

Spiritual Values 2024-2026 GFWC Montana

Compiled by Florence Diede



President Karen Gustavsen asked that we stress the GFWC theme of “Unity and Diversity.” In these pages you will find different religions, different nationalities, and different Native American tribes featured for prayers and thoughts. Not all were used in their entirety.

Opening Prayers

- Focus Guidance and Purpose
- Focus Gratitude
- Focus Connection
- GFWC Theme

General Blessing

- Native American Blessings
 - Crow
 - Cherokee
 - Lakota
- Aztec

Mealtime Prayers

- GFWC Theme with thanks for meal
- Native American Blessings for Food
 - Crow
 - Lakota
 - Northern Cheyenne

Various Religious Mealtime Prayers

- Baptist
- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Later-Day Saint (Mormon)
- Lutheran
- Muslim
- Nondenominational

Alternate Activities

- Positive Thoughts to Share
- "Love Is..."
- Senior Year of High School
- When I'm an Old Lady

OPENING PRAYER

Simple Opening Prayer (Focus: Guidance & Purpose)

"Heavenly Father, we come together with grateful hearts for this team. Thank you for the dedication of each person here. Please bless this time together, give us wisdom in our decisions, and help us to be united in our purpose. Let our efforts today be a blessing to others. In Your name, we pray. Amen."

Appreciation Focused (Focus: Gratitude)

"We thank you for this incredible group of volunteers. Their hard work does not go unnoticed, and their compassion shines brightly. We ask for a special blessing upon them, providing strength for their tasks and peace in their hearts. May their commitment continue to make a world of difference. Amen."

Short & Reflective (Focus: Connection)

"Lord, thank you for bringing this group together. As we meet, help us to see your presence in one another. Guide our conversation, inspire our creativity, and strengthen our passion for this work. Amen."

GFWC Theme Expression of Thanks

The origin of this non-denominational expression of thanks is shadowed. It is used by many Rotary Clubs, and appears in a publication from the National Association of Parliamentarians. Recently Director of Junior Clubs, Shannon Bailey adapted it for club use.

With our friends beside us and no person beneath us,
With the bonds of GFWC between us and our worries behind us,
With our goals before us and no task beyond us,
With a thirst for knowledge and a dream of a better world,
We are thankful for sisterhood, laughter and joy.
We are thankful for our time together.

Originally closing with Thank you, Shalom, Amen, let us add Xie xie and Namaste

GENERAL BLESSING

Montana is home to twelve tribal nations, including seven federally recognized reservations for the Blackfeet, Crow, Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Fort Belknap (Gros Ventre and Assiniboine), Fort Peck (Assiniboine and Sioux), Northern Cheyenne, and Chippewa Cree (Rocky Boy's). Other tribes with significant populations in Montana are the Little Shell Chippewa and the Gros Ventre.

CROW

Prayers are diverse, but a prominent type includes prayers addressed to the Great Spirit for strength, wisdom, and guidance, reflecting a deep connection to nature and a desire for beauty and peace, as seen in traditions that emphasize a spiritual relationship with the Creator.

The Apsáalooke (Crow) people have a rich tradition of prayer, and their prayers are often expressed in their native language, Apsaalooke.

Great Spirit Prayer

Oh Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world – hear me – I come before you, one of your children. I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. Please bless us and let this food nourish our bodies. Amen

CHEROKEE

Great Spirit Prayer

May your house be blessed by the warm winds of Heaven and the Great Spirit and may all who enter there be blessed by the Great Spirit. May your moccasins lead you down happy paths in many snows. And may the rainbow always touch your shoulder.

"Great Spirit, Creator of all. We thank you for gathering us here today, bringing us together in this sacred space. We honor Mother Earth, whose

bounty sustains us all, and we give thanks for the wisdom of our ancestors who walked before us.

May our hearts be filled with peace and understanding as we share our thoughts and intentions. Guide our discussions, that we may move forward with kindness, empathy, and respect.

We are grateful for this moment of unity and for the sacred gift of life. May we carry this spirit of connection and purpose as we go forth today. Amen."

