



Date: _____

Series: Pass the Promise
Fall Year 1, Lesson 15

How to Be Thankful

Primary Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Luke 17:11-19

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God's will in Christ Jesus that you do this."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Many children grow up today with a sense of self-entitlement. In other words, since they are the focus of much attention and given many opportunities, they can become egocentric and quick to feel this world owes them every advantage. The world's standards reinforce this attitude. However, such an attitude always leaves someone looking for more. A big component of the Christian life is to be thankful. We are to be thankful, not only for our material gifts, but also for the gift of Jesus. We receive these gifts because of God's grace, not because we are owed any special favors.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: The greatest gift we could ever have is Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in our place. There is nothing we did to earn, deserve, or be entitled to this. We receive this gift by humble faith.

Jesus in us: Through faith, the presence of Jesus fills our lives so we can see all that we have comes from the Father.

Jesus through us: As we grow in thankfulness, we are quick to witness to God's goodness and minister to others in Jesus' name.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the Presenter is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies:

- *envelope labeled "Richest Kid In the World"*
- *paper that reads "The Most Thankful Person. 'Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God's will in Christ Jesus that you do this.' 1 Thessalonians 5:18." (Place this paper in an envelope.)*

Show kids the envelope labeled, "Richest Kid In the World."

Who is one of the richest kids you know? What does this kid have that makes him so rich?

Inside this envelope is written the identity of the richest kid in the world. Can you guess who this kid might be?

After brief interviews with the children, open the envelope and read the message with 1Thessalonians 5:18. Then say:

The richest people in the world are not the ones with the most things. Sometimes people can have lots of things and still are not thankful. They may want more things. These people might even complain about what they do have.

The richest people in the world are those who see God has given them wonderful things and are thankful for those things.

Let's remember to thank God for all he has given us, as we sing praises to him.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

How many of you complained this week about some food you had to eat that you simply did not like? It's easy to complain until we have no food. Then we become thankful for food.

How many of you complained this week about having to come inside after playing? It is easy to complain until we have no home to go inside or no bed to sleep in.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Supplies:

- *3 x 5-inch cards (or pieces of paper) for each child*
- *pencils*

Draw a picture or write a word about something for which you are thankful. When you present this gift back to God with your offerings, remember that offerings are a way to say "thank you" to God for all he has given us.

Collect the children's offerings.

Bible Presentation and Presentation 1:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

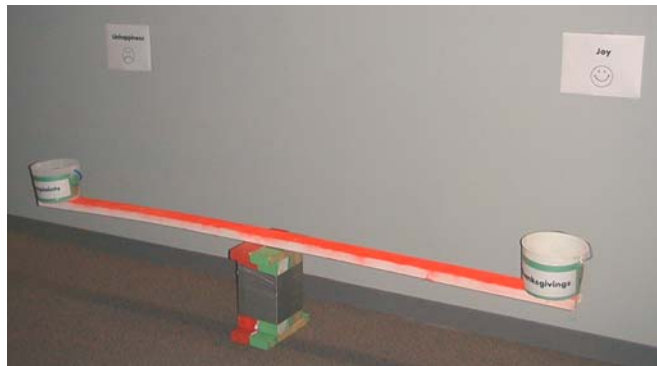
Supplies:

- *a teeter-totter (See below for further instructions.)*
- *two buckets. Label one "Thanksgiving," and label the other "Complaints."*
- *small objects, such as wooden blocks, beanbags, or rocks to toss into the buckets*
- *small floor sign that reads "Joy"*
- *small floor sign that reads "Unhappiness"*
- *larger-sized cross that fits in a bucket*

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

“Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God’s will in Christ Jesus that you do this.”

Demonstrate this Bible verse by setting up a teeter-totter. The dimensions of the teeter-totter need to be large enough to make a visual impact. We suggest using an eight-foot two-by-four with a bucket stapled to each end balancing on a fulcrum. Label one bucket “Complaints” and the other “Thanksgivings.”



