

Always Something There to Remind Me (Give Thanks No Matter What Happens)—November 2020, Week 1

Today's Bible Story: Always Something There to Remind Me (Give Thanks No Matter What Happens) • 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Today's Key Question: What are you grateful for?

Today's Bottom Line: You always have something to be grateful for.

Monthly Memory Verse: Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good. His faithful love continues forever. Psalm 136:1 (NirV)

Monthly Life App: Gratitude—Letting others know you see how they've helped you

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Before kids arrive, take some time to pray and express gratitude to God for what He has done in your own life. Thank him for His love and grace and for welcoming you into His family. Ask for guidance in helping your kids understand what it means to have a heart of gratitude for what God has done for us.

1. Just for Fun

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body.

What You Need: metal spoons, sweet potatoes

What You Do:

- **Ask** kids to form a line on one side of the room by standing shoulder to shoulder facing the same direction.
- **Place** a raw sweet potato on the floor in front of each kid.
- **Give** each kid a metal spoon.
- **Explain** that they will use the spoon to roll their sweet potato across the room to a designated finish line. If your meeting area is small, kids can go down and back again to extend the race.
- **Remind** them that they can only move the potato by pushing it with the spoon. The kid who gets their potato to the finish line first is the winner.
- **Let kids swap** potatoes and play again as time allows.

2. Opening Activity

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Invite** the kids to form a circle.
- **Choose** a kid to stand in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed.
- Quietly **point** to one kid, designating them as the Leader.
 - Their job is to make eye contact with one of the kids in the circle, then blink twice at them without the kid in the middle seeing it happen.

- The person who is blinked at must immediately shout out, "THANK YOU!"
- Then, the kid in the middle tries to guess which kid is the leader.
- **Begin** the game as soon as the kid in the middle is allowed to open their eyes. They will have two turns to guess who the Leader is.
- **Choose** another Leader and a different kid to be in the middle and play again.
- **Play** as many rounds as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

"A couple of blinks in our game signaled a shout out of 'THANK YOU!' In life, it's a grateful heart that prompts us to say thanks. **[Transition]** This month we're focusing on what gratitude is all about letting others know you see how they've helped you. When it comes to being grateful to God and others, there's always more to learn. So, let's get started right now."

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

What You Need: Paper, pens

What You Do:

- **Give** kids paper and pens.
- **Direct** kids to make a list of 10 things they are grateful for.
 - Their lists might include people they love, things they have been given, favorite foods, places, or activities—really, anything for which they are grateful.
- **Explain** that at your signal, they will shout out one thing that's on their list—everyone at the same time.
- **Pause** and let kids write down as many things as they heard the other kids shout out.
- **Repeat** until all the words from kid's original lists have been shouted then compare and see who has the most complete list.
- **Challenge** kids with one final round by asking them to think of something they often forget to be grateful for or that's not easy to feel thankful for at the time.
- As they did previously, ask kids to shout out together.
- **Review** what the kids heard in the final SHOUT OUT then let them share about the situations they found difficult to be grateful for.
- **Ask:**
 - What's one good thing that came out of that situation?
 - When things don't go the way you want, what's wrong with feeling ungrateful?
 - Is it possible to be disappointed or sad about something and still be grateful? Explain.

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

What You Need: Bible, “Crazy Gratitude” Activity Page, pens

What You Do:

- **Give** kids a pen and a copy of “Crazy Gratitude” Activity Page.
- **Sit** in a circle.
- **Ask** kids to fill in the first line on the page with the description of a person such as a teacher, dad, bus driver, farmer.
 - Then they should fold down the page on the dotted line and pass it to the right.
 - The next kid will fill in the second line, then fold the page, and pass to the right once again.
- **Continue** until all of the lines on the paper have been filled in.
- **Collect** the “Crazy Gratitude” pages.
- **Invite** a kid to look up and read aloud 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
- **Ask:**
 - Why do you think God wants us to be thankful in good times and bad?
 - When is it most hard for you to show gratitude?
 - What are some reasons to be grateful even when life stinks?
- **Give** each kid one of the completed “Crazy Gratitude” pages.
- **Let** kids take turns reading the silly scenarios and then developing the story to include a way gratitude could be expressed by that person in that situation.
- **Remind** kids that gratitude—particularly when life is hard—is something we have to work at. It doesn't just happen. As they did with the “Crazy Gratitude” scenarios, they might have to look hard for ways to express their gratitude in some of the situations they face.
- **Ask:**
 - How does gratitude change our perspective when we're going through a tough time?
 - In what ways does your trust in God change the way you feel about the situations you go through?
 - Name something you can do when you feel ungrateful that will help get your attitude back where it should be.

3. Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- Describe an ungrateful person. Now describe a grateful person.
- What would you say are the main reasons people are ungrateful?
- Do you think we can be grateful even when we don't *feel* happy? Why or why not?
- What's the best way to change an ungrateful attitude to a grateful one?

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands-on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Bibles, smartphone or another device with voiceover app

What You Do:

- **Look up** and read aloud Psalm 136:1.
- **Ask:**
 - How does knowing God's love is forever give you reason for thanks?
 - How has God shown you that He is good?
 - People often think that if God is good, He won't let anything bad happen. What do we know about God that helps you understand why people face hard situations?
- **Use** a voice-altering App such as "Voice Changer Plus" to let kids record themselves saying Psalm 136:1 then listen to their voice.
- *Optional: If you don't have access to a smartphone or other device, let kids take turns saying the verse in different ways.*
 - opera singer
 - ventriloquist (speak without moving their lips)
 - whisper
 - shout
 - robot
 - baby
- **Point out** how different each kid's voice sounded even though they were all saying the same words.
- **Remind** kids that in life, we all go through good times and bad, but we don't all react or sound the same when it comes to our responses.
- **Ask:**
 - What would an ungrateful kid sound like and say when life feels like it's going wrong?
 - How would a grateful kid react differently?
 - What determines the way we sound or act when faced with a disappointment?
 - Why do we always have something to be grateful for?

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Bible, Pick-Up Sticks or prepared "Gratitude Stix"

What You Do:

- **Give** the set of Pick-Up Sticks (or the "Gratitude Stix" you prepared earlier) to one of the kids then **instruct** them to grip the entire bundle of sticks upright in one hand just above the floor or table.
- **Release** the sticks and let them fall randomly.
- **Take turns** carefully removing one stick without moving any of the other sticks.
- **Follow** the color chart below to lead kids in prayer. Modify the categories if your set of Pick-Up Sticks contains different or additional colors.

- Red: Thank God for someone who helps you.
- Green: Thank God for a way He has taken care of you.
- Yellow: Thank God for something you love about Jesus.
- Blue: Thank God for something you're going through right now that He is helping you with.
- Orange: Thank God for something you learned in Small Group today.

What You Say:

“Dear God, gratitude doesn't come easy to us, especially when we're having a bad day. We need Your help to remember that Your plans are always good. Instead of complaining about what's bad, help us choose to be grateful for all that is good. In Jesus' name, amen.”

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Hand out this week's GodTime devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Studio252.tv** and the **Parent Cue app**.