Cherokee Prayer Blessing

May the Warm Winds of Heaven blow softly upon your house. May the Great Spirit bless all who enter there. May your moccasins make happy tracks in many snows, and may the rainbow always touch your shoulder.

LAKOTA (Sioux)

Wakan Tanka, Great Mystery,
teach me how to trust
my heart,
my mind,
my intuition,
my inner knowing,
the senses of my body,
the blessings of my spirit.
Teach me to trust these things
so that I may enter my Sacred Space
and love beyond my fear,
and thus Walk in Balance
with the passing of each glorious Sun.

AZTEC

Only For a Short While

Oh, only for so short a while you
have loaned us to each other,
because we take form in your act of drawing us,
and we take life in your painting us,
and we breathe in your singing us.

But only for so short a while
have you loaned us to each other.
Because even a drawing cut in obsidian fades,
and the green feathers, the crown feathers,
of the Quetzal bird lose their color,
and even the sounds of the waterfall
die out in the dry season.

So, we too, because only for a short while
have you loaned us to each other.

MEALTIME PRAYERS

GFWC THEME EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Please join me in a moment of reflection and thanks with these words:
With our friends beside us and no person beneath us,
with the bonds of GFWC between us and our worries behind us,
with our goals before us and no task beyond us,
with a thirst for knowledge and a dream of a better world,
we are thankful for sisterhood, laughter and joy.
We are thankful for our time together and the meal we are about to share.
Thank you, shalom, Amen.

NATIVE AMERICAN BLESSINGS FOR FOOD

General Food Blessing

We thank Great Spirit for the resources that made this food possible. We thank the Earth Mother for producing it, and we thank all those who labored to bring it to us. May the wholesomeness of the food before us, bring out the wholeness of the Spirit within us.

CROW

A Crow meal prayer typically refers to the Indian custom of offering food to crows first as a ritual, especially during important times, before the family eats their own meal. This practice symbolizes offering the food to deceased ancestors, representing the deceased parents and grandparents, and is believed to ensure the food is safe. It is a way to show honor to departed loved ones and ensure a harmonious connection between the living and the spiritual realms.

Dear Lord, so many times I am quick to complain when I haven't even asked You to bless my day. Help me ...

SHIUX (LACOTA)

A traditional Lacota meal prayer focuses on gratitude for life and the interconnectedness of all beings, recognizing the food as a gift from the Creator and the Earth Mother. The prayer expresses thanks to the mineral, plant, and animal nations for sustaining life and asks for continued abundance and protection for all living things, acknowledging everyone as relatives within the circle of life.

“We thank the Great Spirit for the life-giving resources that made this food possible. We thank the Earth Mother for producing it, and all who have labored to bring it to our table. We give thanks to the plant and animal kingdoms who gave their lives so that we may live. May the wholesomeness of this food bring wholeness of spirit within us.” Amen

NORTHERN CHEYENNE

Several prayers for meals and giving thanks are available in the Northern Cheyenne language, and many more exist as general Cheyenne traditions. A common feature is giving thanks to the Creator, known as *Ma'heo'o*.

A simple Cheyenne meal prayer

A simple prayer is often used to give thanks to the Creator for the food.

Cheyenne: *Hahoo, Ma'heo'o, netave'séhetátse he'tohe meséhestótse tseto'semeseto.*

English translation: Thank you, Creator, for this food that I am going to eat. Amen

MEALTIME PRAYERS FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIONS.

BAPTIST

Before meals typically focus on giving thanks to God for provision, requesting a blessing on the food, and acknowledging fellowship in Jesus' name. They are usually heartfelt, simple, and spontaneous rather than strictly liturgical.

Dear Lord, thank you for this food and the hands that prepared it. Bless it to our bodies, and us to your service. In Jesus' name, Amen.

BUDDHIST

We receive this food in gratitude to all beings who have helped to bring it to our table, and vow to respond in turn to those in need with wisdom and compassion.

CATHOLIC

Key Aspects of Catholic Food Blessing

Purpose: To thank God, sanctify the food, and remember those in need.

Sign of the Cross: Often, Catholics make the Sign of the Cross before and after the prayer.

Custom: It is traditional to say grace before main meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner), not usually for small snacks.

