



**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Series:** Thanksgiving  
Fall Year 1, Lesson 27

# True Gratitude to God

**Take Home Point:** \*Trade in your Pet Peeves for Grati-Toads.

\*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

**Bible Event:** Thanksgiving verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18,  
Romans 8:28

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

**We will help kids know:**

- Pet Peeves are the small things in life that we *enjoy* complaining about. They can, however, rob us of our joy. A Grati-Toad is having true gratitude to God. Grati-Toads happen when we say, "Thank you God for ..."
- Instead of keeping our Pet Peeves that can rob us of our joy, we need to trade them in for Grati-Toads.
- God is the source of all of our blessings, so we should have true Grati-Toads (gratitude) to him.




**We will help kids feel:**

- Amused at how silly it is to play with Pet Peeves.
- Awed by how many Grati-Toads we have to give to God.

**We will help kids do:**

- Identify their Pet Peeves.
- Make a Grati-Toad as a reminder of how important it is to give Grati-Toads to God.
- Pray extensively as a group for all that we have to show gratitude to God.

## THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
<b>Small Group Warm-Up</b> 	3	Kids will find out how to exchange a Pet Peeve for a joyous Grati-Toad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• steel wool pads</li> <li>• pipe cleaners</li> <li>• craft foam</li> </ul>
<b>Large Group</b> 	4  7   11	<b>Overview</b>  <b>Dramatic Presentation:</b> “Scratch ‘N’ Itch Pet Store”---Mr. Scratch, the owner of the pet store introduces some of the Pet Peeves from small group. He then explains how to replace Pet Peeves with Grati-Toads.  <b>Excerpt from the book, <i>The Hiding Place</i>, Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill, Bantam Books, 1975</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staging for Scratch ‘N’ Itch Pet Store</li> <li>• costume for Mr. Scratch</li> <li>• Pet Peeves from Small Group Warm-up</li> <li>• three volunteer shepherds</li> <li>• a Grati-Toad, an example of the craft project from small group application</li> <li>• Excerpt from the book, <u><i>The Hiding Place</i></u>, (pgs. 11-12 )</li> </ul>
<b>Small Group Application</b> 	5	Kids discuss how to readjust their attitudes and practically change their “Pet Peeves” into “Grati-toads.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• foam pieces</li> <li>• glue</li> <li>• magnets</li> <li>• labels printed with: “Whatever happens, give thanks.” (p. 13)</li> </ul>

# Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



**Purpose:** *Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.*

**As kids gather:** *Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.*

**Begin:** *Review the group covenant signed by all. This can be as simple as reading it and reminding all that they have signed it. (See lesson 16.) Welcome new kids and invite them to sign the covenant.*

The object lesson for today is a “Pet Peeve”. Prepare your Pet Peeve in advance or on the spot as you introduce the topic. Make your Pet Peeve out of a steel wool pad, pipe cleaners and scraps of craft foam. (This is the foam we will cut up and use later in today's lesson.) A Pet Peeve is made with as many legs, heads, tails and unique shapes as given to it by its creator.

Examples:



Introduce this Pet Peeve to the group to with the following:

**I would like to introduce you to a “Pet Peeve.” As you can tell, this Pet Peeve is something that is scratchy and irritating, certainly not soft and comforting. Pet Peeves are things we often like to complain about. They are usually not world problems or great causes. Instead they are some of the things that simply irritate us and we *enjoy* complaining about them. The problem is that when we complain all the time, we are holding onto our Pet Peeves, and the scratches and irritations can rob us of our joy.**

**For example, let me give you one of my Pet Peeves. Something that really irritates me and I complain about sometimes is \_\_\_\_\_. Use your own personal example and fill in the blank as you hold your Pet Peeve.**

**What are some things that are your Pet Peeves? We'll share them one at a time and as we do, we'll pass the Pet Peeve to each other. Hold it while you tell about one of your pet peeves, then pass the pet peeve to someone else who hasn't yet shared. This way everybody has a chance to talk about at least one. If we have enough time, we may give you a chance to share a second or even third pet peeve.**

Continue having kids take turns to complete one or two rounds of Pet Peeves. After adequate discussion, conclude with the following.

**I'm going to ask you some questions about Pet Peeves. I'm not looking for answers but I want you to just think about the questions.**

Give students a few seconds after each question to consider the solutions.

