



# 10 THANKSGIVING OBJECT LESSONS

## THANK YOU CARD FOR GOD

### Items needed:

“Thank you” greeting cards (for various occasions/people)

*Begin the lesson by having a few kids come up and read one card each, then let the kids decide what people and occasions these cards would be perfect for.*

If you were to write a thank you card to God, what would it say?

You won't find thank you cards for God in the card store, but there are many ways to say thank you to Jesus without a card. We can say thank you in prayer. We can say thank you with praise songs. We can say thank you by loving others and serving them in Jesus's name.

God is the giver of all good gifts – our friends, our families, our schools, the world we live in, and everything that is good. He is worthy of our thanks and our praise. Let's thank God right now in prayer, and let's ask God to give us opportunities to thank him with our actions this week.

# PUMPKIN PIE

## Items needed:

Small slice of pumpkin pie

Today we're talking about having an attitude of gratitude. It's all about thanksgiving. As you know, in America, we have a whole holiday dedicated to giving thanks. Many families gather together on Thanksgiving to share a meal and remember their blessings. Let me ask you: What is your favorite thing to eat on Thanksgiving?

*Allow the kids to answer.*

I think the best part of the Thanksgiving meal – and every meal really – is the dessert. A traditional dessert at Thanksgiving is pumpkin pie.

Bring out the pumpkin pie and start eating. Continue eating and talking. (Don't worry about eating with your mouth full. It will add a little humor and make the time more memorable for the kids.)

Dessert is definitely one of the things that I'm grateful for. It's sweet and yummy. And no matter how much turkey and mashed potatoes I've eaten during the meal, no matter how absolutely stuffed I am, I can always make room for some dessert.

There's only one bad thing about dessert. It's gone too quickly.

*At this point, you will need to have finished the pie.*

The Bible tells us that we should have an attitude of gratitude. We should be thankful all of the time. We need to give thanks to God all of the time. In Psalm 136 (and a lot of other places in the Bible too) it tells us that God's love endures forever. God loves us completely and that love will never falter or stop. God gives us many blessings but the greatest of these is his love.

If I can be thankful for a dessert that is here one minute and gone the next, I can surely be thankful for God's love that is always there and always strong.

Now that's something really sweet.

# FROZEN TURKEY

## Items needed:

Frozen turkey

I love Thanksgiving because it's a time to remember all that God has given us and to thank him for it. It's also a time when a lot of people get together with family or friends – sometimes family and friends they haven't seen in a long time. And what do most of us do when we get together on Thanksgiving?

We eat! A great big meal, with mashed potatoes, and stuffing, and yummy rolls, corn and green beans. But the star of the show is usually a great big, juicy turkey.

I decided to bring a turkey in today.

*Bring out the turkey.*

I just brought it from the store. Would anyone like to eat a few bites of turkey? Probably not. You may have noticed that there are a few problems. Obstacles. First of all, the turkey's still wrapped up. Secondly, a turkey has to be cooked before you eat it, otherwise you'll get sick. Not only is this bird not cooked, it's frozen solid. It's hard as a rock.

*Rap your knuckles on the turkey to show how hard it is.*

Yes sir, this turkey has a lot of obstacles. But we also know that there's still an opportunity to have a great dinner. The obstacles can be overcome. The turkey can be unwrapped and defrosted and then cooked. We can't eat it right now, but eventually, this turkey will be part of a really great meal.

It isn't always so easy to look at the obstacles in our lives and see the opportunity for something good. But it's there, I promise. If we keep a thankful heart instead of grumbling, we're able to keep our focus on God instead of on our problems. God loves you, and because he loves you, he wants to be with you and see you through every tough time you face.

Remember every obstacle is an opportunity for God to do amazing things. That's something to be thankful for.

# MASHED POTATOES

## Items needed:

Bowl of mashed potatoes

I love Thanksgiving because it's a time to remember all that God has given us and to thank him for it. It's also a time when a lot of people get together with family or friends – sometimes family and friends they haven't seen in a long time. And what do most of us do when we get together on Thanksgiving?

We eat! One of my favorite foods to eat at Thanksgiving is mashed potatoes. Like these. Mashed potatoes are so delicious.

They taste great all by themselves. There's also a lot of things you can add to mashed potatoes that make them taste even more delicious. Butter. Or brown gravy. Or white gravy. Or cheese. Or bacon. Some people even add other vegetables to their mashed potatoes to make the vegetables easier to eat.

Now suppose, what you really wanted was mashed potatoes with a little bit of corn mixed in. That's what you've been craving and that's what you want. But there's none in the house. You've got all these other things available: butter, gravy, bacon, cheese. You could add any one of them to your mashed potatoes and they'd be great. Or you could just eat the mashed potatoes as is, and they'd still be wonderful. Are you going to let a little corn – or lack of it – ruin your great meal?

Grumblers have a hard time being happy. They just look at what they don't have. That makes things pretty miserable. Thank-ers don't focus on what they don't have, they're too busy being grateful for all of the great things they do have.

*[Note: you could elect to bring in the condiments mentioned – butter, gravy, bacon, cheese. Although not necessary, they add to the kids' visual engagement with what you're saying.]*

# REMEMBER TO SAY THANKS

## Items needed:

Newspaper ads

Cranberry sauce

Pumpkin pie

TV listings (for the football game; or something Cowboys/Lions)

In just a few days we'll be celebrating Thanksgiving. I've brought a few Thanksgiving traditions with me today, and I want to know from you all, which of these is the most important part of Thanksgiving?

*Show the kids each item. Let them sample the cranberry sauce, if possible. Ask them what each of these means at Thanksgiving. Then ask which is most important.*

To some of you, Thanksgiving food is most important. To some it's the ads, and still others the football. Whatever you think is most important from these four things, it's NOT the most important part of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving was established as a day to thank God for his blessings. It's a day the pilgrims used to celebrate a new home, a new found hope, and new friends. God did a miracle for the pilgrims through Squanto and the Native Americans, and he blessed them richly. He continues to bless his people, and its up to us to carry on the pilgrim tradition of thankfulness.

This Thursday, enjoy all the fun and family that Thanksgiving brings, but don't allow football, Black Friday, or even pumpkin pie to take away from what's most important. Thank God for his blessings, and thank him for his never ending faithfulness!

# NAME CHANGE

## Items needed:

A box of Honey Smacks cereal

*Offer some of the kids a few pieces of cereal. If possible, let everyone have a sample.*

How many of you eat Honey Smacks at home? Anyone?

Believe it or not, Honey Smacks is not the original name of this cereal. Does anyone want to guess the name it had before?

The name, believe it or not, was Sugar Smacks. Anyone want to guess why they changed it?

When Sugar Smacks came out, no one thought it was a big deal that the cereal was full of sugar, but in the 1980s people - make that parents - became much more concerned with what their kids were eating. Cereal companies didn't want to lose their business, so they gave their cereals new names like Honey Smacks. Sounds a whole lot better for you than Sugar Smacks, right?

When God gave Jacob a new name, he was doing it for a similar reason. Jacob's name literally meant "deceiver," and it reflected who Jacob once was. God was changing Jacob into a new man, one who would father a mighty nation. That's why he gave him the name Israel.

Jacob had a lot to be thankful for. He was thankful for God's forgiveness, God's provision, and God's promises for the future. The more he reflected on this, the more thankful he became. The same thing will happen for us. When we look at all God's done, we can't help but thank him and praise his name.

Count your blessings this week, and this Thanksgiving, let God know just how thankful you are for all he has done.

# TAKE TIME TO GIVE THANKS

## Items needed:

Pocket watch

*Show the kids the watch and see if any of them have ever seen one before.*

This is a pocket watch. Nowadays, people wear watches on their wrists or just look at their cell phones to find out what time it is. But back in the day people wore pocket watches. They would hang from a chain that was clipped to a man's vest. The vest even had a little pocket in it that you tucked the watch into. Thus the name pocket watch.

A little over a hundred years ago, many people traveled across country by train. Train conductors – who worked for the railroad – would rely on their pocket watches to keep track of time and make sure the trains didn't run late.

But there was one catch. The watches back then didn't run on batteries. In order for them to run, you had to wind them.