Put a sign that reads “Joy” close to the floor next to the “Thanksgiving” teeter-totter end. On the “Complaints” end should be a sign that reads “Unhappiness.” When a bucket is lowered to the floor, it demonstrates that the result of many complaints is unhappiness and the result of much thankfulness is joy.

Collect examples of complaints from the kids. Add an object to the complaint bucket for each complaint the children give. Watch the teeter-totter finally give in and sink. Describe how complaints bring us unhappiness because our mind is filled with the negative thoughts.

Next, collect examples of thanksgivings from the children and add a weight to the thanksgiving bucket for each thought. Point out how thoughts of thanksgiving weigh the bucket down until it registers happiness.

Place a large cross inside the happiness bucket so the cross totally weighs down the thanksgivings side of the teeter-totter. Then say:

The most precious gift we could ever receive is the very best gift God gave. God loved us so much that he gave his Son for us. If we believe in Jesus, we will live with him and we will not perish. (John 3:16.)

That is a thanksgiving we should remember every day. We are filled with joy when we do.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Hee Haw:

It is easier for most people to complain and frown than to be thankful and joyful. Today's game is going to be just the opposite. We are going to find out that it might be hard not to be thankful or joyful when we play this game.

Two players face each other 20 feet apart. The game begins when the players bow to one another, look each other in the eye, and say "Hee Haw!" Each player must keep looking the other in the eye and not smile. It is best to frown. The children cannot laugh at all. The players must then walk towards each other and pass each other until they have exchanged places.

Why does the game seem so hard? Players are divided among opposing teams. The teams will line up facing each other and proceed on the Hee Haw walk without touching other players. They can, however, make noises, laugh, or make faces trying to get the opposing team to laugh or smile.

If a player does break down and laugh during the Hee Haw walk, he joins the opposing team and the game continues for another round.

The learning point of this game: The key to joy is letting go of our complaints and being thankful for all we have.

Bible Presentation and Presentation 2:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

The Story of the Ten Lepers:

Supplies:

- *costuming for Jesus and ten lepers*

*Suggestions for costuming might include draping kids with old white sheets or loosely wrapping toilet tissue around the arms and legs of kids to look like rags or bandages. The friends might even use tubes of white and red decorating frosting to make sores on the lepers' faces. **Be cautious about the frosting staining clothing.** The Jesus character could wear a robe or a sheet draped around him.*

Pick eleven volunteers and let each volunteer pick a friend to help them get costumed. Read the Bible event from Luke 17:11-19 as follows, with volunteers acting out the parts of the Jesus and the ten lepers.

Presenter: “Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee on his way to Jerusalem. As he went into a village, ten men with a skin disease met him.”

Lepers: “Jesus, Teacher, have mercy on us!”

Presenter: “When he (Jesus) saw them, he told them, ‘Show yourselves to the priests.’”

Okay, lepers, you need to turn around and travel to the priests until you go off stage.

“As they went, they were made clean. When one of them saw that he was healed, he turned back and praised God in a loud voice.”

Instruct the last leper to come back and follow the actions as you read them.

Presenter: “He quickly bowed at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. (The man was a Samaritan.) Jesus asked, ‘Weren’t ten men made clean? Where are the other nine? Only this foreigner came back to praise God.’ Jesus told the man, ‘Get up, and go home! Your faith has made you well.’”

Have the volunteers return to their seats as you ask the following questions:

How many of the ten lepers were happy that they received healing?
(Ten.)

How many returned to be thankful? (*One.*)

How many of the ten lepers had a friendship with Jesus after they were healed? (*The one who returned to show thanks.*)

Conclude with this thought.

The man who was truly the richest was the one who was thankful and left with faith. He realized that Jesus had healed him and he had a friendship with Jesus. When we are thankful, we realize that it is God who helps us. When we are thankful, we show our trust in God. Though all had been healed, only one received the true riches of thankfulness.

