YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

THANKSGIVING · GRATITUDE



WEEK 1 OF 3

The One Who Came Back

Theme: Gratitude · Main text: Luke 17:11–19

ENOUGH.

Gratitude changes what you see.

Inside: 45 / 60 / 75-minute plans · word-for-word scripts · 4 game options · response activity · Joys & Concerns · 3 student pages

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WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

The One Who Came Back

Theme: Gratitude · Main text: Luke 17:11–19 · Memory verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

THE BIG IDEA

Ten were healed; one came back to say thank you. Gratitude is noticing what God has done and turning around to thank him.

The question to carry all night

"What if I already have enough?"

By the end, students will…

- Notice specific good things they usually walk right past
- See that the one who came back noticed first, then turned around
- Write their first **Gratitude Jar** slips and start **My Enough List**

NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	45 MIN	60 MIN	75 MIN
Welcome	Greet new students by name and grade; your announcements	—	—	5
Game 1	Pick from the Activity Menu (next page)	8	10	10
Game 2	A second game from the menu (optional)	—	—	10
Hook + Message	"Held the Door" · Luke 17:11–19 · 1 Thessalonians 5:18	10	12	12
Response Activity	Coming Back: first Gratitude Jar slips + My Enough List	10	12	12
Small Group Talk	Pick 3–4 questions	—	8	10
Joys & Concerns	"I lift up ___ to God." / "Lord, hear our prayer."	10	10	10
Pastoral Prayer	Leader prays over what was shared + send-off	5	5	5

The Gratitude Jar (all three weeks): one big clear jar with a "Gratitude Jar" label. Each week students add two slips: one thank-you to God and one about a person. Slips are unsigned; a writer who is okay with a slip being read aloud draws a ★ on it. In Week 3, at a simple Thanksgiving feast (students never bring anything; leaders check allergies), leaders read pre-screened ★ slips aloud anonymously. Keep the jar in the room every week.

Supplies

- A large clear jar, a label, and a stack of small paper slips
- Paper and pens for teams (Game B)
- A paper "trophy" or a spoon to use as a mic (Game C)
- Upbeat music for walking (Game A, optional)
- Student pages (last 3 pages) · Bibles · phone timer

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read Luke 17:11–19 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18
- Write your own two jar slips so you can go first
- Practice the "Held the Door" hook out loud once
- Pray for each student by name, especially anyone new or anyone who dreads the holidays

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CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOUR GROUP

Activity Menu

Every group is different. Some nights you have fifteen students bouncing off the walls; some nights you have four quiet ones and a visitor. Pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every game tonight is about noticing good things and saying thanks, and every debrief points back to tonight's question.

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Turn Around, Say Thanks Mingle, turn back, answer a thank-you question	High	Open space	Students need to move; everyone talks to everyone	10
B. Ten Healed, Ten Thank-Yous Race to list ten specific thank-yous	Medium	Paper, pens	Some competition; strongest link to the message	10–12
C. The Nobody-Said-Thanks Awards Award speeches for unthanked heroes	Medium	Spoon "mic"	Your group loves to laugh and ham it up	10–12
D. Didn't Notice Till It Broke Stories of things missed once gone	Low	None	Small or quiet group; zero prep time	8–10
E. Coming Back Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Jar, slips	Every night: the heart of the week	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Turn Around, Say Thanks → B. Ten Healed, Ten Thank-Yous → Message → E. Coming Back

Small group (4–6)

D. Didn't Notice Till It Broke (whole group) → Message → E. Coming Back in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

A. Turn Around, Say Thanks → C. The Nobody-Said-Thanks Awards → Message → E. Coming Back (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

B. Ten Healed, Ten Thank-Yous → Message → E. Coming Back → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. We never compare what people have: no "who got the best stuff," no talk about money, houses, or how big anyone's Thanksgiving is. If a game starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

