



JESUS GIVES THANKS

MATTHEW 11:25-30, JOHN 6:10-13, JOHN 11:40-44,
LUKE 22:17-19, AND 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

GOAL



Being thankful in all things requires an understanding of who God is and a relationship with Him as Father. If we are aware that He loves us and we belong to Him, rejection from others won't be as difficult. If we understand that He is all powerful, we will be thankful, even when we feel overwhelmed by forces beyond our strength. If we know He is the resurrection and the life, we won't need to fear death or grieve as though we have no hope. If we know He is good, we will be grateful for what we have. If we know He is forgiving, we will be thankful for the discipline that drives us to repentance. Jesus had an intimate knowledge of His Father, and He trusted Him. He was thankful in all things.

WORDS TO KNOW



Thankful: showing appreciation for and being pleased with what is given to us. Jesus was grateful to His Father for all things and showed His delight in God with His words and complete submission to His Father's purpose.

MEMORY VERSES



Matthew 11:25: At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children."

1 Thessalonians 5:18: Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.



OVERVIEW



Read Matthew 11:250-30, John 6:10-13, John 11:40-44, Luke 22:17-19,

and I Thessalonians 5:18: Throughout His life on earth, Jesus demonstrated thankfulness. When others rejected Him and would not repent, when He faced the impossible in caring for other's needs, while grieving the loss of a close friend, and even while facing persecution and death, Jesus was thankful to His Father in Heaven. He knew His Father was good, perfect, and powerful. Jesus knew His Father was worthy of being trusted, and He was thankful in all things. Paul teaches what Jesus demonstrated: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

SUGGESTIONS



In this lesson, Jesus demonstrated thankfulness in all things. Review the life events that prompted Jesus to show thanks to His Father. Point out the specific knowledge He had about God that made it possible for Him to trust and give thanks, even in the darkest of times.

- 1. Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders, people from His hometown, and even entire cities.** Rejection is hard, but Jesus knew the unending love and acceptance of His Father. Jesus trusted God's plan to reveal His treasured secrets and the mystery of His salvation plan to the childlike.
- 2. Jesus often faced impossibilities.** Jesus knew the glory of God would be revealed in Him to make possible the impossible. Before feeding a large crowd, He thanked God for the five loaves and three fish, then proceeded to feed more than 5,000 people with what He had.
- 3. Jesus experienced the sorrow of a loved-one's death.** Jesus was aware that His Father in Heaven heard His cries and knew His grief. For this he was thankful.
- 4. Jesus faced persecution and death.** Jesus trusted in and was thankful for His Father's salvation plan. He submitted to His Father even to the point of death on the cross.



PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY



Ages 5-7 Thankful, Thankful, I'm so Thankful

Have the class sit down in a large circle. As you go around the circle, each person in the group will say, "Thankful, thankful, I'm so thankful. I have a/an _____, I'm so grateful!" Work through the alphabet. The first person might say, "Thanks, thankful, I'm so thankful. I have an APPLE, I'm so grateful." The second person might say, "Thankful, thankful, I'm so thankful. I have a BROTHER, I'm so grateful!" Students unable to come up with something when it's their turn for the next letter in line is out. The last person standing wins.

Ages 5-7 , **Ages 8-10** **Funny Voice Verse** | **Supplies:** index cards

Write 1 Thessalonians 5:18 on the board. Write various ways to recite the verse, on a separate index card. You might include on the cards: A cowboy, a mouse, fast, slow, toothless, a granny, a cheerleader, an opera singer, etc. Present the cards face down and let each person in the class choose one. Give each child the opportunity to recite the verse in the way their card prescribes.

Ages 8-10 **Grateful Doughnuts** | **Supplies:** a dozen or so doughnuts cut from construction paper, craft decorations (glitter, stickers, markers, crayons, glue, glue sticks, etc.), a box of cake doughnuts, string, and a pole (optional)

Before class, set up the game by hanging five doughnuts from string, spaced 12-18 inches apart. You can hang them from a pole and prop it up on chairs or doors. During class, give the students a paper doughnut and let them decorate it in any way they choose. Talk to them about being thankful for everything they have (the doughnut) instead of worrying about the "empty spaces" in their lives (the hole.) We can be grateful and give thanks for what is there instead of worrying about what isn't. Once they're finished, it's time for the doughnut game! Student will have a turn to eat a doughnut off the string, but must do so on their knees without using their hands. Keep a few extra doughnuts handy to hang up for each new player.



MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING

- ▶ **Matthew 11:25:** God's heart and mind are revealed to those who are teachable, humble, and poor in spirit—those who need Him are willing to depend on Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:18: The Apostle Paul spent a great deal of time encouraging the early church to focus on God and His character so that they would understand the reasons they should be thankful in all things.

POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Ages 5-7** **Hula to Praise** | **Supplies:** hula hoops and something to play thanksgiving and praise music

Divide the class into two equal teams. One person from each team faces each other. When the music begins, they will begin to hula hoop. The first one to drop the hula hoop sits out. The one to hula the longest goes to the end of their team's line. The next two go, and so on. When every person from either team is out, the opposing team is declared the winner.

Ages 5-7 or **Ages 8-10** **Leaves of Blessing** | **Supplies:** several dozen leaves cut from construction paper, markers, and a large basket.

Pass out four to five leaves to each student. Have them write down one thing they are grateful for or happy about on each leaf. Collect the leaves in the basket. Stand on a chair or step stool with the students gathered underneath. Tell them to catch four to five leaves as quickly as they can. On the count of three, turn the basket over and shake the leaves out; they will flutter and fall everywhere, and the children will have a great time jumping and diving to catch them. When all the leaves are gathered, tell the students to sit where they are, and then have them read aloud the leaves they caught. When all the leaves are read, return them to the basket and repeat, as many times as desired.



Ages 8-10 **Thankfulness Time Capsule** | **Supplies:** strips of paper, a recycled glass jar, hot glue (optional), and a shovel or trowel.

Give the students one to three strips of paper each. Tell them to write down one thing they are thankful for per strip. When they are finished, have them line up. Taking turns, each student will read their papers aloud and place them in the glass jar. Seal the lead tightly (you can hot glue around it for extra seal.) Then take the students outside to bury your "time capsule." Pick a good spot and give each student a turn to shovel out a scoop of dirt. When the hole is big enough, place the jar gently in the bottom and fill back in with dirt. Explain that someone in the future will find the jar and remember all the things for which the class was thankful.

**TAKE
HOME**



Show children how acknowledging God and all His marvelous attributes will create peace and result in thankful praise. Let them come up with real-life situations that might ordinarily make thanksgiving difficult, and let Scripture reveal the truth about God concerning those situations. Spend time thanking Him and praising Him.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: When seeing Jesus, it was like seeing whom?

A1: When seeing Jesus, it was like seeing the Father.

Q1b: Would you rather be cold or hot?

TN: Whether we prefer to be hot or cold, we can be thankful that there are lots of ways for us to get to a more comfortable temperature. When it's cold and we want to warm up, we can take a walk in the sun, sit by a fire or heater, or put on a sweater or jacket. When it's hot and we want to cool off, we can go swimming in a pool, river, lake, or even the ocean; we can eat ice cream or sit in an air-conditioned room. What are some other things we could be thankful for in either scenario?

SLIDE 2



Q2a: The Father shared His plan for salvation with people who have what kind of faith?

A2: The Father shared His plan for salvation with people who have child-like faith.



Q2b: Would you rather be disliked by everyone except for two good friends or have no close friends at all?

TN: Neither situation sounds very good, but we'd probably prefer to have two good friends than none at all. But in either situation, we can be thankful. In the first situation, we have two good friends. While it's not many, it is still two people we can turn to for fun and support. If we had no close friends at all, that doesn't mean we are alone—God is always with us, and He loves us more than any single person in the whole world ever could. What are some other things we can be grateful for in either scenario?



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: Jesus fed more than 5,000 people with what?

A3: Jesus fed more than 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish.

Q3b: Would you rather eat your least favorite meal for lunch one day or your favorite meal every day for the rest of your life?

TN: At first, the second option sounds better, but after a while, we would get so tired of eating it, we may actually prefer to eat our least favorite food! In either situation, we have food to eat. Even if it is gross or we get tired of eating the same thing over and over again, it is food that will give us energy to do the things God has called us to do and have fun. What are some other things we can be thankful for in either scenario?

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What was the name of Jesus' friend who had died?

A4: Jesus' friend's name was Lazarus.

Q4b: Would you rather have a best friend who moved to a different state or moved to a different country?

