

THANKSGIVING LESSON PLAN

1. Rules and prayer (go over class rules; give thanks for the opportunity to learn together).
2. Songs:
 - If you're thankful and you know it clap your hands, stomp your feet, say "Thank you," do all three.
 - "I've Got the Joy"
3. Lesson: Thanksgiving

Give each student a small piece of candy. Note who says, "Thank you."

 - **What holiday is next week?** Thanksgiving!
 - **Did you remember to say, "Thank you," when I gave you a piece of candy?**
 - **How did our American Thanksgiving holiday begin?** (Take the following props/pictures out of bag one by one.) **Is it about pumpkins? Turkeys? Ships? Pilgrims? Indians?**

Traditionally the Thanksgiving holiday is traced to the Pilgrims (Separatists, who were seeking religious freedom) and others who sailed on the *Mayflower* from Holland/England and arrived at a place they named Plymouth Rock (Massachusetts) on December 11, 1620. They had a very difficult winter in this "New World." By the next fall (1621), 46 out of 102 were dead. However, they had a plentiful harvest and decided to celebrate with a feast, sharing their bounty with about 90 Indians who had helped them survive their first year. Thanksgiving was celebrated from time to time in America after this, but not yearly.
 - **Which President first proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving?**

President Abraham Lincoln declared a National Day of Thanksgiving for the last Thursday in November 1863 (over 200 years after the Pilgrim's first Thanksgiving). Every president after him declared a Day of Thanksgiving until Congress finally made it a legal holiday (fourth Thursday of each November) in 1941.
 - **It's important to express thanks to people and to God.**

Tell or read the story found in Luke 17:11-19.

 - 10 lepers – met Jesus but stood far away (**why?** Leprosy is contagious) – called out (have 10 students yell this: "Jesus, master, have mercy on us.")
 - Jesus said: "Go show yourselves to the priests." **Why?** (the Law required the priest to verify that a leper was truly cured before the leper was allowed back into the community)
 - So they lepers ran off. And as they went, they were cleansed/healed. One, as soon as he realized what had happened, returned to Jesus, praised God with a loud voice, bowed before Jesus, and gave him thanks.
 - **Have you ever received a really awesome gift?**
 - **Did you ever get so excited that you forgot to thank the giver?**
 - Jesus said, "Weren't 10 cleansed? Where are the other 9? No one returned to give God glory except this stranger (foreigner: Samaritan). Get up. Go your way. Your faith has made you whole." Leprosy often ate away skin; quite possibly this thankful man was the only one who was completely restored, not just healed of the disease.
 - **The Bible instructs us to be thankful (we're going to look up some verses about this in a minute). Thankful people are extra-specially blessed and joyful. What are you thankful for?** (have kids name some things now; tell them these will be used in the craft in a few minutes)
 - **Let's pray a prayer of thanksgiving.** (Pray together.)
4. Bible skills: Have the kids look up these verses in their Bibles and discuss.
 - Psalm 92:1
 - Psalm 100:4
5. Craft: Make Thanksgiving paper chains. You will need at least 10 paper strips and 10 Thanksgiving stickers per student, tape, crayons.

Using crayons, write or draw something for which you are thankful on each of your paper strips. Then make a loop with a paper strip, using a sticker (or tape) to secure. Then loop your other paper strips to form a chain. You can take the chain home and continue to add to it. How many things can you and your family think of to be thankful for? How long can you make your chain?