*Demonstrate.*

A few good winds of the knob would keep the watch in good working order for many hours. But if the conductor forgot to wind it, the watch would start to slow down and eventually stop. To stay on time, the conductors needed to keep winding the watch.

If our life were a pocket watch, the winding knob would be thankfulness. If we remember to thank God for his love and to show our appreciation for what others do, our lives will run in a positive direction. If we have a grumbling attitude though, it's like we've forgotten to wind the watch. Things start to s-l-o-w d-o-w-n until we don't want to go on any more.

If you're in a tough situation and want to turn things around, or even if you're in a good place and just want to be positive moving forward, remember you need to constantly wind your watch by giving thanks and praise.

# THANK YOUR TEACHER

## Items needed:

Jar of candy (you need to know the exact count inside!)

Before we talk about teachers, I want to share some candy with you all. I have \_\_\_\_\_ pieces of candy, and I want to make sure everyone here gets the same amount. How can I figure out how many pieces of candy to give you all?

Pick a few kids to do the math on this. If possible, have a board available for them to show their work. Count the number of kids and divide the total number of candies by number of kids. The remainder will stay with the leader.

*As the kids divide the candy, go on with the lesson.*

Can anyone tell me how teachers were able to help us solve this problem?

Teachers are the reason we know things like counting and division and remainders. It seems boring in the classroom sometimes, but as we all saw this morning, all that math does serve a useful purpose in the real world.

Teachers are special people. They've chosen to take on a profession that's thankless and low paid because they value something far more than money and fame – inspiring kids like you to do great things. Take a moment this week to thank your teachers for all the hard work they put in to educating you, and thank God for the opportunity you have to learn from such wonderful people!

# LEFTOVERS

## Items needed:

A box of leftovers

*Show the kids what you have in the box. Ask if they can tell what restaurant it is from. Ask them what their favorite restaurants are and if they ever bring home leftovers.*

I could have left this food at the restaurant. It wasn't a complete meal anymore, and in truth, it will never taste as good as it did when I first got the food. So why did I ask for a leftover box? Two reasons. First, it's wasteful to just let the restaurant throw the food away. But also... I love this meal! This is good food, and I didn't want to let it go to waste.

God could have tossed mankind out like leftovers. After Adam and Eve broke the rules and sin entered the world, God's creation was ruined. It would never be the same. Why would God want to hold on to something so broken?

For the same reason I kept this food; God loves us. He loves us way more than anyone ever loved a plate of food. He loved us enough to sacrifice his son Jesus for our sake.

Jesus is the greatest gift ever offered and the greatest gift you will ever receive. We need to thank God every day for the wonderful gift he has given us in Jesus.

# CRANBERRY SAUCE

## Items needed:

Picnic basket

A bowl of cranberry sauce

I love Thanksgiving because it's a time to remember all that God has given us and to thank him for it. It's also a time when a lot of people get together with family or friends – sometimes family and friends they haven't seen in a long time. And what do most of us do when we get together on Thanksgiving?

We eat!

My friend packed us this basket with a Thanksgiving feast for us to enjoy.

*Open up the basket and remove the bowl of cranberry sauce.*

Here's a bowl of cranberry sauce. I remember my friend telling me how much he loves cranberry sauce. And let's see what else we have.

*Look into the basket with disappointment. Upend the basket to show that there is nothing else inside.*

There's nothing else inside. I guess my friend was so focused on the cranberry sauce that he forgot all the other things that make a great Thanksgiving feast. Turkey and mashed potatoes and stuffing and yummy rolls and corn and green beans.

That's the problem when we focus too much on one thing. Everything else just disappears.

Like when we focus on our fears. Everybody has things that they are afraid of; but sometimes we get so focused on the things that scare us, we get overwhelmed and we can't see anything else. If we're only thinking on our fears, like my friend was only thinking about the cranberry sauce, then you miss out on a whole feast of good things.

God loves us and wants to help us with all of our problems and fears. If we focus on him and all the good things in life, then it's our fears that start to fade away.

And this Thanksgiving, focus on the one thing that deserves our full attention - God, and His love for us. That's something to be truly thankful for.