



For quite some time now I have a daily habit helping me cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

My routine is waking up, grabbing a cup of coffee, reading 30 minutes, then going for a walk around the neighborhood.

I start out the walk by going through the previous day in my head, thanking God for small and big stuff I'm grateful for.

I try and go through the list as slow as possible, really savoring what I'm thankful for in that moment.

Next, I thank God for anything else that comes to my mind.

One thing that keeps popping up lately is the nice cool weather. I live just outside of New Orleans, and 75% of the year it's hot. Really hot. In fact, cool weather just hit us over the last week or so. Oh...I love the cool weather!

This daily habit helps me start off each day "living in gratitude". It helps me to approach each task, challenge, and person with a positive outlook. I have a sense of gratitude that surround each day, regardless of the circumstance – good or bad. It's really a great way to start the day!

Since Thanksgiving is around the corner, it's the perfect time to teach the teenagers in your ministry about "gratitude".

That's why we created this game and lesson helping students cultivate an "attitude of gratitude".

Hope you enjoy it!

Nick Diliberto, Ministry to Youth

## YOUTH GROUP LESSON – THANKSGIVING

Bible Passage: Luke 17:11-19

Bottom Line: Because of all that God has done for us, we should respond with an attitude of gratitude.

### OPENING GAME – TEXT IT BATTLE

Supplies: One mobile phone per small group.

The game leader will also need a mobile phone with texting capabilities.

### HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Break up into small groups.

Each group sits in a circle.

On GO, one student at a time types one they're grateful for in text (don't yet send it) and then passes the phone to the next player.

No duplicates within the group.

Once every player in each group is done, send the message to the game leader.

The group that gets their text through to the game leader first wins the round.

The winning team gets 100 points.

Play a few rounds.

Each round, individual players have to text something different.

No repeats.

The team with the most points at the end wins.

The point: What a great way to create an attitude of gratitude. Now that we're focused on the things we're thankful for, let's get started!

## TEACH – ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and we'll soon be gathering together with family and friends to celebrate the holiday.

When you think of Thanksgiving, what comes to mind?

(Take responses that might include football, turkey, grandparents, family, etc.)

Thanksgiving is about all of those things, but the main purpose of Thanksgiving is to pause from our busy lives to give thanks back to God for who He is and what He has done for us.

Gratitude means expressing thanks for someone or something.

So, what do you think it means to live with an “attitude of gratitude”?

(Allow students to respond)

Living with an attitude of gratitude means that you live in a way that shows thankfulness for everything – both in the good and bad circumstances in life we face.

Open your Bibles to Luke 17.

If we all take the time to think about it, we have lots of things for which we should be thankful.

The problem is that we take these things for granted.

Instead of living with an attitude of gratitude, we go on with our day and forget to give thanks for these blessings.

This is what happens in the Bible story we're reading today.

Jesus was traveling on his way to Jerusalem when he came across a group of lepers.

Now, leprosy is tough stuff. It is a skin disease that causes the person to have sores all over their body.

The disease would spread and worsen until eventually the person would be crippled by the pain and irritation.

It was a nasty disease.

Those who had leprosy were outcasts.

They were pushed out of their homes, their cities, and they were forced to live with other lepers away from normal life.

Needless to say, being a leper meant a miserable life.

When Jesus came passing by, these lepers knew that He would possibly heal them. Let's read how the story unfolds.

Read Luke 17:11-14

What did the lepers want Jesus to do? (Have mercy)

What do you think they meant by "mercy?"

These ten lepers wanted Jesus to heal them from this disease.

Can you imagine the sight of them running into town with no more leprosy and being reunited with their friends and family that they haven't seen in years?

Jesus had just spoken the words and they were healed, but let's take a look at how they responded to what Jesus had done.

Read Luke 17:15-19

Only one out of ten came back to thank Jesus.

How do you think Jesus felt when He saw that only one had returned?

Jesus had healed them of a horrible disease, he made a way for them to return to their homes and live a normal life, and yet only one of the ten took the time to say "thank you."

By asking where the other nine were, Jesus shows that he is shocked and disappointed by their reaction.

Our bottom line for today is: Because of all that God has done for us, we should respond with an attitude of gratitude.

The one that returned is a great example of living with an "attitude of gratitude."

When he realized what Jesus had done for him, he stopped everything that he was doing and he returned to give thanks to Jesus. He fell at Jesus' feet and, "with a loud voice," began to express his thankfulness through praise.

He was thankful because God had changed his life.

God has done so much for us.

He loves us, provides for us, protects us, and guides us.

And most importantly, He sent His son to die on the cross for us.

We know that God has done these things, but we often forget to express our thanks.

We need to remember that God deserves our gratitude.

Because of all that God has done for us, we should respond with an attitude of gratitude.

Let's say that together: Because of all that God has done for us, we should respond with an attitude of gratitude

This means that we need to live in a way that shows thankfulness to God for all that he has done.

We should take time in our day to thank Him when he protects us, guides us, or simply reminds us of His love.

We can show our thankfulness when we pause before lunch to thank God for providing food, or when we pause after a test to thank God for giving us wisdom.

When you realize what God is doing, take a moment to say 'thank you' to Him.

End Lesson

[Break up into small groups for discussion]

#### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

#### QUESTIONS

As a small group, discuss the lesson using the following questions:

Do you think the other 9 lepers were thankful for Jesus' healing? If so, why do you think they did not return to thank Him?

How hard do you think it was for the one man to leave the others and be different (return to Jesus)?

How do you think the others reacted to his actions?

Who do you identify with most in this story: the one man who returned or the nine who did not? Explain.

What excuses do people usually use for not being more thankful or saying 'thank you' more often?

What is one thing that God has recently done in your life that you could thank Him for today?