Before Meals (Alternative/Short):

Bless, Lord God, this meal prepared for us, and bless all those who partake of it. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

HINDU

This ritual is one. The food is one. We who offer the food are one. The fire of hunger is also one. All action is one. We who understand this are one.

JEWISH

Traditionally recite a short blessing before eating any food, be it meal or snack. There are different blessings for different categories of food including fruits (that grow on trees), vegetables (that grow on the ground), grains, miscellaneous (foods that do not grow in soil, like dairy and meat), bread, and wine.

If one is eating a meal with many of these categories of food and it contains bread, the blessing for bread (Hamotzi) is sufficient to cover all foods consumed in that meal, with the exception of wine which always requires its own blessing. Otherwise, a varied meal can be covered by the blessing for miscellaneous foods.

Grains

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam borei minei mezonot.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates varieties of nourishment. Amen

Simple Jewish prayer

Blessed are you, O Lord my God, King of the universe, who brings forth the bread from the earth. Amen.

LUTHERAN

Before meals typically focus on thanking God for daily bread and asking for a blessing on the food, often rooted in Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

The most common, traditional prayer is: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.

O Christ our God, bless the food and drink of Thy servants, for Thou art holy, both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

MORMON OR LATTER-DAY SAINT PRAYER

Create your own prayer following this guidance.

Heavenly Father,
We are thankful for....
What do we desire....
Close with "In the name of Jesus Christ.. Amen"

MUSLIM

When anyone of you begins eating, say: "With the Name of Allah." And if you forget then, when you remember, say: "With the Name of Allah, in the beginning, and in the end."

Bless us, O God. Bless our food and our drink. Since you redeemed us so dearly and delivered us from evil, as you gave us a share in this food so may you give us a share in eternal life.

NONDENOMINATIONAL

Earth we thank you for our food, For work and play and all that's good, For wind and rain and sun above, But most of all for those we love.

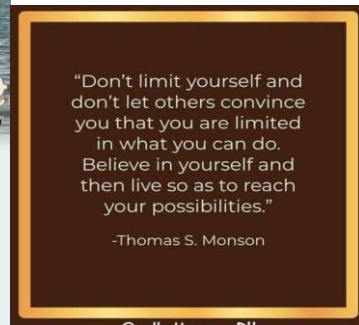
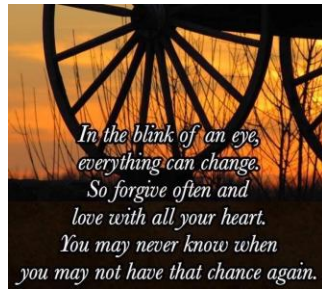
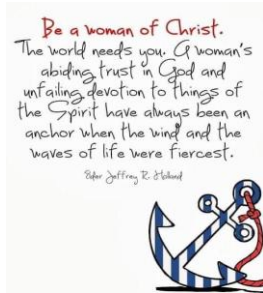
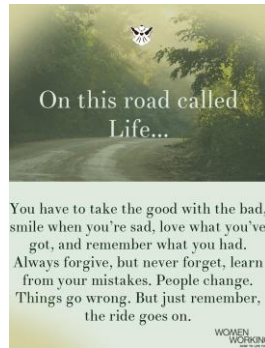
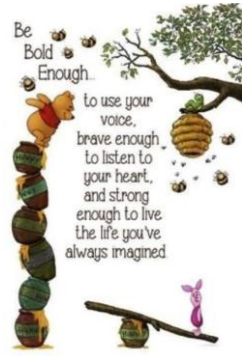
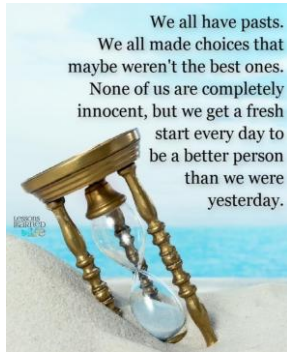
We are grateful for the food before us, the friends beside us, the love among us.