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A. Turn Around, Say Thanks

10 min · High energy

Purpose: A fast mingle game built on tonight's story. Everyone walks in one direction, like the ten men walking down the road. When the leader calls "Turn back!", everyone turns around, and when the leader calls "Thank you!", students grab the nearest person and answer a quick thank-you question. Nobody is ever out. Students talk to almost everyone in the room, and they practice the exact move the one man made: turn around and say thanks.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Everyone walks (no running) in a big loop around the room, all in the same direction. Play music if you have it.
2. The leader calls **"Turn back!"** Everyone turns and walks the other way. Call it a few times to keep people laughing.
3. The leader calls **"Thank you!"** and a number (2, 3, or 4). Students freeze and form a group that size with the people closest to them.
4. The leader reads a **Thank-You Question** (list below). Everyone in the group answers in one sentence. About 60 seconds.
5. Leftover players join the nearest group, or the leader joins them. Then "Keep walking!" Play 8–10 rounds, always with new people.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Everybody's walking down the road together, same direction, like a big parade. When I yell 'Turn back!', spin around and walk the other way. When I yell 'Thank you!' and a number, freeze and make a group that size with whoever's closest. I'll read a question, and everybody in your group answers. Rule: every round, find at least one person you haven't been with yet. Nobody's out. Ready? Start walking…"
>
> "Turn back! … Turn back! … Thank you, two! Your question: *What's a food you're always thankful for, no matter what?*"

THANK-YOU QUESTIONS (ONE PER ROUND)

- What's a food you're always thankful for, no matter what?
- What's the best thing that happened to you this week?
- What's a song that instantly puts you in a good mood?
- Who taught you something useful, like riding a bike or tying a tie?
- What's the best "small thing" in your day: a nap, a snack, a hoodie?
- What's something at school you'd actually miss if it disappeared?
- Best weather: snow day, first warm day, or a thunderstorm?
- What's an animal you're thankful exists?
- What's something you're good at that you're glad you can do?
- When did someone help you and you never said thanks?

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VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Skip the walking. Sit in a circle. The leader says "Turn back!" and everyone switches seats with someone; then the leader reads a question and everyone answers.
- **Loud voice round:** In honor of the man who came back "glorifying God with a loud voice," one round's group answers the question in their best stadium-announcer voice.
- **Pass with thanks:** Anyone who wants to pass just says "Thank you, next!" and the group moves on with a smile.

LEADER NOTE *Group sizes can leave someone alone fast. Watch the edges. Call numbers that fit your crowd, and jump in yourself so nobody ever stands by themselves.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Every time I said 'Turn back,' you turned. Easy. Tonight we're going to meet a man who did that for real. He turned around on a road to say thank you, and he was the only one out of ten who did. We're starting a series called ENOUGH, and every week we'll ask one question: **what if I already have enough?**"

B. Ten Healed, Ten Thank-Yous

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: A team race with a gratitude twist. Teams of 3–4 race to list ten *specific* thank-yous in a category. "Food" doesn't count; "my grandpa's pancakes" does. Then each team picks the one thank-you on their list they would actually go back and say out loud, and tells the story. It sets up the message perfectly: ten were healed, and only one came back.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into teams of 3–4. New students team up with a regular. Each team gets paper and a pen.
2. The leader announces a **category**. Teams have 90 seconds to write ten specific thank-yous that fit it.
3. The **specific rule:** every item has to be specific enough that a stranger could picture it. Leaders can call "Too vague!" with a smile.
4. When time's up, each team circles the **One That Comes Back**: the one thank-you they'd actually go say to someone. One teammate tells the story behind it (about 45 seconds).
5. Play 4–5 categories. A team that hits all ten gets a point; a great story gets a bonus point from the leader.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Teams of three or four. Here's the deal: I give you a category, and you have ninety seconds to write ten things you're thankful for in that category. But they have to be specific. 'Food'? Too vague. 'The cheesy breadsticks at the gas station by my house'? Perfect. Ready? Category one: *things that make school bearable*. Go!"