Who are you most like? One of the nine lepers who never stopped to notice that Jesus had done something special for him, or the one who came to return thanks?

Application:

Read this pen pal letter from a girl in Uganda. This excerpt is from *One Big House: A Kid's Guide to God's Earth and His People*, (Compassion International, 1995) and was reprinted with permission.

Dear American Friend,

I was happy to get your letter! I'm not used to writing letters, but I'm going to try to tell you a little bit about myself. And I have some questions to ask you.

I live in the country of Uganda. My country is near a huge lake called Victoria. It's very beautiful. My country is green with rolling hills and lots of farmland. It must be one of the prettiest places on earth!

My family was once really large, but is getting smaller. My father died a few years ago from "AIDS," and we just found out that my mom has it too. It makes me really sad to think I will lose her, too. But she says, "I'm not dead yet, so don't act like I am!" Mom's pretty good at making us laugh! My brothers and sisters and I try to help out at home as much as we can, and by working little jobs, too. This way my mom doesn't have to do everything herself.

Let's see, about my school. My school starts at seven in the morning, but I have to get up at five o'clock because my family does chores and prays together before we all scatter for the day. I'm the top of my class and my favorite subject is literature. I like my school—mostly because I like my teacher. She does lots of different things to help teach us. Like one day we went into the village and

went to this lady's house who sells breads. The lady showed us how she makes the different kinds of breads and let us try making some, too. (The best part was eating it!)

I don't leave school till nine at night, and by then it's very dark. I try to hurry home—(I always think I hear something, you know?) My mom says I need to watch out since there are a lot of drunks out at that time, and there are bunches of people in our village who practice witchcraft. It gives me the shivers to think about what they might do to me! But I know that God is always with me, and so far I've never gotten into any trouble on the way home. Once I get home, there is always a whole pile of chores to do. Seems like I never get to bed before midnight—and am I ever ready to sleep! What time do you have to go to bed? What time is your school? What is your favorite thing to learn about? Am I asking too many questions? HA!

I like to go to school because I want to be a teacher when I am old enough. It makes me feel good to think I'll be able to take care of my little brothers and sisters when I have a real job. My mom will be proud! I may even be able to buy a house. My dream house has a real bathroom, like in the magazines, and electricity and even water right in the house. No more carrying it from the town well! Wouldn't that be great?

Tell me about the house where you live, and about your dream house. Do you have to carry your water, too? How many kids are in your family? Do you have a mom and a dad? I am curious to know all about you! Now it's your turn to answer questions!

Your Friend in Uganda,
Jackie



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Have kids share about a time they were truly thankful for a way God took care of them or provided for a need.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- envelope labeled *“Richest Kid In the World”*
- paper that reads, *“The Most Thankful Person. ‘Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God’s will in Christ Jesus that you do this.’ 1 Thessalonians 5:18.” (This sheet is attached to this list.) Place this paper in an envelope.*

Offering:

- 3 x 5-inch cards or paper
- pencils

Bible Presentation 1:

- a teeter-totter. The dimensions of the teeter-totter need to be large enough to make a visual impact. We suggest using an eight-foot two-by-four with a bucket stapled to each end balancing on a fulcrum. One bucket will be labeled “Complaints” and the other will be labeled “Thanksgivings.”
- small objects such as wooden blocks or rocks to toss into the buckets
- small floor signs on each end of the teeter-totter. On the “Thanksgivings” side would be a sign that reads “Joy.” On the “Complaints” side would be a sign that reads “Unhappiness.”
- a larger-sized cross that fits in a bucket

Bible Presentation 2:

- costuming for Jesus and ten lepers
Suggestions for costuming might include draping kids with old white sheets or loosely wrapping toilet tissue around the arms and legs of kids to look like rags or bandages. The friends might even use tubes of white and red decorating frosting to make sores on the lepers’ faces. **Be cautious about the frosting staining clothing.** The Jesus character could wear a robe or a sheet draped around him.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.