

ZION'S FAITH AT HOME
MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER
theParentLinkSM

November 2009



Help Children Be Grateful Prayers

There's an important significance to the fact that Thanksgiving comes before Christmas. It's tough to experience "Joy to the World" without first having had the opportunity to "Give Thanks."

Gratitude receives special emphasis as Thanksgiving nears, but parents can keep it at the forefront of children's minds year-round. A great way to start is by helping kids pray with grateful hearts.

Read on to discover ways to show children the value of thanking God for all he provides and does for us:

Make prayer a part of your children's lives by incorporating it into daily living. Model frequent prayer, showing children that requests aren't the only reason to talk to God. Use the "ACTS" model of prayer to get started: Adoration, Confession, Thanking, and Supplication.

Show thankfulness by saying spontaneous prayers throughout the day. Remember to tell God thanks for life's "little things"—from pretty clouds to favorite foods. Also, thank God for your children's kindness and help.



Direct children's gratitude toward the giver of "whatever is good and perfect" (see James 1:17). Let children know that God deserves credit for all of our blessings. Recognize and affirm their feelings of gratitude, and point your children to the real source.

Insights About Prayer and Gratitude

In a nationwide survey conducted by the Barn Group, only 34% of children ages 8 to 12 said that prayer is very important to them. Researcher George Barna said that poses a challenge to parents, who "must take the lead in establishing the centrality of faith experiences and practices for their children."

Some good news about gratitude: Researchers tell us that it's both a feeling and a habit of mind. In addition, the experience of gratitude motivates people to be kind, especially toward the giver of what we're grateful for.

PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To help your children be thankful for their many blessings.
2. To give your children a desire to talk with God often.
3. To help your family keep an attitude of gratitude all year.

Age-Appropriate Prayers

In *Children's Ministry Magazine*, Kathy Downs offers insights into children's perceptions of prayer—and some ways to help kids pray:

Ages 2 to 3

Children this age understand that Jesus is their friend. Say simple, conversational "sentence prayers" that relate to children's life.

Ages 4 to 6

These children want to know how God works in their lives. Help them think of other people to pray for. Point out examples of how God answers prayers.

Ages 7 to 9

Children this age feel a need for God's help and can verbally express thoughts. Offer examples of delayed answers to prayers.

Ages 10 to 12

Preteens understand that God is more personal but may doubt his love. Help kids express joys and fears using the Bible to support their prayer lives.

Elementary Youth



Advent Gathering
November 22
12:00-1:30PM

All youth and families are welcome to join us at the Advent Gathering. We will eat lunch, share an Advent devotion, and add on to our nativity set. If you did not make a nativity set last year, please come and make one this year.

November Sunday School Offering Focus



We are collecting socks for the men that we serve through Kent's H.O.M.E. Project. Please donate new, white men's gym socks.

Zion's Christmas Program will be December 13th from 9:45-10:45. All youth will be rehearsing December 6th during the Sunday School hour. If you would like to play special music in the program, please contact Danielle Acay.



**CHRISTMAS
PROGRAM**

Living Word

Sixth-Eighth Graders

The focus of *Living Word* is to make Jesus the center of your life. We can do that through:

inWord: Digging deeper into God's Word,
upWord: Living life in daily worship and prayer,
outWord: Serving others in Christ's name and
forWord: Sharing Jesus Christ with other people.

During the month of November we will be looking at the 5th and 6th Commandment and serving others at the H.O.M.E. project in our small groups.

Stuff to think about!

"You shall not murder" – Exodus 20:13

"You shall not commit adultery." – Exodus 20:14

- ✝ What would it take for you to have the power to hold back rather than strike back next time someone wrongs you?
- ✝ How can words, looks, and inaction kill?
- ✝ What does this ancient commandment on adultery have to do with teenagers living today?
- ✝ What are some ways to keep temptation from getting control of your life?

What is the Faith at Home staff thankful for?



- ✝ All of the "Sex has a Price Tag" discussion leaders.
- ✝ The amazing volunteers that faithfully teach and guide our children every Sunday.
- ✝ All of the parents who bring their children to the House of God to worship, learn and build friendships.
- ✝ All of God's Children, young and old, who continue to learn more about God everyday and who share the gift of God's grace everyday!

Cultivate a Grateful Attitude in Your Teenagers



The timing is ironic: After briefly pausing to count all our blessings this month, we're immediately bombarded by a lengthy onslaught of consumerism and wish-fulfillment.