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> "Time! Pens down. Now look at your list and circle the one you'd actually go back and say thank you for. Who's telling that story?"

CATEGORIES + TALK QUESTIONS

CATEGORY (TEN SPECIFIC THANK-YOUS)	TALK QUESTION (AFTER THE TEAM PICKS ONE)
Things that make school bearable	"Who at school makes your day better without trying?"
Foods you'd defend in an argument	"Who makes or buys your favorite food?"
Things in your bedroom	"What's one thing you own that has a story?"
Sounds you love	"What sound means 'home' to you?"
Things your body can do	"What's something you can do now that you couldn't do a year ago?"
People who helped you this year (first names or roles)	"Did any of them ever hear you say thanks?"
Things outside you can see, hear, or smell	"Where's your favorite place to be outside?"
Things that happened today	"What was the best five minutes of your day?"
Bridge round: Things God has done for you (anything counts)	"Was this list harder or easier than the others? Why?" Lead into the debrief.

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Play as one team against the clock. Everyone shouts out items while the leader writes, then each person picks their own "one that comes back."
- **Alphabet round:** Ten thank-yous that each start with a different letter, A through J.
- **Steal round:** After time, teams read their lists. Any item another team also wrote gets crossed off. Specific beats general every time.

LEADER NOTE *Keep categories about everyday things, not stuff people buy. Never use categories like "best gifts" or "things you own that cost a lot." If a student says "nothing" for a category, laugh with them and help: "Okay, what about the chair you're sitting on? That counts."*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "You just wrote down dozens of good things in a few minutes, and most of them you walked right past today. Ten things on a list is easy. Going back to say thank you for even one of them? That's rarer. Tonight we'll meet ten people who got the best gift of their lives, and only one came back. Keep this question in your head: **what if I already have enough?**"

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C. The Nobody-Said-Thanks Awards

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: A ridiculous award show for the everyday heroes nobody ever thanks: the bus driver, the lunch staff, socks without holes, the person who refills the toilet paper. Students nominate, then give over-the-top thank-you speeches. Underneath the laughs, students learn who actually helps each other's lives run, and they get a feel for the nine who walked away without a word.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Sit in trios. Each trio gets an **Award Category** from the list below (or picks one).
2. In 2 minutes, each person names their nominee for that category, and the trio picks a winner together.
3. One trio member (a volunteer) gives a 30-second thank-you speech to the winner, award-show style, with the "trophy" or spoon mic. Big drama is encouraged.
4. After each speech, the leader asks the trio one real question: "Has anyone ever actually thanked this person or thing?"
5. Play 2–3 rounds, rotating who gives the speech. Nobody has to give one.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Welcome to the first annual Nobody-Said-Thanks Awards! Tonight we honor the heroes nobody ever thanks. Each trio gets a category. Everybody nominates someone or something, you pick a winner, and one of you comes up and gives the thank-you speech of a lifetime. Tears are welcome. Let me show you. *(Grab the mic.)* The award for Most Underappreciated Kitchen Item goes to… the can opener! Can opener, you've been there for every can of soup. You never complain. Thank you!"

AWARD CATEGORIES

- Best Unthanked Person at School
- Most Underappreciated Thing in Your House
- Hardest-Working Person Nobody Sees
- Best Supporting Pet
- Most Reliable Piece of Clothing
- Best Driver (who drives you places)
- Greatest Invention You Use Every Day
- Person Who Taught You Something Without Trying
- Most Faithful Snack
- Lifetime Achievement: Someone Who's Always Been There

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One circle. Everyone nominates for the same category, the group votes, and the leader gives the first speech to warm things up.
- **Shy group:** Trios write their speech on paper, and the leader reads them all out loud in dramatic voice.
- **Real thank-you round:** Last round, students name a real person in the room or the church who deserves the award. Only positive, and only if the person's okay with it.

