



Date: _____

Series: Thanksgiving
Fall Year 3, Lesson 27

Give Thanks to God

Primary Scripture: Psalm 136:1

Key Verse: Psalm 136:1, "Give thanks to the Lord because he is good, because his mercy endures forever."

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

It is easy for kids, as well as adults, to take their blessings for granted. Kids need to learn to count their blessings and to understand God is the source of those blessings. God gives us all of our blessings, both great and small. Our blessings are not measured only in material wealth, but they are measured spiritually, as well. Today's lesson encounters a wide variety of thanksgiving that helps us boldly proclaim who Jesus is and what he has done.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus meets our most important need—a relationship with God when he gave his life for us on the cross.

Jesus in us: Jesus' life was a life of thanksgiving. Through faith in him, the Holy Spirit imparts that thankfulness to us, as well.

Jesus through us: Being overcome with gratitude for what Jesus has done, we live a life of love demonstrated to others as an expression of our love for him.

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.

Beginning with the letter "A," go through all or part of the alphabet inviting kids to name blessings that begin with that letter.

Encourage the kids to think of more than just material blessings. Help them think of spiritual blessings as well. Note that many of the items the kids name might be taken for granted yet they are truly a blessing from God.

The more thankful we are, the richer we feel and the more blessed our lives are. There are no greater riches than being greatly aware of all of God's goodness that he gives to us.

The Bible says in Psalm 136:1 "Give thanks to the Lord because he is good, because his mercy endures forever."

Let's thank God with our praise and worship!

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.

Thanksgiving reminds us of giving thanks to God who has given us the most. When God gives something to us, we call it grace. He gives even if we don't deserve it. God's greatest grace for us is giving us Jesus. Jesus was the one gift that cost God the most. Jesus was the most prized possession he had. The truth is, he did not possess his Son, yet God loved Jesus more than anything else.

God hates sin and rebellion, which all of us do. The only way that we can be connected with God is to have our sin punished. Jesus was punished when he took our sin upon himself. Though God loved Jesus so much, his love for us was as great. God took all the punishment we deserved and put it on his Son when Jesus died on the cross for us. That was the hardest thing that God ever had to do. It cost him more than anything else.

We have been given the greatest gift of all time—a friendship with God that lasts forever. If you know Jesus as your Savior, raise your hand. It is time now to thank God for that gift. If you do not know him as your Savior and if you don't trust him, now is the time to ask him to be your Savior. He wants you to trust him. Let's pray for that now.

At the conclusion of prayers confessing individual sins, announce God's forgiveness because of his amazing grace.

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.

Your choice of music.

Offering:

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

Invite the children to bring their money gifts to the Lord. Also invite them to come to the microphone and tell one thing they would like to do to help show God's love to someone else this week. It is an offering of their action to show their thankfulness for what God has given them.



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.

“Catch the Blessings”

Supplies needed: ten Frisbees or flying saucers, two tubs, two sheets or blankets, masking tape

Divide the entire group into two teams, such as boys against girls. The object of the game is to see which team gets the most flying saucers into their team tub.

In advance, make two lines on the floor with masking tape that are twenty feet apart. At one line will be the Frisbee throwers. Five girls and five boys will each throw one Frisbee. The teams will try to land a Frisbee in their large tub on the other side where the rest of their teammates are located.

The teammates next to the tubs cannot touch the Frisbees with their hands or pick them up from the ground. Each team has a sheet or blanket and they must figure out how to help their partners get the Frisbees into the tub using the sheet. There are several ways this can be done. They can spread the sheet out, try to catch each of the Frisbees, and “pour” the Frisbees into the tub. The teams could also make the sheet into a type of backboard so that when the Frisbees hit it they would drain into the tub. Each team must decide its strategy. (It is best to let kids come up with their own ideas.)

After one set of Frisbees is thrown, five new contestants can throw for a second round. Rotating players will help to increase participation.

The learning point:

God is throwing blessings to us all the time. Too often we ignore them and do not catch them. We have more thankful attitudes when we stop to recount what our blessings are and thank God for them.

The greatest blessing God gave us is his message of Jesus’ great love for us. That is a blessing we certainly want to catch. We also have the freedom to share that message with others. Especially as

America celebrates Thanksgiving, we celebrate our freedom to proclaim Jesus and to worship him.

Bible Reading:

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: video: **The Story Keepers A.D. 64, "Raging Water"** produced by Shepherd Ltd. 1996. Easily purchased from the Internet.*

Today's movie, *The Story Keepers A.D. 64, "Raging Water,"* reminds us of a time when people were not free to share the message of Jesus. Nonetheless, they shared it all the more. Even when in a country which persecutes believers, it is important to be thankful for the gift and the message of Jesus. We should be so thankful for this blessing that we would share Jesus with others.



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.

If time allows, let children tell about a time they shared Jesus with others because they were so thankful they couldn't help but do so.

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.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chairs:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

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:

Offering:

- microphone

Learning Game:

- ten Frisbees or flying saucers
- two tubs
- two sheets or blankets
- masking tape

Bible Reading:

- video: *The Storykeepers A.D. 64 –“Raging Water”* produced by Shepherd Ltd. 1996

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