

Teaching Outline

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Give Thanks Give Thanks No Matter What Happens
1 Thessalonians 5:18

WEEK 1

Key Question: **What are you grateful for?** We kick off this month of gratitude by helping kids to refocus on their own life and discover reasons they can be thankful. We can get so busy with life that we often don't take the time to pause and notice what God has done for us. We pray that kids will consider why they can always be thankful.

We start off this series with something Paul wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:18**: "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus." It's pretty clear. Giving thanks is something God wants us to do. No matter what happens, we can be thankful for Jesus and God's gift of salvation.

Bottom Line: **You always have something to be grateful for.** When life is hard, or even if life is normal, it can be difficult to find why you should be thankful—especially for kids. We pray that as kids think about this Bottom Line, they'll remember that they can always be thankful to God for sending Jesus to be our Savior.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT GRATITUDE WITH KIDS

On the surface, gratitude might be one of those topics that everyone can relate to. We all have something to be thankful for. However, there are some things to keep in mind when it comes to how kids think and process these sorts of topics. Remember, kids think like scientists. They are concrete thinkers who start from the most literal interpretation of what they hear people say. When we use a phrase like, "We can be thankful for God's blessings," and kids don't come from a family with many monetary blessings or have recently lost a loved one or pet, they might start to feel like God isn't blessing them. Kids are also starting to compare and contrast. When we go around the circle and kids start naming things they're grateful for—good grades, video games, big vacations, etc.—kids who don't have those things might feel bad about themselves and what they have. Steer the conversation to include more general reasons for gratitude that can be inclusive for everyone: friends, church, needs that are met, and people who love us. Of course, be sure to tie all of it back to being thankful to God for the free gift of salvation through Jesus.

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

You always have something to be grateful for.

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What are you grateful for?

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good. His faithful love continues forever."

Psalms 136:1, NIV

TEACHING GUIDE:

KEYSCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

This message should be 15- 18 min. More time for small group is key. Remember the lead small model.

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"What are you grateful for? Think about your life right now. What are some things or who are some people that might fill your heart with gratitude? And maybe, how does being a follower of Jesus help you answer that question beyond just the easy and the obvious? If you're not sure how you'd answer that question, don't worry. You'll talk more about this with your Small Group. And maybe your leader or some of your friends in group can help you think of some ways you can be thankful. But before you head out, let's pray and ask God to help us to be thankful, no matter what comes

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Today as you go to groups, think about this: What are you grateful for?"

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Give Thanks
Give Thanks No Matter
What Happens
1 Thessalonians 5:18

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

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to be grateful for.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

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because he is good. His faithful
love continues forever."
Psalm 136:1, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Gratitude—Letting others
know you see how they've
helped you

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

OPENER

HOST: "Hey, everyone! I am so pumped for another month here at [Name of Environment]. Have any of you ever given anyone a shout-out? (Get response.) Awesome! And for those of you who have no idea what I'm talking about—have no fear! A 'shout-out' is just a way to call attention to people who you appreciate and are thankful for! You can give a shout-out to a friend who you helped with your math homework or to a parent for the delicious meal they cooked or even your amazing Small Group Leader for showing up and having fun with you today! Shout-outs let people know how much gratitude we have for them. And I can't wait to hear what you are thankful for all month long.

"Now, before we get started with a great game today . . . here's a heads up for something coming at the end of the month and we need your help! All month long, we're collecting non-perishable cans of food that will be donated to [Name of local organization] that helps people in our community. You can start bringing cans of food as early as NEXT week. We'll display them here on stage! Sound good? Awesome!

"Alright, now back to THIS week. How much time do you spend thinking about what you're thankful for? Hopefully, you're always thinking about gratitude! In the spirit of gratitude, we're having what I like to call . . . 'Shout Out Blitz!'



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

SLIDE: "SHOUT OUT BLITZ"

"As you can see, there's a large sheet of paper behind me. Each of your Small Group Leaders has a different color pad of sticky notes. When I say go, write things you are thankful for—one per note—and run it up and stick it on the paper. Try not to stick them over top another. The Small Group with the most sticky notes wins. Get it? Good! On your mark, get set, SHOUT OUT! GO!

AUDIO: FUN BACKGROUND MUSIC

Groups brainstorm, write, and race to stick their notes. After a set time, the Host stops everyone and shares a few briefly. More will be shared by the Communicator.

"(After the game, surveying the notes) That is a LOT of gratitude. Well done! Now let's stand together and worship as we let God know how THANKFUL we are for sending us Jesus!"

PRELUDE

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HOME

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "I'm excited to be here with all of you so we can sing together and say 'thank You' to God. Worship gives us words to share our gratitude for all that God is doing in our lives. That's what this song is about. Sing with me.