LEADER NOTE *Keep it about gratitude, not roasting. If a nominee becomes a joke about someone in the room, steer it back: "Let's thank somebody, not tease them." Some students may not have a parent who drives them or a pet at home; that's why every category has lots of options.*

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DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Those were amazing speeches. But here's the funny part: most of the people we just thanked have never heard a single word of it. It's easy to receive good things and keep walking. Tonight we'll meet one guy who didn't keep walking. And we'll ask: **what if I already have enough?**"

D. Didn't Notice Till It Broke

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm, funny, story-based game for small or quiet groups. Students trade stories about ordinary things they never noticed until they broke, ran out, or went missing: the Wi-Fi, hot water, their voice, a working zipper. Everyone has these stories, so nobody looks weird. It shows how much good we walk past every day, which is exactly where the message goes: the one man *saw* that he was healed.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Sit in trios (or one circle for small groups).
2. The leader reads a **Broke Moment** from the list. Anyone who has lived it raises a hand, and one volunteer tells the quick story.
3. The trio answers: "On a normal day, does anybody ever say thanks for this?" (The answer is almost always no.)
4. After a few rounds, each person shares one "didn't notice till it broke" moment of their own that isn't on the list.
5. Finish with the Bridge question.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "Some things are so normal we never notice them until they stop working. I'll read one. If it's happened to you, raise your hand, and somebody tell the story. I'll go first: once the power went out at my house for a whole day. I kept walking into rooms and flipping the light switch. Every time. I had never once thanked God for a light switch."

BROKE MOMENTS

- The Wi-Fi went down
- You lost your voice
- The hot water ran out mid-shower
- You hurt a finger, ankle, or wrist
- Your zipper or backpack strap broke
- You were stuck without your glasses or charger
- The heat or air conditioning quit
- You had a cold and couldn't taste food
- Your bike or ride broke down
- The microwave, toaster, or fridge stopped working

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One circle. Everyone tells one story, and the group votes on "Most Underrated Thing We Should Thank God For."

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- **Flip it:** Add a round of "Didn't notice till it was fixed": the cast came off, the power came back, a cold finally ended.

LEADER NOTE *Keep this game about things and everyday comforts. If a story turns to losing a person or a home, thank them gently and say, "That's a big one. Thank you for trusting us with it." Move on with care and follow up later (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"Most of what we're thankful for is invisible until it's gone. Tonight's story is about a man who noticed what God did for him while it was still fresh, and he turned right around to say so. Hold onto this question tonight: **what if I already have enough?**"

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Hook: "Held the Door"

2 min

SAY

(Stand by the door and hold it open, like you're waiting for a crowd.) "Okay, real question. Have you ever held a door for somebody, and then another person comes, and another, and suddenly you're the official doorman for twelve people? And how many say thank you?" *(Let them answer.)* "Yeah. Maybe one. And you remember that one person, right? 'That one has manners.'"

"Now the honest part. Raise your hand if you've ever been one of the eleven who walked through without saying anything." *(Raise your own hand.)* "Me too. Not because we're terrible people. We just didn't notice."

"Tonight we're starting a three-week series called **ENOUGH**, leading up to Thanksgiving. And it's not a 'be more thankful, you ungrateful kids' talk. I promise. It's about something better: gratitude changes what you see. Every week we'll ask one question: **what if I already have enough?**"

LEADER NOTE *Keep the hook light and quick. The point is that everyone, leaders included, walks past good things without noticing. No shame, just a laugh of recognition.*

Message: Ten Healed, One Came Back

10 min

1. Ten people with nothing left

SAY

"Jesus is walking toward Jerusalem, and as he comes into a village, he meets ten men. Listen to where they're standing:"

> [11] *As he was on his way to Jerusalem, he was passing along the borders of Samaria and*
> *Galilee.* [12] *As he entered into a certain village, ten men who were lepers met him, who stood*
> *at a distance.* [13] *They lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"*
>
> LUKE 17:11–13 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Leprosy was a skin disease, and back then it meant you had to live away from everybody. Away from your family, your friends, your town. If you saw someone coming, you had to stand far back and call out from a distance. So these ten have lost almost everything: health, home, hugs, the normal stuff. All they can do is yell, 'Jesus, have mercy on us!'"