May this sharing of food foster peace and understanding among us. May it bring us to the recognition that we depend on each other for all the good we can ever hope to receive, and that all the good we can hope to accomplish rests in helping others in turn. (Adam Lee)

As we come together to share this meal, let us first remember how it came to us and be thankful to the people who made it possible. This food was born from the bounty of the Earth, in warm sunlight, rich earth and cool rain. May it nourish us, in body and mind, and provide us with the things that are good for living. We are grateful to those who cultivated it, those who harvested it, those who brought it to us and those who prepared it. May its consumption bring about the pleasures of friendship, love and good company. And as we partake of this food in each other's company, as what was once separate from all of us becomes part of each of us, may we also remember what we have in common and what brings us all together. May this sharing of food foster peace and understanding among us, may it bring us to the recognition that we depend on each other for all the good we can ever hope to receive, and that all the good we can hope to accomplish rests in helping others in turn. May it remind us that as we reach out to others to brighten their lives, so are our lives brightened in turn. (Adam Lee)

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Positive happy thoughts were enlarged, duplicated and placed on the meeting tables to share with each other.



"Don't be gloomy. Do not dwell on unkind things. Stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the sunlight. Even if you are not happy, put a smile on your face. 'Accentuate the positive.' Look a little deeper for the good. Go forward in life with a twinkle in your eye and a smile on your face, with great and strong purpose in your heart. Love life." -Gordon B. Hinckley

Motivational Speaker: "You can do anything, you just have to wake up the lion inside of you."

The Lion inside me:

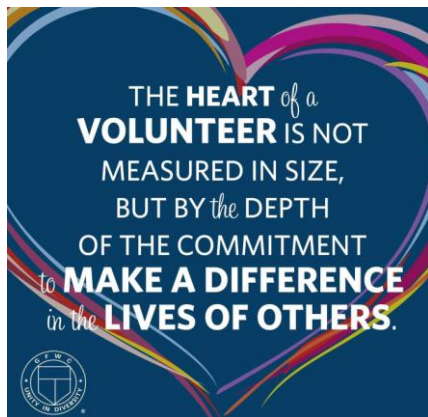


The butterfly does not look back at the caterpillar in shame, just as you should not look back at your past in shame. Your past was part of your own transformation.

- Anthony Gucciardi



Women need other women in their lives who think they are a blessing. No competition, no jealousy...just a supportive LOVING FRIENDSHIP



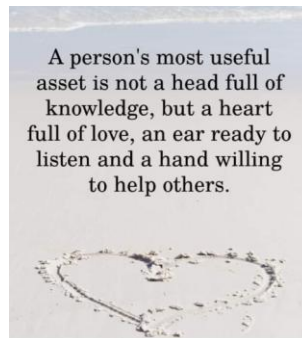
In this life, we're all just climbing up the mountain. We can sing as we hike or complain about our sore feet. But, whatever we choose, we still have to do the trek. So I decided a long time ago singing made a lot more sense.

Inspired by Tiny Buddha

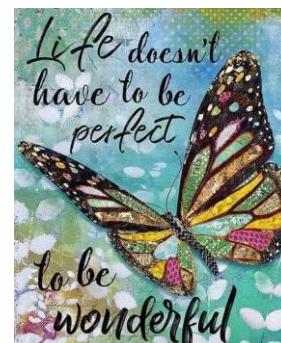
A good marriage does not require a perfect man or a perfect woman. It only requires a man and a woman committed to strive together toward perfection.

