

Giving Thanks

OBJECTIVE: *To encourage each other to have thankful hearts.*



WORSHIP

Sing praise and worship songs as well as songs of thanksgiving that are familiar and meaningful to your group. Here are some suggestions.

- "Count Your Blessings"
- "For All You Have Done I Will Thank You"
- "For Health and Strength"
- "Forever Grateful"
- "Give Thanks"
- "I Will Enter His Gates"
- "Now Thank We All Our God"
- "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

STORY

The Ten Lepers, Luke 17:11-19

- Ten lepers call to Jesus from a distance.
- Jesus heals the lepers.
- Only one man returns to thank Jesus.

For this story, use baby powder in a shaker container. Ask each person to hold out his arms. Sprinkle powder on their arms. Pretend they have leprosy. Tell the story. When Jesus heals the lepers, they may rub the powder in to reveal clean arms.

MEMORY VERSE

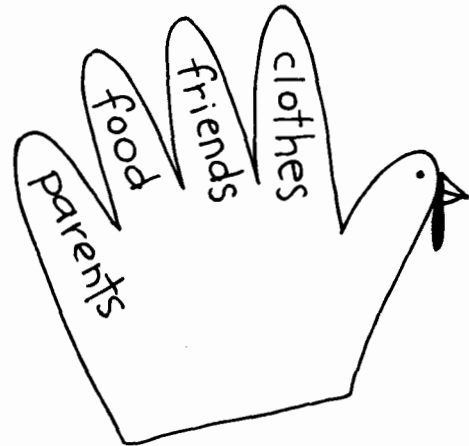
"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever" (Psalm 106:1).

Before your group meets, make a simple jigsaw puzzle by writing the verse on poster board, cardboard, or plain paper. Then cut the board or paper into large pieces that fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. After everyone has said the verse together several times, give each person one piece of the puzzle and let them put the puzzle together. Young children can work with an older person. Then say the verse again.

ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to support the story and to provide a springboard for discussion.

TURKEY TRACE. Trace around each person's hand on a piece of paper. Then draw a turkey from the handprint, with the thumb as the head and the fingers as feathers. On each feather, write something the person is thankful for.



GUESS WHAT? Ask each person to think of something he is thankful for. Then each person describes that thing without telling what it is. The others guess what it might be.

A PSALM OF THANKS. Read Psalm 65:9-13. Now try writing a psalm of thanksgiving yourselves. Each person can contribute a line or two. Ask someone to copy it on paper as it is created. Then read it aloud to the Lord.

CIRCLE TOSS. Stand in a circle. Let everyone toss a ball to each other around the circle. Whoever the ball is tossed to must tell something he is thankful for before tossing it on to another person.

A THANKS REMINDER CHAIN. Make a paper chain by cutting 6-by-1-inch strips of paper. Each person can make a chain. Each person writes or draws on each strip of paper something he is thankful for. Then make a loop out of one strip by taping or stapling the ends together to form a ring. Loop the next strip through the first, loop the third through the second, and so on. Encourage people to hang their chains where they will see them and be reminded of all the things they are thankful for.

QUESTIONS

1. What is gratitude? How can we show others that we are thankful? How can we show God?
2. Why does God want us to have thankful hearts?
3. What are you thankful for?

KIDS' COUNCIL

BRING IT HOME

- Tell of a time when you did something for someone and they did not thank you. How did you feel? How must God feel when we don't thank him?
- Tell of a time when you did something for someone and they thanked you. How did you feel?
- What will you thank God for this week?
- Who else will you thank?
- Are there other ways to show you are thankful besides saying so?

SHARE AND PRAY

- Ask the children to share their concerns and pray for each other.
- Thank God for specific things he has given.
- Ask God to remind them to express their thanks to him and to others.

ADULT STUDY QUESTIONS

- Read and discuss 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Is this really possible? If so, how can it be done?
- What difficult experience have you had that you are now thankful for?
- What is one thing that you are very grateful to God for?
- A grateful heart contributes to the maturing of other character qualities. What are some character qualities that grow out of a grateful heart?

SNACK AND FELLOWSHIP

Fruit Salad. Let the children help make a fruit salad. Grown-ups should do any cutting involved. Each child adds something to the bowl. Bake cinnamon biscuits to go with the fruit salad. Use canned biscuit dough or make your own. Before baking, spread a thin layer of soft margarine on top of each biscuit and sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar. Discuss thankfulness for our food and other blessings.