2. All ten were healed

SAY

"And Jesus answers them:"

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[14] *When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." As they went, they were cleansed.*

LUKE 17:14 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

> "Back then, the priest was the one who could say, 'You're clean, you can go home.' So Jesus is basically saying, 'Go get your life back.' And somewhere on the road, they look down, and their skin is healed. All ten of them. Not just the polite one. Jesus is generous to all ten, even the nine who will never come back. That tells you something about God: he gives good gifts all the time, whether we notice or not."

3. One noticed, and turned around

> **SAY**
> "Now watch what one of them does:"

[15] *One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice.* [16] *He fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan.*

LUKE 17:15–16 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

> "Two words. First, he *saw*. He noticed what had happened to him. Second, he *turned back*. He stopped going where he was going and went back to Jesus. That's gratitude: noticing what God has done, and turning around to thank him."
>
> "And here's the surprise: he was a Samaritan. Back then, Samaritans were the outsiders. People looked down on them. The guy everyone expected the least from is the one who came back. Gratitude isn't for the people who have it all together. It's for anyone who notices."

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about a time you walked past something good without noticing, then finally saw it and said thanks (to God or to someone), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Keep it about noticing, not about having more. Students trust leaders who go first.*

4. Where are the nine?

> **SAY**
> "Then Jesus asks a question that's almost funny:"

[17] *Jesus answered, "Weren't the ten cleansed? But where are the nine?* [18] *Were there none found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"* [19] *Then he said to him, "Get up, and go your way. Your faith has healed you."*

LUKE 17:17–19 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

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"Where are the nine? Probably running home. Hugging people. Living their lives. Not evil, just busy. They got the gift and missed the Giver. But the one who came back got something extra: he met Jesus face to face and heard, 'Your faith has healed you.' He got more than clear skin. He got a relationship."

"Our memory verse is from Paul:"

In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Notice it says *in* everything, not *for* everything. You don't have to be thankful for the hard stuff. If something in your life really hurts, God isn't asking you to pretend it doesn't. But even in the hard stuff, you can look for what God is still giving. That changes what you see."

"So this week, be the one who comes back. Notice one good thing, and turn around and say thanks. And keep asking yourself: **what if I already have enough?**"

E. Response Activity: Coming Back

12 min

Purpose: Help students do exactly what the one man did: notice specific things God has given, then turn around and say thanks. Tonight they write their first two **Gratitude Jar** slips (one thank-you to God and one about a person) and start **My Enough List**. The jar fills up for three weeks, and in Week 3, at a simple Thanksgiving feast night, leaders will read the starred slips aloud (anonymous, and only the ones students said yes to) and we'll see how much was there all along.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Hold up the empty Gratitude Jar. Explain: two slips every week, and in Week 3 we'll read them together.
2. **The Noticing Check:** On student page 1, students fill in one specific thing for each row. Nobody shares the page.
3. **Turn around:** Students circle one row and write two slips: one starting "God, thank you for…" and one starting "I'm thankful for (a person) because…" No signatures; use a first name or a role for the person ("my coach"). Draw a ★ on any slip you're okay with being read aloud in Week 3.
4. **Come back to the jar:** Students walk up and drop their slips in. Leaders go first. Anyone can fold their slip as small as they like.
5. **My Enough List · Week 1:** On student page 2, students write three specific thank-yous to keep.
6. **My One Step:** Students fill in "My One Step This Week" on student page 2.

LEADER SCRIPT

SAY (THE JAR)

"This is our Gratitude Jar. Right now it's empty. Every week of this series, each of us is going to add two thank-yous: one to God, one about a person. In three weeks we'll have a Thanksgiving feast night, and we'll read some of them out loud. Don't sign your slips. If you're okay with one being read, draw a star on it. No star, nobody reads it. I want you to see how full it gets."