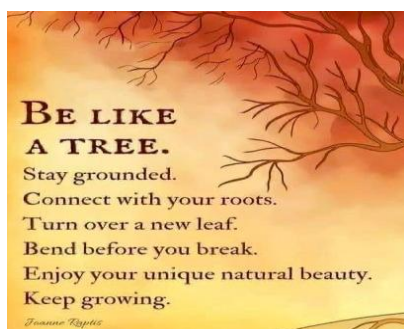
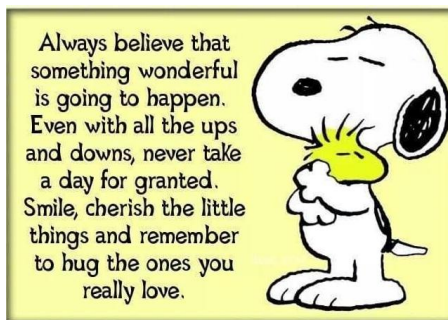
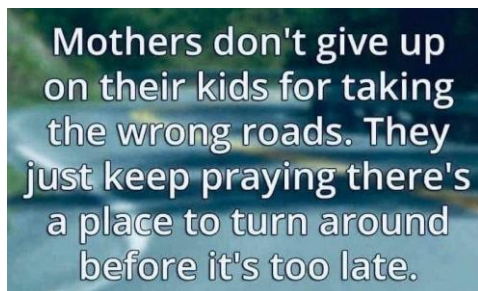
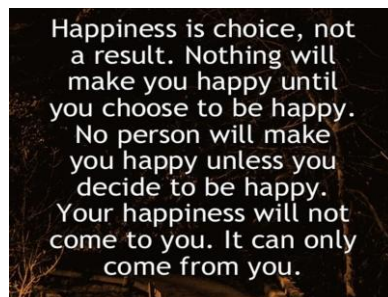
- Dallin H. Oaks

A person's most useful asset is not a head full of knowledge, but a heart full of love, an ear ready to listen and a hand willing to help others.



Life is short. Take the trip. Buy the shoes. Eat the cake.





DO THE BEST YOU CAN UNTIL YOU KNOW BETTER. THEN WHEN YOU KNOW BETTER, DO BETTER

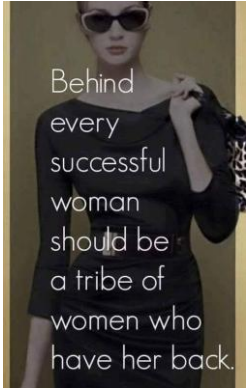


Maya Angelou

Some people don't understand that sitting in **your own house** alone in peace, eating snacks and minding your own business is **priceless**.



Behind every successful woman should be a tribe of women who have her back.



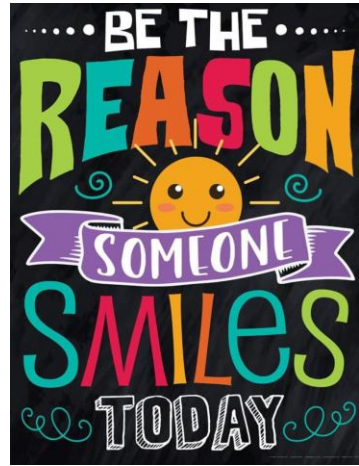
As the world fights to figure everything out, I'll be holding doors for strangers, letting people cut in front of me in traffic, saying good morning, keeping babies entertained in grocery lines, stopping to talk to someone who is lonely, being patient with sales clerks, smiling at a passersby.

WHY?
Because I will not stand idly by and live in a world where love is invisible. Join me in showing kindness, understanding, and judging less. Be kind to a stranger, give grace to friends who are having a bad day, be forgiving of yourself - today and every day

BE the change, BE the light, start today and never stop.

Audrey Love Fay

..... BE THE
REASON
SOMEONE
SMILES
TODAY



Usually when someone is angry, all we hear are their angry words. Instead, try hearing the unspoken, "I am scared, I am frustrated, I am insecure, I am vulnerable, I feel threatened."

Charles F. Glassman

Don't worry about **getting old**, worry about **thinking old**.



Stop trying to calm the storm.
Calm yourself.
The storm will pass.



Kindness doesn't cost a thing, yet it's the richest gift you can give.



Don't wait for someone to bring you flowers. Plant your garden and decorate your own soul.



Attitude is everything.. Think *positive*, have fun and look for the good in your days~

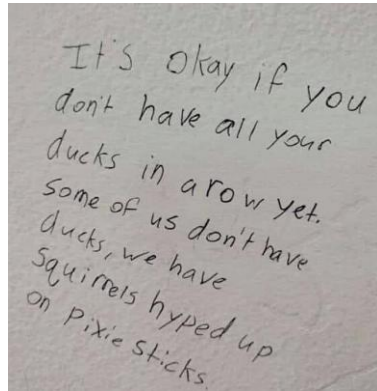
TLC All that Matters



SOME PEOPLE just make YOU **FEEL** better WHEN you're **AROUND** them. THEY are **SUNSHINE** to your soul AND **MEDICINE** FOR YOUR **MIND**.