AUDIO: "THANK YOU GOD" / TRACK 1 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "THANK YOU GOD" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yes! Every good and perfect gift comes from God. It's good to praise God and say 'thank You.' Before we continue in worship, let's watch this.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"We have a new song today. It's called 'I'm So Grateful!' When we get in the habit of being grateful, it changes the way we look at the world. And there is SO much to be grateful for! No matter what's happening around us, we can be thankful for God's love and forgiveness. Sing along as you catch on to this one.

AUDIO: "I'M SO GRATEFUL" / TRACK 3 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "I'M SO GRATEFUL" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Listen to these words from Psalm 116:5: 'The Lord is holy and kind. Our God is full of tender love.' (NIRV) We are part of God's family. God cares for us and is always good and kind. Let's honor God today with a grateful heart as we worship."

AUDIO: "GOOD GOOD FATHER" / TRACK 2 FROM KIDMIN WORSHIP VOL. 4

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "GOOD GOOD FATHER" LIVE LYRICS VIDEO

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hey, everyone! I'm so glad to be with you as we give a shout out to all the people we're thankful for. Let's start our time together with a little challenge. I need a couple artists who think they know their emojis and how to draw them. Anyone like that here?"

Communicator chooses two volunteers. Sets each one up at an easel with multiple papers. They will write on a new paper each time.

"Alright, so I'll quietly give each of you an emotion or reaction. Your job is to draw an emoji, without words, that will help your side of the room guess the correct word. Make sense? Great! We'll do a few rounds.

After each drawing, set the pictures up so they can all be seen—taped to the wall, displayed on an easel, etc.). Communicator will use these drawings during the Truth section.

"Alright here we go!

Divide the room in half. Half will guess the drawing of the one volunteer. The other half the other volunteer. Download the 'Emoji Drawing Prompts' Printable from the Week 1 Large Group Assets and print it for the communicator to easily prompt the volunteers.

*Thankful
*Amazed
*Sad
*Nervous
*Surprised
*Loving

*Happy
*Rolling on the floor laughing
*Frustrated
*Cool
*Angry
*Mind Blown

"(After activity) Wow, you all really know your emojis! Great job, everyone."

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "(Looking at all the emoji art) Okay, so these drawings represent a lot of emotions! Not all of our emotions are positive, are they? In fact, we ended our activity on a bit of a downer. We can be super excited or find something absolutely hysterical one moment, and a few moments later we might feel sad or frustrated. This can also be true about the moments when we feel thankful. Often how we're feeling gets in the way of feeling grateful.

"For example, have you ever noticed how when you're angry it is hard to find anything to be thankful for? It's like all of the anger and frustration we're feeling about something or someone is clouding our vision to see anything besides the thing we're angry about.

"But what if there's a better way? What if gratitude is possible, even when we're feeling upset? And if it is possible,

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25 MINUTES

what might that even look like?

“Those are some great questions for us to think about today. And we have a great place where we can start as we look for answers—the Bible! In the pages of the Bible, we can read about people who experienced the power of God in their lives. And God inspired them to write down what they learned from these experiences to help us grow and figure out how God wants us to live today! And we’ve got a great verse that can help us dive into this idea today . . . let’s head there now!”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Now, you might remember the name Paul. Paul is a pretty important guy in the New Testament of our Bible. He carries the official title of an apostle, which meant he was ‘sent out’ to bring the message of Jesus to others. Paul went on several long and far journeys, going from town to town all around the Mediterranean Sea and elsewhere bringing the good news of Jesus.

SLIDE: MAP OF PAUL’S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

“In each of these towns, Paul would teach people about Jesus and help the new followers of Jesus start churches. Once Paul left a town, how do you think he would communicate with them? Phone call? Text message? Send e-mails?

“No, of course not. The only real way they had of communicating was to write letters. But you couldn’t just stick the letter in the mailbox and put the flag up. They didn’t have a postal service either! Instead, you had to find someone who was willing to carry the letter to the location and hand-deliver it. Paul wrote many letters to churches, some of which ended up becoming books in the New Testament of the Bible.

“Let’s check out one of those letters that Paul wrote: 1 Thessalonians. Now, the fact that it is called ‘first’ tells you that there is more than one letter to the Thessalonians in the Bible. And that is true. We have record of Paul writing two letters to the Thessalonians, and they’re both included in the New Testament! It is kind of like reading someone else’s mail, and yet, we can still learn from these letters today! Like, the letters were to them, but since God’s Holy Spirit lives inside of us, we can experience how these letters are for us, too!

“So, what or who is a Thessalonian? It’s someone who lives here . . .

SLIDE: PAUL’S MISSIONARY JOURNEY MAP WITH ARROW TO THESSALONICA

“Thessalonica. Paul visited here on his second major journey and began a church. This city was a hard place to be a follower of Jesus, so Paul wrote to them to encourage and challenge them to stay true to their faith.

