

# A Tool For Your Parenting Toolbox

## *Appreciation Jars*

What we focus on with our children grows. If you want more cooperation, appreciation, kindness or neatness you need to find time when it is happening and NOTICE it!

The written word is a powerful tool. Children take special notice to the things we write down.

These notes are sure to be treasured.

Tired of hearing lots of complaining? Want your family to focus on recognizing all the good things each of you do: the hugs you give, the errands you run, the favors you offer? In focusing on the caring others show, your family may be less likely to dwell on the little annoyances.

Appreciation jars are tiny, personalized “mailboxes” where feel-good messages can be left for family members.

Using drying/hardening clay or Crayola’s Model Magic (my favorite clay!) have each family member create their own small jars. Encourage each family member to personalize theirs with their favorite designs and later, when dry, favorite colors.

Make an extra to keep small strips of paper and pencils (you can use a plain cup for paper and pencils too).

Once decorated, put the jars in a prominent place in your home.

Discuss with your children that they can write notes to one another (and you!) showing their gratitude for small things like: “Thanks for giving me the big half of the cookie yesterday” to bigger things: “I noticed the great patience you showed when your brother was bugging you.”

Children (and adults too) will soon discover that it is just as fun to write an appreciation note and see the effects on the receiver as it is to receive one yourself.

Watch the effects of how specific praise can help your child discover all of their great attributes. Enjoy!