

# FOR TEENS: Giving Thanks (But to Whom and For What?)

Thanksgiving is a time for being thankful, but often we take too much for granted. This session will help teens focus on not only what they have to be thankful for, but also to whom they should be thankful.

Begin the session with the "following prayer:

*Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive for your bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

or the *Jashagestzook* in English: Let us in peace eat this meal, which is prepraed for us by the Lord. Blessed is the Lord in all his gifts. Amen.

Tell the teens that just as these prayers might be taken for granted, the same is true of what we should be thankful for.

## PART ONE

Distribute paper and have students write 3-5 items in each of the following ten categories. They will not be required to show this list to anyone, but will be asked to verbally share some of it with others.

- 1) favorite clothing
- 2) favorite jewelry
- 3) best friends
- 4) abilities of which you are most proud
- 5) favorite things in your room, such as stuffed animals, trophies, keep sakes, etc.
- 6) personality traits of which you are most proud
- 7) reasons you like living in this part of the country
- 8) reasons you are a Christian
- 9) things you most like about your church
- 10) reasons you like living in the present age

Before going on to Part Two, ask if anyone would like to reflect on how it felt to make this inventory. Was it hard for them to do? Were they surprised by what they wrote?



## PART TWO

Next have students reflect on each category to help them understand why they might be thankful for each item. Ask the following questions which correspond to each category:

- 1) Who gave you this article of clothing? Or who gave you the money to buy it? For what occasion did you get it? Why do you consider it so important?
- 2) When did you get this item? Who gave it to you? If you bought it yourself, where did you get the money? Why is it precious to you? How would you feel if it were lost or stolen?
- 3) How did the two of you meet? Why is this person a best friend? How long have you known each other? How long have you been best friends? When was the time you told this person how much she/he means to you?
- 4) Why are you proud of this ability? How did you learn to do it? Who taught you? Who has helped you become better? Have you used it to help others?
- 5) Would someone know that this item is important to you if he/she just walked into your room? How? Who gave you this item and for what reason? Is its value to you actual or sentimental?
- 6) Who in your family has the same strength? Who has recognized this in you and complimented you on it? How have you used this trait to help others?
- 7) How has this area made your life better? Who made this part of your world? Who are the people you enjoy it with? Do you waste environmental gifts or only take your fair share?
- 8) How did you become a Christian? What people role model Christianity for you? Are you a good Christian role model?
- 9) How did you come to this parish? What makes it different from others in town? Why is it special to you?
- 10) What modern conveniences could you not live without? How would your life be different without lights? Washers and dryers? Computers? Jet travel? Curling irons and hair dryers? Do you appreciate these conveniences?

### **PART THREE**

Now have each teen share with the group one thing he/she is thankful for. After everyone has a turn, go around again if you have time. Help the teens realize they have many areas in their lives for thanksgiving. Ask them to be especially aware during Thanksgiving week of all these things. Have them think about specific people in their lives for whom they should be grateful. Suggest they either speak to them directly or write them a letter expressing their gratefulness.