



SMALL GROUP LEADER APPRECIATION IDEAS (SPRING 2019)

Hey parents! Congratulations, you've almost made it through another school year! Sure, your kid is the one who actually took the tests and worked on the projects, but you were there along the way offering support and a helping hand (and a few last minute trips for posterboard). Everybody needs support to get through the day-to-day, including your kid.

There's also someone else who has supported your son or daughter during this school year—their small group leader. We want to give you and your kid/teen an opportunity to express your appreciation by offering you a few ideas. You don't have to do a lot, or spend a ton (or any) money. All it takes is a little time and intentionality (and maybe a little inspiration). Here are a few suggestions organized by the phase of your child or teen. (Some of these will work for any age.)

PRESCHOOL

Preschoolers are Hilarious. Create your own "fill-in-the-blank" thank you card, but let your kid add in all the details. For example:

Dear **(Leader Name)**,
Thank you for all the **(BLANK)** things you do for **(Kid Name)**. His/Her favorite thing about you is your **(BLANK)**. He/She thinks it's funny when you **(BLANK)**. His/Her best memory of you is the time you **(BLANK)** together. If he/she had to use one word to describe you, it would be **(BLANK)**.
Thank you again!
Love,
(Kid Name)

Framer. Have your child draw a picture of something they love to do with their small group leader. Make it feel extra polished by grabbing an inexpensive picture frame and framing the artwork. Feel free to translate their creativity by giving the piece a title.

Plant On It. Give a plant! It can be purchased or grown in your yard. It can be a simple flower or a gorgeous succulent. Place the plant in a pot or mason jar. Add soil and a note that says, "Thanks for helping me grow." To personalize it, have your preschooler color the note, and write your own note of thanks, too.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

To the Letter. Now is a great time to teach your elementary schooler the importance of handwritten letters. Have your child sit down and write (or type) a note to their leader, thanking them for their influence. Give them the following checklist as a guide when writing:

- My letter:
- » Has an introduction
 - » Gives an example of something specific the leader has done
 - » Mentions a memory with the leader that is meaningful
 - » Contains the words "thank you" or "grateful for you" or something similar
 - » Has an ending/salutation

Bake Cookies. Spend some quality time with your kid and bake your favorite cookie or dessert recipe together. Talk about how important it is to show appreciation for the people in your life. There's nothing better than the thought and effort that goes into a homemade gift. (Prepackaged dough or boxed mixes still count!)

Make a Picture Collage. Collect and print pictures from things your child and his/her small group leader have done this past year. Have your child create an 8x10 sheet (that can be easily framed) or book using these pictures and write about some of their favorite memories. Be sure to include a personal note about how you're thankful for helping create such wonderful memories.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grab a Dozen Donuts. Swing by a grocery store or donut shop and pick up a dozen delicious donuts. Write or print a note that says "DONUT WHAT WE'D DO WITHOUT YOU" and have your kid give it to their small group leader. (We've created a printable donut sheet for you. It's available at theparentcue.org/resources.)

Serve Together. Get with other parents in the small group and organize a "Leader Appreciation Afternoon." Have students show up at the small group leader's home or apartment (give them a heads up!) with supplies in hand, ready to serve. The students can rake leaves, wash cars, paint fences, clean the bathroom, vacuum—even cook their leader a meal AND do the dishes.

Make a Top 10 List. Have your middle schooler create a Top 10 list of reasons why their small group leader is the best. Challenge their creativity to come up with a unique way to present it to their leader. Maybe they make a video or a poster. Maybe they present it with 10 different envelopes or as a list rolled up like a scroll.

HIGH SCHOOL

Text Your Thanks. Keep it simple and send a quick text of gratitude to your teen's small group leader. Challenge your son or daughter to do the same, listing a few specific ways they have been impacted this year. Sometimes even the smallest gestures and words of thanks can make the biggest impression.

Go for Coffee. Encourage your high schooler to take their Small Group Leader to dinner or coffee on their own dime, making sure to spend their time together thanking their leader for the investment they've made in their lives.

Gift their favorite things. Help your high schooler to do some sleuthing to find out their leader's favorite things. Together, create a basket/bucket filled with these items and a note that tells the leader why they're one of your teen's favorites. Below is a list to get you started:

- » *Coffee drink*
- » *Favorite restaurant gift card*
- » *Sweet snack*
- » *Gum flavor*
- » *Sports team*
- » *Soda*
- » *Candy*
- » *Color*
- » *Candle scent*
- » *Potato chip*
- » *Cookie*
- » *Lip balm*