- 1) Choose a bowl. It can be crystal, wood or plastic or any material you connect with that is appropriate for you and your family. Is there some special bowl that speaks to you that represents who you are as a family? Do you have a carved bowl or crystal bowl that has sentimental value because of who made it, how you use it or because it's been passed down from a grandparent?
- 2) What are you grateful for? Look around. Take a moment to appreciate. It is just as meaningful to fill a blessings bowl with water and shells, beans, rice, a bowl and a fork as it is to fill it with precious jewels. The important thing is to consider tangible objects for babies and younger children. My acorn can just be an acorn and I love it because it's textured and nuanced and I like how it feels to hold it. I can appreciate that I saw the Wampanoag make acorn flour at Plimouth Plantation and I can eat it. I can also consider feeding a squirrel. An acorn is a seed and from tiny acorns come big oak trees. I sometimes think of an acorn as a metaphor for any seed in creation including hopes, dreams, projects and people.
- 3) Fill your bowl! Make several bowls, make different kinds of bowls inside and outside. God's treasures are everywhere!
- 4) Pray. Make up your own prayer or say this one from Diane Matthes's book *Words of Worship* by Glen Rainsley:

Gracious God, the season of Thanksgiving alerts us and reminds us to be grateful for common, everyday wonders.

Thank you for colored things: for the bright scenes of Sunday Comics, for the many hues of human skin, for the brilliant bronze of sunset reflected in a skyscraper's glass.

Thank you for textured things: for the slippery smoothness of ice, for the rocky roughness of a hiking path, for the impossible softness of a baby's hair.

Thank you for living things: for the breathing natural world, for thriving relationships, for an active faith.

Thank you for imaginable things: for the vision of a world at peace, for bold forgiveness, for the dreams and hopes of all our years.

Gracious God, our Provider and Sustainer, all gratitude and glory we give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

I would love to hear your stories when you have a moment to share with me.

Yours in Christ,

LeeAnne