**What do you think we ought to do with Pet Peeves? How do we get rid of them? If we try to starve them, do you think they will die away? What about squashing them? Do you think that will get rid of them? Or maybe, we'll try to keep them caged up. If we could just get rid of Pet Peeves, we would rid ourselves of much complaining.**

**Today we will find out a special secret to keep Pet Peeves from eating up our joy. We will *\*Trade in our Pet Peeves for Grati-Toads.***

## **Large Group: 20-30 minutes**



**Purpose:** *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

### **Overview**

#### **Large Group Presentation: "Scratch 'N' Itch Pet Store"**

Mr. Scratch, the owner of the pet store introduces some of the Pet Peeves from small group. He then explains how to replace Pet Peeves with Grati-Toads.

**Excerpt from the book, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill, Bantam Books, 1975**

# Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion, but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

*Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.*

## Observation Questions: What does it say?

Have kids refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 in their Bibles.

**How often shall we be joyful?** *(Always).*

**How often should we pray?** *(Continually.)*

**When should we give thanks?** *(In all circumstances.)* **Why?** *( Because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.)*

## Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

**If you were to give yourself a grade on living like these verses say, what grade would you give yourself?** *(Probably most kids would give themselves a low grade. If any kids give themselves an A or B, ask them if they have any "secrets for their success" in this area. Are there things they deliberately do to help be thankful?)*

**What do you think you could do to improve your grade?** *(Their answers will vary. Mention that in a minute you will read a couple of verses from God's Word that, hopefully, will help them have more Grati-Toads than Pet Peeves.)*

**What do you think it means when the Bible says, "and this is God's will in Christ Jesus."**

Let the kids give you their own ideas. Help them understand that we can do God's will because we are in Christ Jesus – that is, we have faith in him and he is the one who makes it possible.

During the discussion of this topic, we want to point out that a thankful attitude is possible because we are in Christ, the greatest blessing we could have. Remind students of 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation."*

**Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, he gives us forgiveness and the power of his thankfulness in our lives.**

## Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Read aloud Romans 8:28:

***“We know all things work together for the good of those who love God – those whom he has called according to his plan.”***

**This verse points out that even in the middle of life’s hurts and tragedies, God is still present and can bring blessings. Therefore, we can give thanks in these situations as well.**

**Let’s remember some of our Pet Peeves we talked about earlier. Now, can we exchange them for a Grati-Toad by saying “Thank you God for...” That would be trading a Pet Peeve for a Grati-Toad.**



Have students make their own Grati-Toad. Have them cut foam core pieces and glue them together, then glue a magnet strip to the back making a refrigerator magnet. They can label the toad with the verse from 1 Thessalonians 5:18. “What ever happens, give thanks!”

Tell kids this would be a great refrigerator magnet or decoration for their room, reminding them that they can and should always give thanks.

Repeat the take home point: ***\*Trade in your Pet Peeves for Grati-Toads.*** Have kids review how to do this.

### Closing Prayer:

Take extra time in closing prayer. Challenge each child to give thanks for both spiritual and material blessings, especially when they think of those situations that are difficult or easy to complain about. Help them to think about things they can give thanks for in those situations.

A way for them to pray through many items is to ask each child to simply say, “Thank you God, for...” The next child can add another item, continuing around the circle several times.

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## Large Group Presentation

### "Scratch N Itch Pet Store."

#### Dramatic Presentation

*The setting for this large group presentation is the "Scratch N Itch Pet Store." Make a sign with that title and gather any other props that might indicate a pet store. The presenter should be costumed as the pet store owner and give the presentation. Also needed is a Grati-Toad, an example of the craft project to be made in the small group application.*

**Hello, I'm Mr. Scratch, one of the owners of Scratch N Itch Pet Store. I'm sorry Mr. Itch couldn't make it in today. He is still training his pet mosquito circus. Crazy guy, that Mr. Itch, but he sure loves his mosquitoes. I guess they bring out the best in Mr. Itch. Speaking of pet mosquitoes, we have some other interesting pets with us today. Let me introduce them to you.**

**I'd like all the shepherds to bring forward their Pet Peeves and lay them on the table. Wow, we have some real beauties here. These Pet Peeves look so great; I think we must have a Pet Peeve contest. Let's see who has the best or maybe I should say the worst Pet Peeve in the group.**

**Which of these Pet Peeves is the "peeviest?" Let's have three shepherds step forward and we will have a competition. We will listen to each one of their Pet Peeve complaints and afterwards, the entire group will judge them based on the volume level of applause.**

**Okay, shepherd #1, will you introduce us to your Pet Peeve? His name is \_\_\_\_\_. And what does this Pet Peeve say? Shepherd gives a brief explanation. Thank you very much.**

