



Gratitude for God's Gifts

Study Introduction

In the season of Thanksgiving, it makes sense to discuss gratitude with your youth! This study is discussion based and focuses on three main ideas: what God's gifts are, why He gives them to us, and how we should respond. Use this study to explore the immensity of God's gifts to us and brainstorm ways to develop grateful habits all year long.

Beneath each question, there are bulleted potential answers in italics. Youth can brainstorm on their own responses or use these potential answers to get the ideas flowing. Non-italicized bullets are meant to be shared with the group and relate to corresponding Bible verses.

Gratitude for God's Gifts

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and during this season, we take time to think about all that we're thankful for. One thing we are thankful for is God's gifts! Let's talk about what those gifts are, and how we can show our gratitude.

Opening Game - Encore

Create two teams. The goal of the game is to compete to see which can come with the most number of songs that include a key word. The leader will give a key word, in this case use words around gratitude like

- Thank you/Thanks
- Love
- Jesus
- Sheep

The leader will go back and forth between the group, asking them to list songs with that key word in the lyrics. If they can't, the other team gets a point.

Scripture Study

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95:7)

God is our shepherd and we are his sheep.

Take a moment to brainstorm all the ways a shepherd cares for his flock. What sorts of things does he do for them?

- *Feeds them*
- *Gives them shelter*
- *Keeps them company*
- *Provides them with community (other sheep)*

God does the same for us as our Shepherd. *(Phil 4:19)*

- He feeds us *(Read Matthew 6:31)*
- He clothes us *(Read Matthew 6:31)*
- He gives us shelter *(Read Matthew 6:31)*



- He is always with us (*Read Isaiah 41:10*)
- He provides us community (*Read Romans 12:5*)
- He leads us to new opportunities (*Read Genesis 12*)

This metaphor only goes so far. God cares for us in ways that a shepherd wouldn't and couldn't care for his flock. What are some of the ways God goes BEYOND a shepherd or parent while he takes care of us? What kinds of gifts does he give us?

- Spiritual gifts (*Read 1 Cor 12*)
- He helps us to resist temptation (*Read 1 Cor 10:13*) (*Read Eph 6:10-17*)
- Fruits of the Spirit (*Read Gal 5:22-23*)
- Forgiveness (*Read Ps 103:10-13*)
- Mercy and Grace (*Read 1 Timothy 1:14*)
- ETERNAL LIFE (*Read John 3:16*)

Okay, let's take a step back. Why do shepherds care for their sheep?

- *It's their job*
- *They care about their sheep*

Shepherds might like their sheep, or even love their sheep, but ultimately, taking care of their sheep is their job. They have an obligation to care for their sheep.

Is this why God grants us gifts?

Is it simply his job to take care of us? Does he owe it to use to take care of us?

NO.

God grants us these gifts completely from love. We by no means deserve the blessings God gives us each and every day. By His grace we receive blessings that we don't deserve.

Take a moment and read these Bible verses:

Romans 5:8

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Ephesians 2:8

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—"

In our sinful nature, we are enemies of God. Yet in his great love, he blesses us every day. He owes us nothing but grants us immeasurable gifts. He loves us SO MUCH that he sent his only Son to die for us. He sent his Son to die for his enemies so that He could grant us the gift of eternal life.



When we take time to consider ALL that God does for us, it's hard NOT to be grateful. God does SO MUCH for us! Not only does he grant us gifts that supply our daily, physical needs, but he also provides for us spiritually. He "gifted us" entry into his family, and the hope of eternal life with him in heaven through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

But now what? God blesses us so richly, it seems like we could never thank him enough. However, when we study the Bible, we are called to thank Him without end in Psalm 95:1-2: "*Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*"

How can we show our gratitude to God? As you make your list of ways we can show gratitude to God, discuss practical ways to incorporate them into your daily lives.

- *Pray*
 - *Set some time aside each day, maybe in the morning or before bed, to talk to God.*
 - *Ask a friend to be prayer partners, and commit to praying for each other daily.*
- *Read the Bible*
 - *Setting aside time to read a couple verses each day is a great place to start. You could also use a devotional to help guide your Bible reading.*
 - *This is another great opportunity for an accountability partner. Choose a book of the Bible to read with a friend and discuss what you read each day!*
- *Go to church*
 - *Going to church gives us the opportunity to worship God and spend time with other Christians!*
- *Offer time/talents/money to Him*
 - *While you may not have money to put in the offering plate, you could offer your time by volunteering for the altar guild, or offer your talents by helping with church music.*
 - *Using your time and talents to serve others is another great way to give offerings to God! Volunteering at a food pantry, visiting a nursing home, or helping your neighbors rake their yard are great ways to give thanks!*
- *Go to youth group/Bible study*
 - *Learning more about God is a great way to show your gratitude. Maybe even invite a friend to come along!*
- *Tell others about Him*
 - *Showing a friend in need comforting Bible verses could be a great place to start!*
- *Show gratitude to others*
 - *Thank those around you for everything they do for you. It makes God happy when we show our appreciation to others!*
- *Obey His commands/Repent*



- *We should do our best to keep God's 10 Commandments, HOWEVER, as sinners, we will always let God down. When we repent and ask God for forgiveness, He forgives us!*

These are all great ways to thank God for his gracious gifts to us!

God gave us his greatest gift, Jesus, because he wanted us to be with Him and to live in relationship with Him. When we pray, read His word, and worship in church, we are spending time with God and growing in our relationship with Him! In His grace and love, God grants us gifts. To show our thanks, we love God back!

Here's how the Bible says it:

Luke 10:27

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

We've mentioned some ways we love God; how do we love our neighbor? As you make your list of ways to love others, discuss practical ways to incorporate them into your daily lives.

- *Set an example for them* (Read Matthew 5:16)
- *Tell them about Jesus* (Read Matthew 28:19-20)
- *Be kind to them* (Read Galatians 5:13)
- *Help those in need* (Read Matthew 25:35-40)
- *Forgive them* (Read Ephesians 4:32)

God loves us and blesses us so richly that He wants us to share His love with those around us!

This Thanksgiving, be intentional about thanking God for all of His gifts by loving Him, praying to Him, reading His Word, worshipping Him, and spreading His Good News with others. However, we should always thank God for his gifts, all year long! Use this season to develop a continuous "attitude of gratitude" and give thanks to God every day for all He has done for you!

Closing

Encourage youth to write down and decorate a notecard with one gratitude goal they hope to maintain throughout their day to day lives. Have them include a Bible verse on the card as well. As they do this, have them put the card in a place they would see it as a reminder throughout their week.

If you have time you can do a short service project, like writing notes to shut ins or the military. If you have a bit more time, you can make cookies for local first responders or make something like Plarn (the instructions are here).