“Let’s find out what Paul had to say to these followers of Jesus. We pick up at the end of the letter. Now, if something is written at the end of the letter, that meant that he was wrapping things up and being sure to say what he wanted to say before finishing the letter and sending it. And in his final challenge to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul had a list of quick hitters right in a row. He said to be patient with others, not to pay others back when they did you wrong, to do good to everyone. Always be joyful. Never stop praying. And check this out this last one—

Open the Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NirV) and read.



WEEK
ONE
NOVEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

“Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.”

“Paul’s instruction here was about gratitude. He was telling this group of Jesus followers to be the kind of people who give thanks, not just when life is easy and everything is going well but no matter what happens. That means even if life isn’t easy and nothing is going well.

“Now, sometimes it is fairly easy to give thanks. Like for instance . . . (*Communicator grabs or points to a ‘rolling on the floor laughing’ emoji drawing from before*) when you’re feeling like this! What might be some times when it’s super easy for you to give thanks? Take a moment and talk to a neighbor. Share a few times when it could be easy to give thanks.

AUDIO: QUIET BACKGROUND MUSIC

Turn and talk into groups. After a time of talking, have some kids share their answers with everyone. Comment appropriately and write down some of their answers on the page with the rolling on the floor laughing emoji.

“Those were great. I’d have gratitude in all of those circumstances, too! Okay, let’s try something else. What about if you’re feeling like this . . . (*Hold up or point to the nervous emoji drawing*) What about when you’re feeling a bit nervous? Maybe you can think of a situation when you were nervous going into it, but you are thankful for the way it all turned out. Go!

AUDIO: QUIET BACKGROUND MUSIC

Turn and talk into groups. After a time of talking, have some kids share their answers with everyone. Comment appropriately and write down some of their answers on the page with the nervous emoji.

“Those were good answers! Some of those situations can be really tough, especially when we don’t know how they are going to turn out. But remember what Paul wrote in his letter.

“Let’s read it again.

Open the Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NirV) and read.

“Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.”

“Give thanks . . . but not just when things turn out the way we want. Paul added an important part. What did he say? (*Responses*) Right, NO MATTER WHAT happens.

“This is not just an instruction to wait until things are good so that you will have things to be thankful for. Paul wrote that we can find a way to be thankful no matter what happens. So let’s try one more conversation and focus on that. (*Hold up or point to the sad, frustrated, and angry emoji drawings*) What about when you’re feeling these sorts of feeling? How can you be thankful then? Think of a time that you might feel sad or a time when you might get frustrated or angry. What might you be thankful for during those times? Take a moment and talk with your neighbor!

PRELUDE

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25 MINUTES

AUDIO: QUIET BACKGROUND MUSIC

Turn and talk into groups. After a time of talking, have some kids share their answers with everyone. Comment appropriately and write down some of their answers on the pages with the sad, frustrated, or angry emojis depending on their answers.

“Those were some great answers. Thanks so much for sharing!

“When it comes down to it, we might ask why? Why should followers of Jesus find a way to give thanks no matter what? Honestly, it seems like Paul was saying we should be thankful and experience gratitude because we are followers of Jesus. Listen to how Paul finished that verse . . .

Open the Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NirV) and read.

“Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus.”

“Being a follower of Jesus changes everything . . . even the WAY we give thanks! And before we think: ‘Well, who was Paul to write this? What does he know about my life?’ Paul had quite the track record to write these words. He went through some really sad and frustrating times (*hold up or point to emojis*) as well as some times I sure he was nervous about how it would all go (*nervous emoji*). But Paul was amazed (*amazed emoji*) at the way in which God gave him grace and the ability to be thankful . . . no matter WHAT!”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “You know, it’s one thing to give thanks. I have a lot of things happening in my life that I can easily give thanks for. I love feeling like this (*laughing emoji*) or even this (*surprised emoji*). That verse would be easy if it just said, ‘Give thanks.’ But the fact that the sentence continues and says ‘no matter what’ is a much different story. That is much harder. It takes more work. You have to see your life and the situations that happen with different eyes, believing that there’s more than what’s right in front of you. More than just the bad day. More than just the bad situation. I think that is why Paul then said that you can give thanks no matter what because you believe in Jesus Christ.

“As a follower of Jesus, we are called to do things differently. We love those who we are supposed to hate. We serve instead of fighting for power. And we learn to give thanks even when it is hard to see anything worth being grateful for. And as we live differently, other people will notice, not us, but the One who is living through us. And because of Jesus—His life, death, and resurrection that makes life forever with God possible—we always can find at least ONE thing to be thankful for: God’s unfailing, amazingly awesome LOVE for each and every one of us!”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“What are you grateful for?” Think about your life right now. What are some things or who are some people that might fill your heart with gratitude? And maybe, how does being a follower of Jesus help you answer that question beyond just the easy and the obvious? If you’re not sure how you’d answer that question, don’t worry. You’ll talk more about this with your Small Group. And maybe your leader or some of your friends in group can help you think of some ways you can be thankful. But before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us to be thankful, no matter what comes



25 MINUTES

our way! Let's pray!"

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP