

# THANKFULNESS

## LESSON TEXT

Psalm 100:1-5; Hebrews 13:15-16; Mark 8:1-9

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will describe the attitude they should have toward God because of all he has done for them.
- The students will explain how they know that Jesus was a thankful person.
- The students will express in writing specific things for which they are thankful.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

*For each student:*

- ½ piece of 9" x 12" construction paper (4½" x 6")
- 2 pieces plain white paper, 8½" x 11"
- pen or pencil
- scissors

*For the teacher:*

- enough staplers to easily staple all the students' books
- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world
- markers/crayons/colored pencils
- stickers
- large foam poster board
- extra Bibles

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page A, 1 copy for the teacher
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 1 copy for each student

## LESSON PLAN

### *Getting Ready*

Faithful Instruction  
 Teacher Focus  
 Teacher Tips  
 Preclass Activity: My Gratitude Journal  
 Starting Up  
 Welcome and Singing  
 Opening Prayer  
 Victories  
 Good News from the Kingdom

### *Getting into God's Word*

Story: The Cost of Gratefulness  
 Scripture Study  
 Activity: My Gratitude Journal

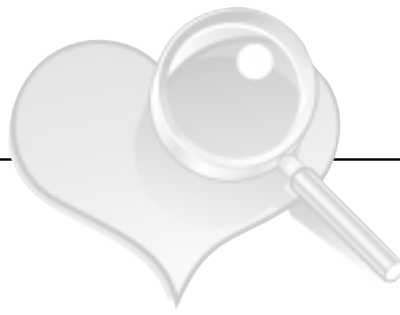
### *Getting It to Others*

Scripture Memory: Colossians 1:3  
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time  
 Conclusion

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...

Colossians 1:3



## FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

### TEACHER FOCUS

Pray for a heart filled with gratitude as you prepare this lesson. Read and meditate on Psalm 100:1-5, Hebrews 13:15-16 and Mark 8:1-9. The focus of this lesson is gratitude to God for who he is, all he has done for each one of us and all he continues to do every day for us. The more thankful you are for God and all his blessings in your own life, the more you will be able to communicate deep gratitude to your preteen class, helping them to be thankful for the blessings in their lives.

### TEACHER TIPS

Before preparing this lesson, take some extra time to have a special time with God. During this time, focus on thanking God for who he is, what he has done for you and what he continues to do every day in your life as a disciple. Make a written list of things for which you are thankful; make the list as long as you can. Be sure to bring your list to class so that you can share it with your students.

## PRECLASS ACTIVITY

### MY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

The students will make a journal in which they will record a list of all that they are thankful for in their everyday lives.

#### MATERIALS USED

*For each student:*

- ½ piece of 9" x 12" construction paper (4½" x 6")
- 2 pieces plain white paper, 8½" x 11"
- pen or pencil
- scissors

*For the teacher:*

- enough staplers to easily staple all the students' books
- markers

*Reproducible Pages:*

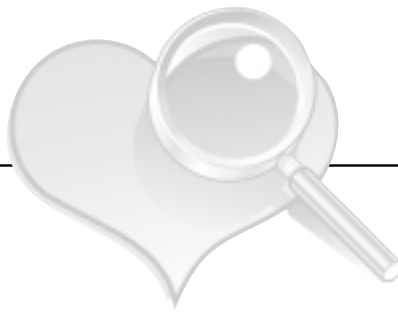
- Page A, 1 copy for the teacher

#### PREPARATION

During the week prior to this class, you should put together a journal as an example for your students. Familiarize yourself with the instructions so that you can help your students with their own journals. (See directions on Reproducible Page A.)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, have them sit down at a table or on the floor with enough space to be able to make a small journal.
2. Tell the students that they are going to begin to make a journal that they will use later in the class and at home.
3. Give each student a half piece of construction paper, two pieces of plain white paper and a pair of scissors.
4. Tell the students to fold the two pieces of white paper in half from top to bottom. (Figure A)
5. Have them use their scissors to cut the paper along the fold, making four pieces. (Figure B)
6. Have the students put these four pieces together evenly in stacks, and then fold their stacks in half, from left to right. (Figure C)
7. Have each student fold the piece of construction paper in half as shown in Figure D.



8. Have the students place the folded white papers inside the folded piece of construction paper. (Figure E)
9. Using a stapler, each student should staple his or her booklet on the left side three times—near the top, in the middle and near the bottom. (Figure F)
10. After the booklet is stapled together, give the students a marker to write “My Gratitude Journal” and their names on the front of their booklets. (Figure F)
11. Collect all the journals and put them aside so that they can be used later in this lesson.

## STARTING UP

### WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

### OPENING PRAYER

*Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together?* Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to be especially thankful for the chance to be together.

### VICTORIES

Take the time to have the students share about the challenges they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Who would like to share something they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

### GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

#### MATERIALS USED

*For the teacher:*

- 1 copy of “Good News from the Kingdom”
- globe or map of the world

#### INSTRUCTIONS

*Now let's take a few minutes to share “Good News from the Kingdom.”* Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that God's kingdom is worldwide, and that the victories of our brothers and sisters on other continents can inspire us and spur us on.





## STORY

### "THE COST OF GRATITUDE"

This story is about a teenager who learned a lesson about being thankful. Every preteen can learn something from this story, especially about being more thankful in their actions toward their parents for all that they do for them.

#### MATERIALS USED

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page B, 1 copy for each student

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page B (the story) to the students.
2. Tell the students to listen as you read the story. Ask:
  - *How does this teenager feel about his father?*
  - *What kind of relationship does the boy have with his father?*
  - *Was the father giving to his son? How do you know that?*
  - *Why do you think the boy had such a hard time buying his dad an ice cream cone?*
  - *What do you think made the boy change?*
  - *What did the teenager learn?*
  - *How can we compare God to the father in the story?*
  - *How do we treat God like the teenager treated his father?*



## SCRIPTURE STUDY

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Psalm 100:1-5. Select a student to read the passage aloud. Explain to the students that this scripture shows that we were all made by God. This passage says that we are like sheep that live in a beautiful pasture. God created us and gave us a beautiful earth to live on. On this beautiful earth, we have air to breathe, food to eat, clothes to wear and places to live. Not only does God give us all this, he gives us his love, goodness and faithfulness. This passage tells us that these things endure forever. Ask the following questions:

- *Who keeps us alive every day? (God)*
- *Name some of the things God gives to us that keep us alive.*
- *What does "God's goodness" mean?*
- *What does "God's faithfulness" mean?*
- *What does "endure forever" mean?*
- *What should our attitude be toward God when we think of all he has given us and done for us?*
- *How can we show God that we are thankful for him and everything we have?*

Have the students turn in their Bibles to Mark 8:1-9. Select a student to read the passage aloud. Explain that this passage gives us an example of Jesus showing compassion to people in need. These people who had not eaten for three days were hungry. Jesus performed a miracle and fed four thousand people. Ask the following questions:

- *What was the first thing Jesus did after he took the seven loaves of bread? (He gave thanks.)*
- *What was the first thing Jesus did after he took the few small fish? (He gave thanks.)*
- *Why do you think Jesus thanked God?*
- *Do you think that Jesus was a thankful person? Why?*
- *Do you think that Jesus complained about what he did not have?*
- *Is it possible to complain and be thankful at the same time?*
- *How can you be more like Jesus in being thankful?*



## ACTIVITY

### MY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

To help the preteens apply what they learned in this lesson, they will use their Gratitude Journals to daily record at least three things for which they are thankful. The students will write in their journals every day, at the end of the day, for the next two weeks. A focus on listing specific things for which they are thankful each day should help each one to develop a more thankful attitude and a greater realization of how much God has given them.

#### MATERIALS USED

*For each student:*

- pen or pencil

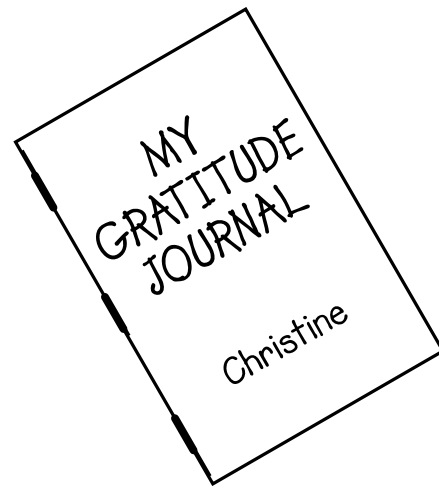
*For the teacher:*

- markers/crayons/colored pencils
- stickers

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the journals that the students made during the preclass activity. If any students arrived late, give them the construction paper and white paper so that they can make their own journal. Follow the same instructions given for the preclass activity.
2. Put the markers, crayons, colored pencils and stickers on a table in front of the students. Tell them that they may use these items to decorate the front of their journals.
3. When everyone is finished decorating their journals, give each student a pen or pencil. Tell them to turn to the first page in their journal.
4. Explain that the journals they made are called Gratitude Journals because you want them to write in them every day, at the end of their day. They should write at least three things for which they are thankful that happened during the day. They could also write about something they have or they saw, or about a relationship. They may write more than three things if they want to, but they should write at least three things every day. Encourage the students not to repeat items. The goal is to try to find new things every day for which to be thankful.

5. To help them get started, tell each student to write three things on the first page in their journals. These three things should be things for which they are grateful today.
6. When the students have completed writing, tell them to be sure their names are on the journals. Have them put them aside so that they may take them home to use over the next two weeks.





## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...  
Colossians 1:3

### MATERIALS USED

*For the teacher:*

- large foam poster board
- marker

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page C, 1 copy for each student

### PREPARATION

Before class, print the scripture out neatly on a foam poster board.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have the students sit in a half circle. Hold the printed scripture up in front of them so that everyone can see it.
2. Tell them that you want them to practice saying the scripture by loudly emphasizing one word at a time. For example, the first time they say the scripture in unison, they should emphasize "We" by saying it louder than the rest of the words in the passage. Then, the next time, they will say "always" the very loudest. This should continue until every word in the passage has been emphasized loudly.
3. Tell the students that you want them to have some competition. Divide the class into two teams. Decide which team will go first with a coin toss.
4. Place the board with the scripture printed on it on a stand or lean it against a wall. Each team will send a student to come up and stand with their back to the board. They must recite the scripture without looking. If they get every word correct, they can take the marker and mark out one word from the passage. They can choose to mark out any word that they want to from the passage.
5. Continue until every word is marked out. Scores can be kept by giving one point per team each time the scripture is said correctly.
6. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page C (Memory Verse) to take home.

## WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you explain to them the challenge for the week.

Share with them the list that you made about some of the things for which you are thankful. Describe to them the special time that you had with God this week, focusing on your thankfulness to him. Tell them that their challenge for this week will be to write in their journals at least three things every day for which they are thankful. They also should do something special to show one or both of their parents that they are thankful for them.

## CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

1. Write in your Gratitude Journal at the end of every day, listing at least three things for which you are grateful. Look for new things to be thankful for each day.
2. Do something special for one or both of your parents this week, showing them just how thankful you are for them and for all they do for you.

# THANKFULNESS

## LESSON TEXT

Psalm 8:1-9; Psalm 75:1; Luke 9:10-17

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will describe the attitude they should have toward God because of all he has done for them.
- The students will explain how they know that Jesus was a thankful person.
- The students will express in writing specific things for which they are thankful.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

*For each student:*

- magazine
- glue stick
- scissors
- 1 piece of construction paper
- pen or pencil

*For the teacher:*

- pens or pencils
- markers/crayons/colored pencils
- colorful pictures of nature—the sky, clouds, birds, fish, animals, plants
- extra Bibles

*Reproducible Pages:*

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

## LESSON PLAN

### *Getting Ready*

Faithful Instruction  
 Teacher Focus  
 Teacher Tips  
 Preclass Activity: God Has Blessed My Life!  
 Starting Up  
 Welcome and Singing  
 Opening Prayer and Review  
 Great News Sharing

### *Getting into God's Word*

Scripture Study  
 Activity: Who Is the Thankful Person?

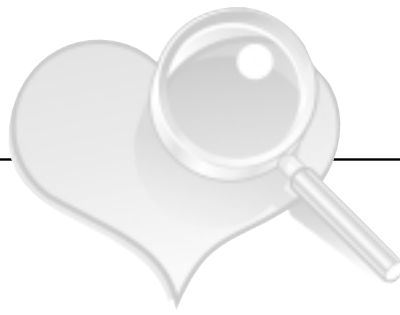
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Scripture Memory: Colossians 1:3  
 Weekly Challenge and Snack Time  
 Conclusion

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...

Colossians 1:3



## FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

### TEACHER FOCUS

Pray for a heart filled with gratitude as you prepare this lesson. Read and meditate on Psalm 8:1-9, Psalm 75:1 and Luke 9:10-17. The focus of this lesson is gratitude to God for who he is, all he has done for each one of us and all he continues to do every day for us. The more thankful you are for God and all his blessings in your own life, the more you will be able to communicate deep gratitude to your preteen class, helping them to be thankful for the blessings in their lives.

### TEACHER TIPS

Before preparing this lesson, have at least one quiet time from one of the Gospels on a passage in which Jesus expresses thanks to God. Pray to have this type of thankful heart, even for the smallest things. Go to your local library and find some books with beautiful color pictures of nature. Get pictures of the sky, clouds, birds, fish, animals and plants. You will need to bring the book or books that you find to class for this lesson.

## PRECLASS ACTIVITY

### GOD HAS BLESSED MY LIFE!

The students will create a personal collage, emphasizing the things in their lives for which they are most thankful.

#### MATERIALS USED

*For each student:*

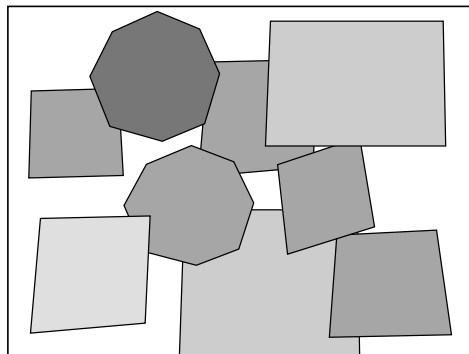
- magazine
- glue stick
- scissors
- 1 piece of construction paper

*For the teacher:*

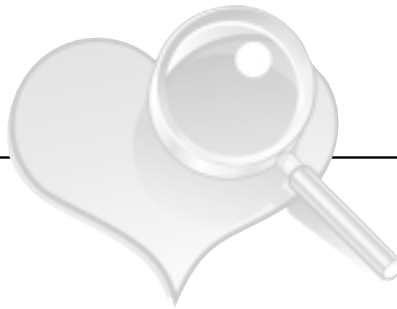
- pens or pencils
- markers/crayons/colored pencils

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have the students each select a magazine, scissors, glue stick and a piece of construction paper. Direct them to work independently.
2. Have them work individually to cut out pictures that best describe things for which they are thankful in their lives.
3. Have them glue as many pictures as possible on the construction paper. They can also draw pictures using pens, markers and crayons. Be sure the students put their names on the back of the collages.







## STARTING UP

### WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

### OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with a student praying for each student to have a heart that is full of gratitude for all that God has done for them and given them.
- Have one student recite the memory verse for this lesson: Colossians 1:3.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson (Core Lesson).

### GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so as many as possible can share.

**WHO IS THE THANKFUL PERSON?**  
*Please don't let anyone see the answers on your paper!*

The vacation that I was the most thankful for was \_\_\_\_\_.

The TV show that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The food that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The fun activity that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The movie that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The sport that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

A talent that I have that I am thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am thankful that \_\_\_\_\_ is the color of my hair.

I am thankful that there are \_\_\_\_\_ people in my family.

I am thankful that \_\_\_\_\_ is the color of my eyes.

I am thankful that \_\_\_\_\_ is my favorite person in the Bible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

A faint, light-colored illustration of a girl wearing a hat and a boy in a t-shirt and shorts is visible in the background of the worksheet.



## SCRIPTURE STUDY

### MATERIALS USED

#### For the teacher:

- colorful pictures of nature—the sky, clouds, birds, fish, animals, plants
- extra Bibles

Have the students take out their Bibles and turn to Psalm 8:1-9. Select a student to read the passage aloud. Explain to the students that this scripture shows that the heavens, moon and stars are the work of God's fingers. (Hold up the pictures of these things as you talk.) Talk about how we can see with our eyes many incredible things that God created. God is an amazing creator. There are also things that God created for each of us that we cannot see, such as the air we breathe. Even though God created all the wonderful things around us (show pictures of birds, animals, fish and plants), God cares about people more than anything he created! When we look at all the amazing things that God created, it should cause us to praise and thank God. God is truly worthy of our gratitude and praise.

Have the students turn to Psalm 75:1. Select one student to read this passage aloud. Ask the following questions:

- *Who can name at least ten things you see in nature that God made?*
- *Why do you think God made such a beautiful world?*
- *How does it make you feel when you see pictures of the beautiful things God made for you to enjoy?*
- *How does it make you feel when you read in the Bible that God cares about you and is mindful of you?*
- *What should our attitude be toward God because of all he has made and done for each one of us?*
- *How can we show God that we are thankful for what he has done?*

Have the students turn in their Bibles to Luke 9:10-17. Select one student to read the passage aloud. Ask the students to explain what they learn in this passage about Jesus being thankful. How can they tell that he was thankful? What are some ways we can tell that someone is thankful?





## ACTIVITY

### WHO IS THE THANKFUL PERSON?

#### MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- pen or pencil

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for each student

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page D (Who Is the Thankful Person?) and a pen or pencil.
2. Tell them to fill out the paper, without talking or looking on their neighbor's paper.
3. Give the students about ten minutes to complete the paper.
4. When finished, have them write their names in small print on the bottom right corner of the papers.
5. Collect the papers, putting all the girls' papers together in one stack and all the boys' papers together in another stack. Mix up the papers in each stack.
6. Have all the girls sit together on one side of the room and all the boys sit together on one side of the room.
7. Tell the students that they are going to play a guessing game. The girls will guess which boy's paper is read, based on the answers given. The boys will do the same for the girls' papers.
8. Keep score by giving one point for each time the name of the student who wrote the answers on a paper is guessed correctly by a team.





## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...  
Colossians 1:3

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask: Who can recite the memory verse?
2. Allow two or three students to stand up and quote the verse to the class.
3. Assign the students a partner so that they can each take a turn saying the verse to their partner. The one who is hearing the verse quoted may look it up in the Bible to check to be sure that his partner is getting every word correct.

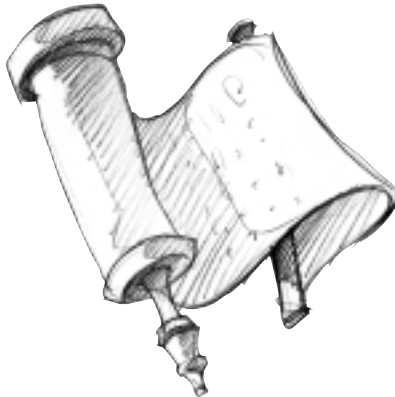
## WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you talk to them about their weekly challenge.

The students made a Gratitude Journal during the previous lesson. Every day they are to write in it at least three things for which they are thankful. Ask them how that is going. Are they remembering to write in their journals every day? They were also asked to think of one thing that they could do this week to show one or both of their parents that they are thankful for them.

## CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

1. Write in your Gratitude Journal at the end of every day, listing at least three things for which you are particularly grateful. Look for new things to be thankful for each day.
2. Do something special for one or both of your parents this week, showing them just how thankful you are for them and for all that they do for you.

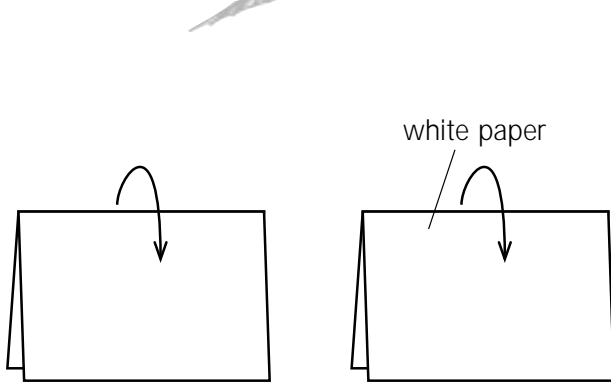


Figure A

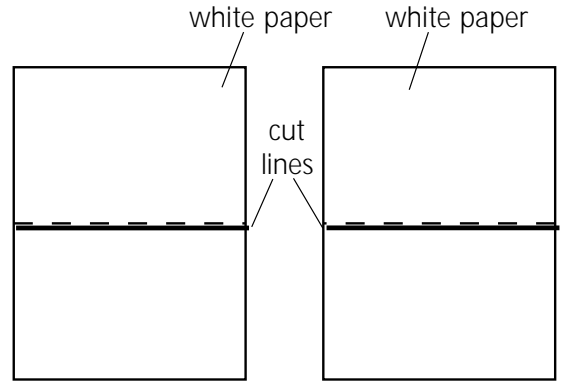


Figure B

four pieces of white paper folded

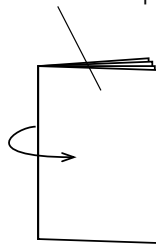


Figure C

folded construction paper

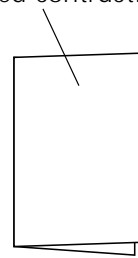


Figure D

white paper construction paper

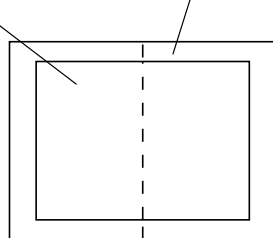


Figure E

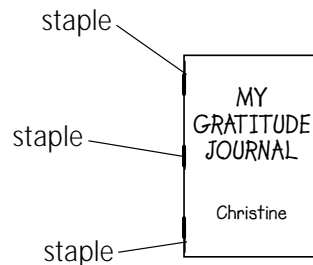


Figure F

## THE COST OF GRATEFULNESS

I was about thirteen years old. My father frequently took me on short day trips on Saturdays. Sometimes we went to a park or to a marina to look at boats. My favorite trips were the ones we took to junk stores, where we could admire old electronic stuff. Once in a while we would buy something just to take it apart.

On the way home from these trips, dad frequently stopped at the Dairy Queen for dollar ice cream cones. Not every single time; just often enough. I couldn't expect it, but I could hope and pray from the time we started heading home to that critical corner where we would either go straight for the ice cream or turn and go home empty handed. That corner meant either mouth-watering excitement or disappointment.

A few times my dad teased me by going home the long way. "I'm just going this way for variety," he would say, as he drove by the Dairy Queen without stopping. It was a game, and I was well fed, so we're not talking torture here.

On the best days he would ask, in a tone that made it sound like a new idea, "Would you like an ice cream cone?" and I would say, "That sounds great, Dad!" I'd always have chocolate and he'd have vanilla. He would hand me two dollars and I would run in to buy the ice cream for both of us. We'd eat the ice cream in the car. I loved my dad and I loved ice cream—so that was heaven.

On one day, we were heading home and I was hoping and praying for the beautiful sound of Dad's offer to stop and get ice cream. It came, "Would you like to get ice cream today?"

"That sounds great, dad!"

But then he said, "It sounds good to me, too, son. How would you like to treat today?"

Two dollars! Two dollars! My mind raced. I knew that I could afford it. I got five dollars for allowance every week, plus I got extra for odd jobs. And I had a lot of money saved in my room at home. Saving my money was very important to me. And when it was my money, ice cream just wasn't a good use of it.

Why didn't it occur to me that this was a golden opportunity to give something back to my very generous father? Why didn't I think about how many ice cream cones my dad had bought me? He probably had bought me at least fifty ice cream cones, and I had never in my life bought him one ice cream cone! But all I could think of was spending my money.

In a fit of selfish, miserable ingratitude, I said the awful words that have rung in my ears ever since.

"Well, in that case, I guess I'll pass."

My father just said, "Okay, son."

But as we turned to head home, I realized how wrong I was and begged him to turn back. "I'll pay," I pleaded.

But he just said, "That's okay, we don't really need one." He wouldn't hear my pleading. We drove home.

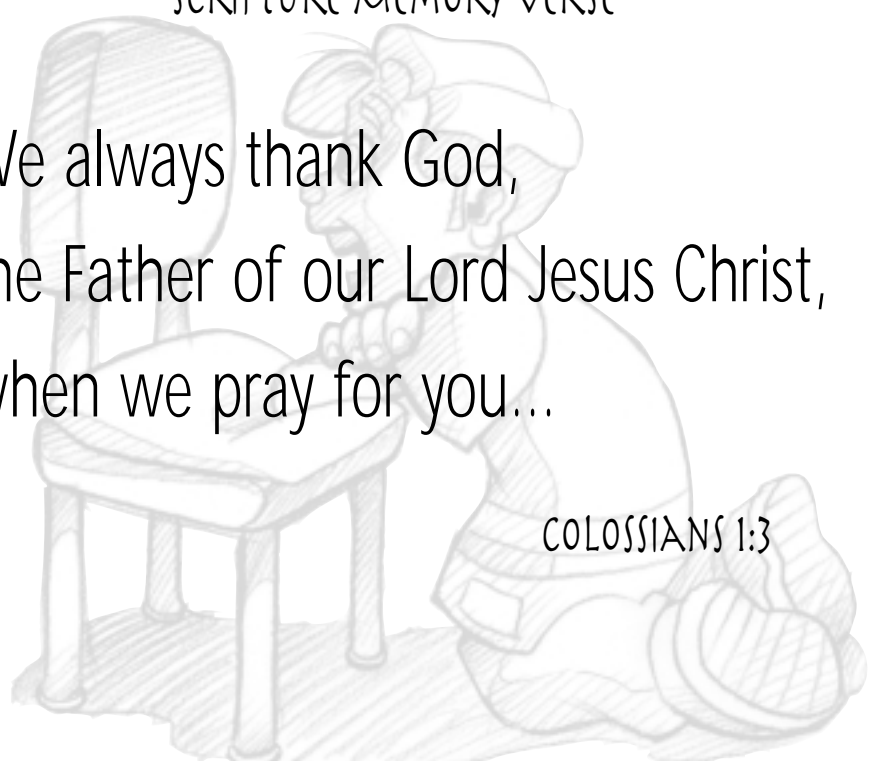
I felt awful for my selfishness and ungratefulness. He didn't rub it in. That day I learned a big lesson that I never forgot. It made a big impression on me.

I learned that generosity goes two ways and gratefulness sometimes costs a little more than just saying the words, "thank you." On that day gratefulness would have cost me two dollars, and it would have been the best ice cream I'd ever had.

I'll tell you one more thing. We went on another trip the next week, and as we approached the crucial corner, I said, "Dad, would you like an ice cream cone today? My treat."

Randal Jones, "The Cost of Gratefulness," *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*, eds. Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Kimberly Kirberger (Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications, Inc., 1997), 35.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE



We always thank God,  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
when we pray for you...

COLOSSIANS 1:3

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

1. Write in your Gratitude Journal at the end of every day, listing at least three things for which you are particularly grateful. Look for new things to be thankful for each day.
2. Do something special for one or both of your parents this week, showing them just how thankful you are for them and for all that they do for you.

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WHO IS THE THANKFUL PERSON?

*Please don't let anyone see the answers on your paper!*

The vacation that I was the most thankful for was \_\_\_\_\_.

The TV show that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The food that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The fun activity that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The movie that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

The sport that I am the most thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

A talent that I have that I am thankful for is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am thankful that \_\_\_\_\_ is the color of my hair.

I am thankful that there are \_\_\_\_\_ people in my family.

I am thankful that \_\_\_\_\_ is the color of my eyes.

I am thankful that \_\_\_\_\_ is my favorite person in the Bible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