It's okay if you don't have all your ducks in a row yet. Some of us don't have ducks, we have squirrels hyped up on Pixie sticks.



Love is...

Selected from the list of responses to share a few.

A group of professionals posed a simple question to a class of children aged 4 to 8: "What does love mean?" The answers they received were more heartfelt and insightful than anyone could have ever imagined.

"When my grandma got arthritis, she couldn't bend down to paint her toenails anymore, so my grandpa does it for her, even though his hands hurt too. That's love." – Rebecca, age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know your name is safe in their mouth." – Billy, age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume, and a boy puts on cologne, and they go out and smell each other." – Karl, age 5

"Love is when you go out to eat and give someone most of your fries without asking for any of theirs." – Chrissy, age 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired." – Terri, age 4

"Love is when my mom makes coffee for my dad and takes a sip first, just to make sure it's right." – Danny, age 8

"Love is what's in the room with you on Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen." – Bobby, age 7

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with someone you don't like."

– Nikka, age 6 (We need a few million more Nikkas in the world.)

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, and then he wears it every day." – Noelle, age 7

"Love is like an old woman and an old man who are still friends even though they know each other so well." – Tommy, age 6

"During my piano recital, I was scared, but when I looked out and saw my daddy smiling and waving, I wasn't scared anymore." – Cindy, age 8

"My mom loves me more than anyone else. You don't see anyone else kissing me goodnight." – Clare, age 6

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken." – Elaine, age 5

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy all sweaty and still says he's handsomer than Robert Redford." – Chris, age 7

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day." – Mary Ann, age 4

"When you love someone, your eyelashes go up and down, and little stars come out of you." – Karen, age 7

"You shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot because people forget." – Jessica, age 8

A four-year-old boy who lived next door to an elderly man who had just lost his wife. Upon seeing the man crying, the little boy went into his yard, climbed into his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the boy replied, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

Think about your SENIOR year in High School...if you can remember that long ago! The longer ago it was, the more fun the answers will be!

Class of _____

1. Did you know your current love?
2. Type of car:
3. What kind of job?
4. Where did you live?
5. Were you popular?
6. Were you in choir or band?
7. Ever get suspended?
8. If you could, would you go back?
9. Since graduation have you talked to the person you went to prom with?
10. Did you skip school?
11. Go to all the football games?
12. Favorite SUBJECT?
13. Do you still have your yearbook?
14. Did you follow your career?
15. Do you have a class ring? Whose?
16. Who was your favorite teacher?
17. Favorite shoes?
18. Favorite restaurant?
19. What was your style?
20. Favorite band?
21. High school hair?
22. What cologne/perfume?
23. Age when you graduated?
24. Who do you still stay in touch with from high school?
25. What high school did you attend?



When I'm an Old Lady

by Joanne Bailey Baxter

When I'm an old lady, I'll live with each kid,
And bring so much happiness just as they did.
I want to pay back all the joy they've provided.
Returning each deed! Oh, they'll be so excited!
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

I'll write on the walls with reds, whites and blues,
And I'll bounce on the furniture wearing my shoes.
I'll drink from the carton and then leave it out.
I'll stuff all the toilets and oh, how they'll shout!
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

When they're on the phone and just out of reach,
I'll get into things like sugar and bleach.
Oh, they'll snap their fingers and then shake their head,
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

When they cook dinner and call me to eat,
I'll not eat my green beans or salad or meat,
I'll gag on my okra, spill milk on the table,
And when they get angry I'll run if I'm able!
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

I'll sit close to the TV, through channels I'll click,
I'll cross both eyes just to see if they stick.
I'll take off my socks and throw one away,
And play in the mud 'til the end of the day!
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

And later in bed, I'll lay back and sigh,
I'll thank God in prayer and then close my eyes.
My kids will look down with a smile slowly creeping,
And say with a groan, "She's so sweet when she's sleeping!"