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SAY (NOTICING CHECK)

"First, notice. On page 1, find the Noticing Check. For each row, write one specific thing. Not 'my family'; something like 'my sister drove me to practice.' If a row is hard, skip it. This is between you and God."

SAY (TURN AROUND)

"Now turn around. Circle one row, and write two slips. One says, 'God, thank you for…' The other says, 'I'm thankful for ___ because…' Use a first name or something like 'my coach.' Star it if it's okay to read in Week 3. Then, like the man in the story, come back. Walk up and put them in the jar. I'll go first."

SAY (ENOUGH LIST + ONE STEP)

"Last thing. On page 2, write three specific thank-yous in My Enough List. Then write your one step: one person you'll actually go back and thank this week. Bring that page next week."

Specific slip ideas (read aloud if stuck)

- God, thank you for the warm bus this morning
- God, thank you for my dog waiting at the door
- I'm thankful for my coach because she didn't give up on me
- I'm thankful for the lunch staff because they know my name
- I'm thankful for my friend because he texted me first

"Be the one who comes back" step ideas

- Thank one teacher, coach, or driver out loud this week
- Before bed, tell God three specific thank-yous
- Text one person, "Hey, thanks for ___"
- Pray my memory verse every morning before school
- Notice one thing I usually walk past, every day

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. Each person may say one thank-you out loud (or pass), then everyone folds their slips and walks them to the jar together.
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the walking up. Pass the jar around the circle while music plays, and the leader prays one prayer over everyone: "God, help us notice what you've done, and come back to say thanks."
- **New in Week 2 or 3?** New students can join anytime. Their slips go in the same jar and count just the same.

LEADER NOTE *Never read the slips tonight, and never ask who wrote what. Store the jar somewhere safe between weeks. Some students may struggle to name anything, especially if home is hard right now. "Thank you for this group" or "thank you for a warm room" is a real thank-you. If a student seems really stuck or sad, check in quietly afterward (see the Care Note).*

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DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Look at that jar. Five minutes ago it was empty. Nothing in this room changed. We just noticed. That's what gratitude does: it doesn't change what you have, it changes what you see. So here's the question for the week: **what if I already have enough?**"

Small Group Talk

8–10 min · Optional

Groups of 3–5, with one adult or student leader per group if possible. Pick 3–4 questions that fit your group.

WARM UP

1. What's something small that made you smile this week?
   Follow-up: Did you notice it in the moment, or just now?
2. Who's the best "thank-you" person you know, the one who always notices?
   Keep it light. It's a warm-up.

GO DEEPER

3. All ten were healed, but only one came back. Why do you think the other nine kept walking?
   Have you ever been one of the nine?
4. The man "saw that he was healed" before he turned back. What makes it hard to notice the good things God gives us?
   Busy? Distracted? Used to it?
5. The one who came back was an outsider, a Samaritan. Why do you think Luke made a point of telling us that?
6. Paul says give thanks *in* everything, not *for* everything. What's the difference?
   No need to share a hard thing. Just talk about the idea.

TAKE IT HOME

7. Who is one person you've never really thanked? What would you say to them?
8. What would change this week if you noticed one good thing every day?

LEADER NOTE *Silence is okay. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself briefly and honestly, then ask again. Never ask students to compare what they have or what their holidays look like.*

Joys & Concerns

10 min

Purpose: Students practice praying *for each other*, not just hearing about prayer. It's often the moment new students realize this group actually cares about them. Tonight it fits the theme perfectly: we start with joys, like the one man who came back to say thank you, and then we bring God the things that still hurt.