According to the Journal of Consumer Research, the worse kids feel about themselves, the more obsessed they become with buying stuff. And because self-esteem takes a big hit during adolescence, countless retailers and brands are vying for the attention of teenagers trying to purchase their identity.

Author John Rosemond says that while adults generally attain 10% to 20% of the things they desire, kids are accustomed to receiving about 80% of what they want. And parents often make sure their teenagers aren't deprived of any luxury. No wonder materialism has such a strong hold on kids today.

The problem is that "stuff" can't meet our deepest needs or heal our hurts. Only God, the giver of all good gifts, can do that. Being content with—and grateful for—what we have is rooted in this knowledge of the source of all our blessings.

God not only promises to meet all our needs but commands us to give thanks in all circumstances, even the tough ones. As parents, you can help teenagers be grateful for what they already have and help them start to see the blessings in challenges and adversity. This issue of The Parent Link offers many ideas of how to talk about being thankful and serving others.

Here are some practical ideas for instilling a sense of gratitude in your teenagers. Try them this month as a family to enhance your Thanksgiving celebrations:

- 1. Offer a fresh perspective.** Have family members each write their names on a piece of paper. Pass around the papers, and have each person write down what they'd be thankful for if they were the person named.
- 2. Bring proof of your thanks.** Add a twist to Thanksgiving dinner by having everyone bring to the table three objects for which they're thankful. These objects represent:
 - 1) something new this year
 - 2) something intangible
 - 3) something basic to their lives.
- 3. Serve others.** Volunteer as a family to express your gratitude and to foster generosity. This month you could help Zion serve dinner at the H.O.M.E. Project or help finish the Habitat house so that the family can be home for Christmas.

Senior High Youth

Sunday School: 9:45 to 10:45 am, 9th – 12th Graders!!!

Come to the Faith Café to:
G.P.S. Gather/Pray/Scripture

November Topics:

- 1st: "Going Through the Motions" part 1
8th: "Going Through the Motions" part 2 "Saintly Stories"
15th: Do you share the Gospel? Do you know how to share the Gospel?
22nd: Gospel revisited, "Early Saints of God"... Faith of a Mustard seed and MORE!



November 22nd:

EVENING WORSHIP SERVICE

Dinner starts at 5:30 pm

Worship service starts at 6:15 pm

The High School Students prepare and serve for the H.O.M.E. project after the worship service.

Small Groups! Small groups have met and are off and running. Are you an 11th or 12th grader and want to connect in a small group setting off campus? Contact any Sunday School facilitator or Faith at Home Team Member!



PRAY THAT:

1. God will give your teenagers a genuine "attitude of gratitude" for all the many blessings he provides.
2. Your teenagers will discover how to be content no matter what they have and no matter what challenges life brings.
3. Your family members can focus on giving thanks during the holidays, rather than on what they need or want.
4. Your teenagers won't be consumed by materialism but will find joy in generosity and service.

**"I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."
(Philippians 4:11-13)**

Family Experience: "God, I'm Grateful For..."

Thanksgiving is about more than just food. So give your family an opportunity to "feast" on the many blessings God provides each day. Try these fun ideas this year:

- **Blessing Tree**—Start a new pre-Christmas tradition by setting up a small artificial tree during November. Together, cut out some colorful paper circles. Punch a hole near the edge, and thread yarn through it to make a hanger. Have everyone write on the circles things they're thankful for or recent answers to prayer. Throughout the month, hang the circles on the tree.
- **Thanksgiving Countdown**— Play this "giving thanks" game with your family to help them focus on all their blessings. You can do one per day as you count down the week before Thanksgiving Day. Take turns naming:
 1. One gift you've received this year that you're thankful for.
 2. Two things you've learned about God this year that have changed your life.
 3. Three things you're thankful for about your family's faith.
 4. Four things you're thankful for about your family.
 5. Five experiences your family had this year that made you happy.
 6. Six things in creation you couldn't live without.
 7. Seven people outside your family who blessed you somehow.



November ... **H.O.M.E.** sign-ups! (**H**omeless **O**utreach **M**obilization **E**ffort)

November 22nd: Potluck @ 5:30 pm and Evening Worship Service @ 6:15 pm
Come one come all. Potluck instructions:

- "Faith at Home Ministries" provides the entree
- Last names A-L bring a dessert; L-Z bring a salad!

After the worship service, High School Ministry will prepare for H.O.M.E.

- December 6th: Christmas Program Rehearsal (during the Sunday School Hour)
 December 6th: Christmas Caroling and Chili Feed! 12:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall
 December 13th: Christmas Program (during the Sunday School Hour)