



Date: _____

Series: Pass the Promise
Fall Year 1, Lesson 27

What Makes a Thankful Heart

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

Key Verse: Luke 17:15, “When one of them saw that he was healed, he turned back and praised God in a loud voice.”

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

Many kids today have so many blessings that they take them for granted. They live *thankless* lives instead of *thankful* lives. Even in public schools, they are taught that Thanksgiving was a holiday founded on friendship between pilgrims and Indians as opposed to a time when they gathered to give thanks to God for the source of their blessings. Kids need to understand and appreciate how they are richly blessed so they can give thanks to the one who has blessed them—God.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: All material gifts would mean nothing to us if we did not have Jesus who won every spiritual blessing for us. He gave his life on the cross. We have been restored with God. We can now give him thanks in every circumstance.

Jesus in us: Jesus gave thanks to the Father for all he does, so we, too, should give thanks. Through the Holy Spirit, we can know that God the Father is the source of all our blessings.

Jesus through us: Our thankfulness is more than just a feeling. We can put it into action. We give back to God the sacrifice of our praise and the sacrifice of our gifts. When giving to others, we are giving to God.

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 leader 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:

- *pitcher of water*
- *large tray or pan*
- *several small cups*

To introduce the theme, divide the group into three parts and have each group repeat a verse of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 alternately. Have the first group say "Always be joyful," the second group say, "Never stop praying," and the third group say, "Whatever happens, give thanks." Change verses with groups one more time until each group has had a different line. Then say the whole passage together.

For this next object lesson have a pitcher of water, a large tray or pan, and several small cups.

We've practiced this verse so much I'm getting thirsty. Is anyone else thirsty?

Invite a few kids who are thirsty to come forward. As you pour water into the cups, do not stop. Expect for cups to overflow and kids to scramble in drinking their water fast enough so they can catch more water. What's the point?

The key to a joyful life is to see that God's blessings have been poured into our lives so much that they overflow, just like the water is overflowing. We've been so filled up with his blessings that we can't help but overflow with thankfulness.

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.

Help the kids identify times in their lives in which they complained.

Let's have a contest... a whining contest. Who can whine the loudest, boys or girls? Girls first. Let's hear you whine. Wow. Boys, let's hear you whine. Declare the winner.

Can you think of a time you complained about something instead of giving thanks for it? Instead of thanking your mom for dinner, you may have said, "I don't like this. Do I have to eat it?" Instead of appreciating the clothes your parents provided for you, maybe you said, "I don't like this shirt anymore. It's out of style." Or instead of thanking someone for a gift, you said or thought, "I don't want that. I think I'll exchange it for something else."

You may tell a story from your own life. Children can give other examples. Have children confess their sins in their hearts, and then announce God's forgiveness.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want 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.

When the kids come forward to place their offerings in the basket, have them say thank you. Invite all kids forward to put their thanksgiving in the offering by imagining they are holding a glob of thanksgiving in their cupped hands. Have them "pour" their thanksgiving into the offering basket while they say thank you. Children with offerings can have their offerings in their cupped hands as they do this. Children without offerings can still put their thanksgivings in the basket.



The Word

Bible Presentation:

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:

- *blanket backdrop*
- *bucket attached to the end of a pole (behind the backdrop)*
- *can of soda (behind the backdrop)*
- *small bag of chips (behind the backdrop)*
- *small toy (behind the backdrop)*
- *candy bar (behind the backdrop)*
- *pack of gum (behind the backdrop)*
- *index card for each actor's lines*

Begin with the drama, "How About That?" (See page 7 for script.)

From a simple Bible translation or a children's story Bible, read the Bible event in Luke 17:11-19 about Jesus healing the ten lepers.

How is the drama sketch you saw earlier like what happened in the real life event of Jesus' healing? *(Ten men asked for something from Jesus and expected to get what they asked for.)*

How is sin in our lives like having leprosy? *(Sin brings pain and misery and we need Jesus' healing.)*

How does Jesus heal us from our sin?

Who are you most like in the story, the nine who didn't come back or the one who did?

Who do you think is the happiest in the story? Why?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:15.

"I thank God for his gift that words cannot describe."

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.

Supplies:

- six tables
- the following ingredients with the following signs:
 - **Peanuts:** "I'm thankful for this person..."