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HOW IT WORKS

1. Sit in a circle if you can. Explain the response: when someone shares, they end with "**I lift up ___ to God.**" Everyone responds together: "**Lord, hear our prayer.**"
2. Start with **joys** (things to thank God for), then move to **concerns** (things we're worried about or carrying).
3. The leader goes first to model it, with one joy and one concern.
4. Anyone can share, or pass. "Unspoken" requests are welcome, too.
5. Jot down what's shared (first names only) so you can pray for each one in the Pastoral Prayer.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Tonight we heard about one man who came back to Jesus and said thank you out loud. So let's be the ones who come back. We'll start with joys: what's something good God has done, big or small? Then we'll bring the things we're carrying, for you, your family, or a friend. Thankful and hurting can sit right next to each other here."
>
> "When you share, end with 'I lift up ___ to God.' And all of us will say together, 'Lord, hear our prayer.' Let's practice. I lift up this group to God…" (*All: "Lord, hear our prayer."*)
>
> "I'll go first. My joy is ___. I lift up ___ to God. My concern is ___. I lift up ___ to God."

Joy starters (if students are stuck)

- Something specific that went right this week
- Someone who helped me and I want to thank God for
- My team, club, or band had a good week
- Someone I love got good news

Concern starters

- A test, a project, or a stressful week
- Someone I love who is sick or hurting
- The holidays feel hard for me or my family
- "I have an unspoken request."

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle so everyone gets a turn, and everyone is allowed to pass.
- **Big group (12+):** "Popcorn" style: anyone shares when ready. Cap it at about 8 minutes.
- **Written version:** Students write joys and concerns on slips of paper. The leader reads them (no names) and the group responds.

LEADER NOTE *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note). Concerns are never "less thankful." Make room for both.*

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Pastoral Prayer

3–5 min

Pray this over the group. The **[bracketed]** lines are where you name the joys and concerns students just shared.

Generous God,

Thank you for every person in this room, especially anyone here for the very first time. Like the one man who came back, we turn around tonight to say thank you. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Maya's good news, for Chris's great week..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

And we bring you the things we're carrying. *[Name the concerns: "Be with Ethan's grandma. Give Sophia peace about her family this month..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

Jesus, you were generous to all ten, even the ones who never came back. You are generous to us every day, and so often we walk right past it. Open our eyes to see what you've already given us. Teach us to turn around and say thank you, to you and to the people in our lives. And when life is hard, help us give thanks in it, even when we can't give thanks for it.

Help anyone new feel at home, and help each of us be the one who comes back this week. In Jesus' name, amen.

SEND-OFF

"Take your student pages home. Be the one who comes back: thank somebody for real this week. Next week we'll add two more slips to the jar and talk about the feeling of always wanting more, and the secret Paul learned. In two weeks we'll have our Thanksgiving feast night, and you don't need to bring anything but yourself. It's called '**Learning Content.**' And every week we'll keep asking: **what if I already have enough?** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 by asking students to look at their One Step tracker and My Enough List. "Did anybody come back and thank someone this week? What happened? How did they react?" Celebrate any thank-you, even a tiny one. Bring out the Gratitude Jar with extra slips for new students, and start asking families quietly about food allergies for the Week 3 feast.

Care Note for Leaders

Thanksgiving is not a happy season for everyone. Never imply that a hurting student just needs to be more thankful. Respond calmly, and never ask for details in front of others.

- **Grief and hard holidays:** An empty chair, a first holiday after a loss, or a student still waiting for healing (this week's story is about healing). Name it gently: "It's okay if this season is hard."
- **Food insecurity:** Some students don't have enough food at home. Never ask about meals or plans. Quietly connect the family with your church's care ministry or local food resources, with dignity.
- **Family conflict, divorce, or two-home holidays:** Don't assume one family table. Listen; don't try to fix it.
- **Comparison and money stress:** Never compare what students have. Their worth was never about stuff.
- **Safety: Don't promise to keep secrets** if someone's safety is at risk. **Follow your church's safety policy** and tell your lead pastor the same day. Connect students to parents or guardians, a school counselor, or a licensed counselor. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

You're not expected to be a counselor. Listen well, take it seriously, and connect them to the right people.

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THE FULL SERIES

ENOUGH · 3 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week. Taught in order, the three weeks lead into Thanksgiving: noticing and thanking God, learning contentment in a world that always wants more, and celebrating the Shepherd who gives more than enough. The question every week: *What if I already have enough?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**The One Who Came Back** Gratitude	Luke 17:11–19
2	**Learning Content** Contentment vs. always wanting more	Philippians 4:10–13
3	**More Than Enough** Thanksgiving: God provides	Psalm 23

Every week includes

- 45 / 60 / 75-minute schedules
- Activity Menu with 4+ game options
- Word-for-word leader scripts
- Scripture (World English Bible) and one big idea
- Response activity + "One Step" challenge
- Gratitude Jar slips every week and a Thanksgiving feast night
- Tiered discussion questions
- Joys & Concerns prayer time
- Pastoral prayer with space for your group
- Student pages and 5-day devotional
- Next-week follow-up

Built for real youth groups

These weeks are written for a real Wednesday night group: 5 to 15 students, often with a new face or two, led by a pastor or volunteer with limited prep time. Games never single anyone out. Every activity has a small-group version. And every leader script can be read word for word when you're short on time.

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Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (public domain).

Name: _____ Date: _____

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

Ten were healed; one came back to say thank you. Gratitude is noticing what God has done and turning around to thank him.

THE STORY · LUKE 17:12, 14–15, 17

"_____ men who were lepers met him, who stood at a distance."

"As they went, they were _____."

"One of them, when he _____ that he was healed, _____ _____."

"But where are the _____?"

THE NOTICING CHECK

Private, just you and God. Write one **specific** thing for each row (skip any row that's hard). Then **circle** the one you most want to turn around and say thanks for.

SOMETHING GOOD…	SPECIFIC THING I NOTICED	SAID THANKS?
From today		☐
About a person who helps me		☐
Something my body can do		☐
A place I like to be		☐
A small, everyday thing		☐
Where God showed up in something hard		☐
Something I didn't notice till it broke		☐

IN EVERYTHING · 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

"In _____ give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you."

One thing I want to turn around and thank God for this week:

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MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

This week I will be the one who comes back and thank

_____ for _____

Example: "This week I will thank my bus driver for getting me to school safe every morning."

My Enough List · Week 1

Three specific thank-yous from this week. Not "my family," but "my brother made me a sandwich." Your Gratitude Jar slips (one to God, one about a person) can come right from this list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you noticed something good and said thanks.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

MY PRAYER LIST

Write down the joys and concerns people shared tonight (first names only) and keep praying this week.

JOYS: THANK YOU, GOD, FOR…	CONCERNS: PLEASE BE WITH…

✂ CUT OUT AND KEEP IN YOUR PHONE CASE, WALLET, OR BIBLE

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

This week I'm coming back to thank: _____

My step: M ☐ T ☐ W ☐ T ☐ F ☐ S ☐ S ☐

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5 Days of Coming Back

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. That's it.

DAY 1 Luke 17:15 · He saw, and turned back

The man noticed first, then turned around. What's one good thing from today you almost missed? Thank God for it.

DAY 2 Psalm 103:2 · Don't forget

The psalmist reminds himself, "Praise Yahweh, my soul, and don't forget all his benefits." Make a quick list of three good things God has done for you this year. Which one had you forgotten?

DAY 3 James 1:17 · Every good gift

Every good gift is "from above." Who is one person God used to bring something good into your life? How could you thank them?

DAY 4 Lamentations 3:22–23 · New every morning

God's mercies are "new every morning," even on hard days. What's one good thing you can find in a hard part of your week?

DAY 5 1 Thessalonians 5:18 · In everything

In everything, not *for* everything. Where do you need help giving thanks right now? Tell God honestly.

A prayer you can pray this week

God, you give me so much, and so often I walk right past it. Open my eyes to see what you've already done. Help me be the one who comes back, to you and to the people you've put in my life. Thank you that with you, I have enough. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **Learning Content**

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