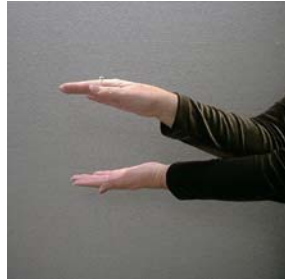
**Now for shepherd #2. Please introduce us to your Pet Peeve. What does he have to say?.... Thank you.**

**And finally shepherd #3. Let's hear about your Pet Peeve... Thank you.**

**Kids, now you have heard the Pet Peeves. Which is the best... or maybe I should say, the worst Pet Peeve? I have my applause meter out.**



Use your forearms as an applause meter. Hold arms out in front, bent at the elbow with one arm lying on top of the other. Raise the top forearm up to register the volume of the applause for each contestant.



**All for shepherd #1 and her Pet Peeve!**

**All for shepherd #2 and his Pet Peeve!**

**All for shepherd #3 and her Pet Peeve!**

**Phenomenal! We have a winner. The best Pet Peeve is shepherd #.....** Whoever you pick. **Your grand prize is .... Nothing! Ha, ha! Actually you did get something. You've got another thing to complain about: you didn't get a reward for winning the game! Maybe it will be another Pet Peeve. Who knows?**

**Thank you, shepherds. You may sit down.**

**Now the question is, "What do we do with these Pet Peeves?" How do we get rid of them? If we try to starve them, well, you can tell they don't eat very much. It takes very little at all and they can start complaining again. Starving won't work.**

**Can we squash them? Let me see. Smash it. Nope, still alive. How about caging one? Put your hand over it like a cage. Then pretend to listen and hear its complaint. Even though it is caged, I can still hear it complain. It says, "I hate these hand made jails."**

**The only way to get rid of a Pet Peeve is to trade it in for one of these delightful little creatures right here. At first glance, it may look like a frog, but it's far from a frog. Actually, it's a toad. But it's a special type of toad; it is a Grati-Toad.**

Take the Pet Peeve, throw it over your shoulder and pick up a Grati-Toad. Hold it in your hand or put it in your pocket.

**I just traded a Pet Peeve for a Grati-Toad. A Pet Peeve is something I complain about, like doing homework. But now that I've traded it in for a Grati-Toad, I can say, "Thank you, God, for giving me an opportunity to get an education and have a future."**



The truth is, Pet Peeves steal our joy, but Grati-Toads give us joy. This can be found right from the Bible. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, *“Always be joyful, never stop praying. Whatever happens, give thanks because it is God’s will in Christ Jesus that you do this.”*

According to this passage, when do we give thanks? In “whatever happens.”

Let me explain something about thankfulness. Sometimes people think that I would be more thankful if I just had more things. That’s not true. If it were true, who would be the most thankful people in the world? Yes, the people with the most things. We could go to the biggest houses and the richest people and they would be the most thankful people. Is that the case? Many times, not.

The truth is that we often find very thankful people who are very poor. As well, many complaining people are very rich. In either case, the truth is this; those who are the most thankful are also filled with the greatest joy. Those who are the least thankful are those who are filled with less joy. Why? Because their Pet Peeves have robbed them of their joy! How do we get filled with joy and thankfulness? Pull out the Grati-Toad. Right, Grati-Toad.

Okay, let’s see if you have it. I will read the Bible again with you repeating after me. This reading is from 1 Thessalonians 5:16. “Always be joyful,”... “Always be joyful,”

“Never stop praying.”... “Never stop praying.”

“Whatever happen,”... “Whatever happens,”

“Give thanks.”... “Give thanks.”

“Because it is God’s will,”... “Because it is God’s will,”

“In Christ Jesus,”... “In Christ Jesus,”

“That you do this.”... “That you do this.”

I think you are catching on, but let me tell you a wonderful story about two sisters who were captured by the Nazis during World War II and put in prison: Corrie and Betsie ten Boom.

The Nazi’s had conquered and invaded their homeland of Holland. During that time, they the Nazi’s rounded up Jews and sent them to concentration camps or even death camps. These two sisters, along with their family, helped hide Jews to keep them from getting caught by the Nazi’s. They did this because they were followers of Jesus Christ and cared for other people, especially other people who were persecuted, like the Jews. As a result, Corrie and Betsie’s family was captured and imprisoned.

Read excerpts of the book from the appendix at the asterisk: **Did you see how hard and cruel their life was? Does it seem to be a difficult place to give thanks?** When answers and comments have been received, continue reading.