*****CAUTION:** *If you know of any Peanut Allergy problems in your groups, you can substitute other items as needed.*

- **Chocolate Chips:** "I'm thankful for these sweet things that I have..."
- **Raisins:** "I'm raising my thanks for the challenges I have..."
- **Sunflower Seeds (no shells):** "I'm thankful for Jesus, who does this for me..."
- **Cereal:** "I'm thankful for things of God's creation I can see around me..."
- several serving spoons or tablespoons at each ingredient table
- container for mix. This container might easily be contrived from a heart-shaped cake pan with six-inch tall poster board "walls" taped to the outline of the heart, or it might be a bowl with an outline shape of a heart cut out to fit over the top. This would need to have a center hole cut in it.
- sandwich bag for each child
- small paper cup for each child

This activity is designed to help the children understand just how richly they have been blessed so their hearts could be filled to overflowing. They will give thanks, and out of that overflowing they will give away more than just words.

Part One: The Mixing of the Thankful Heart

Set up five tables surrounding one central table. Place the tables about ten walking paces away. On the center table place a heart-shaped container that will be the mixing bowl for massive group trail mix. On each of the tables is one of the trail mix ingredients with the signs. Tell the children they are going to create a thankful heart.

A thankful heart is filled with an understanding that all blessings come from God. Counting those blessings, from the small ones to the major ones, helps a heart become filled with thankfulness.

Give instructions that the kids are to take a spoon from the table, dip it into an ingredient, and try to get to the center heart without spilling. When they deposit their spoonful of ingredient, they must tell God "thank you" for something that ingredient represents. They cannot put in a spoonful without saying a thank you out loud. It will be

important that ALL kids and adults are quiet during this experience, except when they are expressing their thankfulness. An adult with a microphone should be at the center table so everyone can hear the thanksgiving of the person “spooning in” his blessings.

Talk about the signs at each table and give examples for what the children might say. You might mention that the raisin table will take extra thinking.

Remember the 1 Thessalonians passage? “*Whatever happens, give thanks.*”

According to the number of total children, ask for 1/5 of the group to start at the peanut table, 1/5 of the total of kids number of kids to come to the chocolate chips table and so on. Let children bring their blessings to the “Thankful Heart” bowl. They can then go to a different table. As each child takes a turn, the thankful heart is filled as the kids literally give thanks to God.

Part Two: The Tasting of the Thankful Heart

After the kids have adequately filled the thankful heart container, stir the trail mix. The kids then take small paper cups of trail mix from the thankful heart and retreat to their own special space. As the lights are dimmed, the kids close their eyes and eat their trail mix bit by bit as the leader prays through a list of thanksgivings.

Part Three: The Giving

The overflowing of a thankful heart means that we give gifts ourselves. Give each child sandwich bags to take trail mix to others. They can share this with a family member, a friend, or even an acquaintance. As they share it, they are to say to that person, “*I thank God for you because...*”



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.

Invite some adults forward to talk about positive examples of how the children shared their thankfulness in the previous learning activity.

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.

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.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- pitcher of water
- large tray or pan
- several small cups

Bible Presentation:

- blanket backdrop
- bucket attached to the end of a pole (behind the backdrop)
- can of soda (behind the backdrop)
- small bag of chips (behind the backdrop)
- small toy (behind the backdrop)
- candy bar (behind the backdrop)
- pack of gum (behind the backdrop)
- index card for each actor's lines

Learning Game:

- six tables
- the following ingredients with the following signs. (Signs are attached to this listing.)
 - **Peanuts:** "I'm thankful for this person..."

*****CAUTION: If you know of any Peanut Allergy problems in your groups, you can substitute other items as needed.**

- **Chocolate Chips:** "I'm thankful for these sweet things that I have..."
- **Raisins:** "I'm raising my thanks for the challenges I have..."
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- sandwich bag for each child
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“How About That”

This drama needs to be rehearsed beforehand. Five children sit in front of a blanket backdrop with two others holding the blanket up. Two people need to be behind the blanket putting the “wish” items in the bucket and handing them over on a pole.

Actor 1: **I wish I had a pop.**

(The item appears from over the blanket handed to him in the bucket on a pole.)

Actor 1: **How about that!**

Rest of actors: *(Nonchalantly.)* Oh well...we get this stuff all the time.

Actor 2: **I wish I had some chips.**

(A bag of chips is handed over the blanket.)

Actor 2: **How about that!**

Rest of actors: *(Nonchalantly.)* Oh well...we get this stuff all the time.

(This continues with actors three, four, and five individually asking for a specific toy, a candy bar, and a pack of gum.)

Actor 1: **Hey, where do you think all this stuff comes from anyway?**

Actor 2: **From a bucket.**

Actor 3: From a pole.

Actor 4: **From behind the blanket.**

Actor 5 : *(Nonchalantly.)* **Well, it's always there. How about that!**

**I'm thankful for this
person...**

**I'm thankful for these
sweet things that I
have...**

**I'm raising my thanks
for the challenges I
have...**

**I'm thankful for
Jesus, who does
this for me...**

**I'm thankful for things
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