TN: Either way we probably won't be able to see our best friend very often. In both scenarios, we have a best friend. In both scenarios we can communicate with our friend. In both scenarios, we can be thankful for the time we got to spend with our friend before he or she moved away. What are some other things we can be thankful for in either scenario?



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: What did the wine and the bread represent at the Last Supper?

A5: The wine represented Jesus' blood, and the bread represented His broken body.

Q5b: Would you rather climb a volcano that's about to explode or walk a tight rope across the Grand Canyon?

TN: Both sound incredibly dangerous. Jesus knew when He came to earth what would happen to Him. He didn't shy away from it; He faced it head-on. Jesus knew He faced danger and incredible pain, but it would save everyone He loves. So, in both dangerous and scary situations, we can be thankful because God has a plan for our lives. We can't say for certain that God will never ask us to climb a volcano that's about to explode or walk a tight rope across the Grand Canyon, but if He did, we can say that it would be for a good reason and that it would glorify God.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: What did the Apostle Paul write about to the church?

A6: Paul wrote to the church about the Father's love, the grace of Jesus, and the friendship possible between God and humans.

Q6b: Would you rather be loved by God or get to live in Heaven with God forever?

TN: Both are amazing options! Fortunately, those who love Jesus don't have to choose! There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. Because Jesus died for our sins, we have been saved from sin and death, which means that, even if we make mistakes in our lives, we will live forever in Heaven with God. Life may present many bad situations, but because we have God with us, there is always something good in our lives. It may be difficult to see, but if we focus on God, we can find good in our lives and in the world.



MEMORY VERSES

▶ **Matthew 11:25:** At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children."

1 Thessalonians 5:18: Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

BIG IDEA

▶ No matter what is happening in our lives, we can always be thankful to God.

CLOSING PRAYER

▶ Dear Father, thank You for meeting our every need, and for being worthy of our gratefulness. Our sins are paid for, we are cared for and loved, and we can look forward to Heaven. Help us to grow in our understanding of You so that we continue to build more and more reasons why You are praiseworthy. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



Jesus lived a life that was filled with thanksgiving. His thankful heart came from a deep love for and trust in His Father. In fact, they were so close, when seeing Jesus, it was like seeing the Father! You could hear the Father in Jesus' words and feel the Father in Jesus' heart. Jesus never doubted His Father's love and committed His life to the mission of saving the world. Through good times and bad, Jesus always responded to His Father by giving thanks.

SLIDE 2



Even when religious leaders, or people from His home town were jealous and wouldn't listen to Him, Jesus was filled with thankfulness to God. "I thank you, Father," He prayed, "that you hide these wonderful things from those who think they are wise, and show them to little children instead." The people who were mean to Jesus couldn't see the goodness and love of His Father, but He rejoiced that God made His plan of salvation known to people of every age who had child-like faith and were excited to learn about God. Jesus would take away their burdens and give them rest.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 3



Even when He faced the impossible, Jesus was still thankful. One day, He was very tired, and needed to be alone, but a huge crowd followed Him to His quiet spot. Instead of sending them away, He continued to teach them about His father. The people were tired and hungry, and the only food anyone could find were five loaves of bread and two fish. There was no way that small amount of food could feed so many, but Jesus gave thanks to God anyway. That's when a miracle happened! Somehow that small lunch fed the crowd of more than 5,000 people—with 12 baskets of food left over!

SLIDE 4



Jesus never stopped thanking His father, even after His dear friend Lazarus died. When He finally arrived at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, everyone was very sad. Even Jesus started to cry. But He knew what no one else knew: God was about to do something amazing, and Jesus would be shown to be the resurrection and the life! Jesus lifted his head toward Heaven and thanked His father in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear. Then with the words, "Lazarus, come forth!", the man who had been dead for days, walked out of the tomb ALIVE again!



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 5



Even leading up to His own death, Jesus trusted His father and thanked Him for His salvation plan. At the very last supper He would enjoy with His disciples, He held up the cup that represented His blood, and the bread that represented His broken body, and He thanked His Father. "Please take this," He said to His disciples, "because my body will be broken, and my blood will be shed to forgive the sins of many."

SLIDE 6



After Jesus died and rose from the dead, His story continued to be told. The Apostle Paul wrote pages and pages to the church, reminding them of the Father's love, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the friendship that is now possible between God and humans. Even the sorrows and difficulties in life could not be compared to the glory of this amazing gift of salvation! "Give thanks in all things," he wrote, "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you!"