Close with a prayer asking for God's power and joy to replace our Pet Peeves with Grati-Toads, just as Corrie ten Boom did.

## APPENDIX

### Excerpted from *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill, Bantam Books, 1975

Pg 199 - Betsie and Corrie have just been introduced to their new living quarters in a wooden barrack.

"We followed our guide single file—the aisle was not wide enough for two—fighting back the claustrophobia of these platforms rising everywhere above us. The tremendous room was nearly empty of people; they must have been out on various work crews. At last she pointed to a second tier in the center of a large block. To reach it, we had to stand on the bottom level, haul ourselves up, and then crawl across three other straw-covered platforms to reach the one that we would share with—how many? The deck above us was too close to let us sit up. We lay back, struggling against the nausea that swept over us from the reeking straw. We could hear the women who had arrived with us finding their places.

Suddenly I sat up, striking my head on the cross slats above. Something had pinched my leg. "Fleas!" I cried. "Betsie, the place is swarming with them!"

We scrambled across the intervening platforms, heads low to avoid another bump, dropped down to the aisle, and edged our way to a patch of light. "Here! And here another one!" I wailed. "Betsie, how can we live in such a place!"

"Show us. Show us how." It was said so matter of factly it took me a second to realize she was praying. More and more the distinction between prayer and the rest of life seemed to be vanishing for Betsie.

"Corrie!" she said excitedly. "He's given us the answer! Before we asked, as He always does! In the Bible this morning. Where was it? Read that part again!"

I glanced down the long dim aisle to make sure no guard was in sight, then drew the Bible from its pouch. "It was in 1 Thessalonians," I said. We were on our third complete reading of the New Testament since leaving Scheveningen. In the feeble light I turned the pages. "Here it is: 'Comfort the frightened, help the weak. Be patient with everyone. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all...'" It seemed written expressly to Ravensbruck.

(\*Summarize: **Did you see how hard and cruel their life was? Does it seem to be a difficult place to give thanks?** When answers and comments have been received, continue reading.)

"Go on," said Betsie. "That wasn't all."

"Oh yes: '...to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus—"

"That's it, Corrie! That's His answer. 'Give thanks in all circumstances!' That's what we can do. We can start right now by thanking God for every single thing about this new barrack!"

I stared at her, then around me at the dark, foul-aired room. "Such as?" I said.

"Such as being assigned here together."

I bit my lip. "Oh yes, Lord Jesus!"

“Such as what you’re holding in your hands.”

I looked down at the Bible. “Yes! Thank You, dear Lord, that there was no inspection when we entered here! Thank you for all the women, here in this room who will meet You in these pages.”

“Yes,” said Betsie. “Thank you for the very crowding here. Since we’re packed so close, that many more will hear!” She looked at me expectantly. “Corrie!” she prodded.

“Oh, all right. Thank You for the jammed, crammed, stuffed, packed, suffocating crowds.”

“Thank You,” Betsie went on serenely, “for the fleas and for—“

The fleas! This was too much. “Betsie, there’s no way God can make me grateful for a flea.”

“Give thanks in ALL circumstances.” She quoted. “It doesn’t say, ‘in pleasant circumstances.’ Fleas are part of this place where God has put us.”

And so we stood between piers of bunks and gave thanks for the fleas. But this time I was sure Betsie was wrong.

Pg. 201 - after starting services in their barracks...

At first Betsie and I called these meetings with great timidity. But as night after night went by and no guard ever came near us, we grew bolder. So many now wanted to join us that we held a second service after evening roll call. There on the *Lagerstrasse* we were under rigid surveillance, guards in their warm wool capes marching constantly up and down. It was the same in the center room of the barracks: half a dozen guards or camp police always present. Yet in the large dormitory room there was almost no supervision at all. We did not understand it.

Pg 209 - wondering why they were not supervised more closely:

“You know we’ve never understood why we had so much freedom in the big room,” Betsie said. “Well, I’ve found out.”

That afternoon, she said, there’d been confusion in her knitting group about sock sizes and they’d asked the supervisor to come and settle it.

“But she wouldn’t. She wouldn’t step through the door and neither would the guards. And you know why?”

Betsie could not keep the triumph from her voice: “Because of the fleas! That’s what she said, ‘That place is crawling with fleas!’”

My mind rushed back to our first hour in this place. I remembered Betsie’s bowed head, remembered her thanks to God for creatures I could see no use for.

<b>Whatever happens, give thanks</b>	<b>Whatever happens, give thanks</b>	<b>Whatever happens, give thanks</b>
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