

“Thanksgiving” Circles of Gratitude

Pre-session Activity

The Gratitude Tree

Materials: The shape of a large tree drawn on the wall or a large sheet of paper, markers and leaf shapes for each child.

Invite the children to think of all the things they are grateful for and write each one on a leaf shape. Mount the leaves on the tree branches.

Also have prayer request slips available for those who want to fill out a prayer request.

Gathering Circle

- ♥ Welcome
- ♥ Share the Daily Word
- ♥ Announcements
- ♥ Collect the Love Offering

Prayer Focus

Bible Quote:

Phil 4:4,6

“Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice...In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Introduce the prayer box and the prayer request slips and encourage the children to write or draw out their prayer requests and place them in the prayer box. Each class will be taking turns each week to say prayers for the requests in the box.

LESSON INTENTION

The focus of this lesson is to understand that when we give thanks for the blessings in our lives, even if we don't immediately recognize them as blessings, we are saying yes to God and to our good.

Issue: What are we grateful for?

Unity Principle: #3 - "I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe."

Affirmation: I am grateful for all the good in my life.

12 Powers: RELEASE: I let go of all negative thinking and give thanks for the blessings in my life.

Lesson - All *"God Provides"*

Story/Quote...

The Feeding of the Five Thousand – Matthew 14: 14-19 (*Read if from a regular Bible.*)

Jesus recognizes his abundance even if the disciples don't.

Discussion Questions...

- ◆ Where does this story take place?
- ◆ What does Jesus want to give all the people?
- ◆ How do the disciples feel about this?
- ◆ What did the disciples find to eat? Was it enough?
- ◆ What happened to the food that the boy had?
- ◆ What actions did Jesus take that helped to multiply the feast?
 1. *He told everyone to sit down = When we are concerned about not having enough the first thing we need to do is to quiet ourselves*
 2. *He looked to heaven = We must know that God is the source of our supply and look within not at the appearance of things.*

3. *He blessed and broke the loaves = Jesus gave thanks for what he had, knowing it would be enough, just as we should.*
4. *He gave the bread to the disciples = What ever we want to multiple we must first be willing to give away.*
5. *There was plenty left over = There is always enough if we look to God as the source of all things.*

Activity...

I Am Thankful

Materials: A basket filled with things that will help the kids remember things they are thankful for, i.e.: an apple, a toy car, a stuffed animal, a ring, a key, or a school paper.

After reading the above story and helping the children understand how important it is to be thankful for what we have, invite the children think of things they are grateful for by showing the items one by one.

Say, "This is a traditional basket. Just by looking at it, I'm reminded of Thanksgiving. Inside are some items that might remind you of some things to thank God for. For example, when I pull out this apple, you might think of all the good food God has provided for you. Or you might thank God for good health. When I show you something from the cornucopia, get ready to tell how it reminds you of some way that God has blessed you. After each item we'll all say "Thank you, God."

(Allow several responses.) Are you surprised at some of the things you remembered? Why do you think it's important to remember what God has done?

Creative Expression...

God Provides

Materials: Plastic gloves, one for each child, fall wired garland, candy corn, popcorn, 5 labels for each child.

The Message: The first winter the pilgrims spent in America was very cold. Some days, all they had was enough for each person to have only five kernels of corn.

When spring came, the pilgrims planted their corn and it grew so they had a lot of food the next year. From that time on at Thanksgiving, the pilgrims each kept five kernels of corn at their plates to remind them of God's provision.

1. Give each child a glove, 5 pieces of candy corn, 5 labels, a piece of the garland and markers.
2. Invite the children to place one kernel of corn in each of the finger tips. Reminding them that this candy corn reminds us of the meaning of Thanksgiving. Then fill the rest of the hand with popcorn and tie the top shut.
3. Then invite them to create a picture or something that will help them remember these 5 points of Thanksgiving on each of the 5 labels.
 - ◆ **First kernel: Reminds us that God loves us.**
 - ◆ **Second kernel: God is the source of all we need.**
 - ◆ **Third: We are grateful for our friends**
 - ◆ **Fourth: We are grateful for all the people who love us.**
 - ◆ **Fifth: God hears and answers our prayers.**
4. Then invite the children to stick one label on each of the fingers of the glove. Tie the top closed with the wire garland.

Celebration...

Horn of Plenty Prayers

Truth: Our prayers show our thankfulness

Materials: Sugar cones, M&M's, candy corn, raisins, sunflower seeds, choc chips, and popcorn.

Use this prayer as part of a Thanksgiving celebration. Place bowls of mini marshmallows, M&M's candies, candy corn, raisins, sunflower seeds, popcorn and chocolate chips on a long table. Scatter spoons around the table. Place a stack of pointed ice cream cones at both ends of the table. Have kids form pairs.

Say: At Thanksgiving time, lots of the decorations we see show cornucopias, sometimes called horns of plenty. They're brimming with vegetables and fruit from a good harvest. Today we're going to celebrate the "harvest" of good things God has done for us this year.

The ice cream cones will be your horns of plenty. Travel around the table with your partner and stop in front of each bowl. Say, "I thank God for _____" and then finish the sentence by naming a good thing God has done for you this year. You might mention something good that's happened to your family, or a sick friend or relative who got well. Maybe you just want to thank God for our country or our church.

After you've shared what you're thankful for, you can each put a spoonful of goodies into your partner's horn of plenty and then move on to the next bowl.

After kids have shared their thanks and filled their horns of plenty let them enjoy their treats.

Prayer Circles

This can be done in individual classrooms or the group can come back together at the end of class time. Assign someone to speak aloud a prayer from the heart.

Invite everyone to form a circle and join hands and then invite each person to state a simple prayer affirmation (they may pass if they need to.)

Prayer Circle Affirmation: ***I am grateful for all the good in my life.***

Close with the Prayer for Protection.