# TEACHING THANKFULNESS

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At the supper each night, my family would take turns answering, "What was one way that God blessed you today?" One child might say that a friend helped him at school. Another might comment that she had fun at dress rehearsal. But at one point, we had to make a rule that no one at the table could say "This supper!" Although the meal was indeed something for which to be thankful, my wife and I were trying to teach our children to find God's blessings throughout their day- at school, at sports practice and together at home.

How do you encourage your child to be thankful? I Thessalonians 5:18 says to give thanks **in all circumstances**. This is easy when we've just eaten a delicious meal or had a good day. But it can be difficult—for kids and parents alike—to give thanks always, especially in the hard times. Here's some tips to help cultivate thankfulness in your family.

**1. Practice Thankfulness**

At your family's evening meal time (or whenever you're consistently altogether in one place), go around the table and ask each person to share one good thing about their day. It doesn't have to be a very special thing, just something positive. Then give thanks for the ways that God has blessed your family that day. You may find that this practice will cause family members to share even more about their day.

**2. Pray Prayers of Gratitude**

Consider a weekly practice of thanking God as a family in prayer.This can be a time of free prayer or you can use a prayer prompt.

- **Alphabet Prayer**—Go through the Alphabet and thank God for who he is. "Thank you God for being **Awesome**. Thank you God for being **Beautiful**. Thank you God for **Caring**…"
- **Popsicle Prayer**—Have a jar of popsicle sticks in the center of your table. Each stick has a name of a person, ministry, or other "daily bread" item. Each member of the family pulls a random stick out of the jar and prays a prayer of thanksgiving for the person or item, "Thank you for Pastor Jenny and her work translating Bibles for the people in..." or "Thank you for Grandpa and Grandma..."

**3. Read and Share Bible Verses about Being Thankful**

Search "Bible verses about thanksgiving" and you'll find tons of sites with hundreds of verse suggestions. Do a deep dive with your children or check out some of the verses listed here: Numbers 6:24–26; Psalm 8: 1-9; Psalm 28:7; John 6:11; 1 Chronicles 16:34–35; Psalm 7:17; 1 Chronicles 29:13; Psalm 100:1–4; Jonah 2:9; Jeremiah 30:19; 2 Corinthians 9:11; Colossians 3:15–17. Read thanksgiving verses together often and look for opportunities to share these scriptures with each other via text or a handwritten note.

Giving thanks in all circumstances can be a challenge, but by regularly practicing thankfulness, giving thanks in prayer, and reading Scripture, your child can grow in gratitude and even begin to give thanks when the day is hard and not so good.

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article Living Daily in Gratitude

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