



# A 50-minute Teen Bible Study

## Materials needed

*3 x 5 cards,  
pencils, newsprint,  
masking tape, Bibles,  
Bible commentary,  
Bible dictionary*

### Thanksgiving Associations

*10 minutes*

As students enter, provide each with a 3x5 card and a pencil. Have them form groups of 2's and/or 3's. Ask them to write on the card five words they associate with thanksgiving. Now have students share their five words with their group. Ask that each person then share his/her most memorable Thanksgiving Day.

### Creating Definitions

*5 minutes*

Give each group a piece of newsprint and a marker. Invite each group to create a definition of Thanksgiving suitable for Webster's dictionary, based on their word associations and memorable celebrations. When the definition is completed, ask that it be written in large letters on the newsprint and posted on the wall.

### Exploring the Bible

*20 minutes*

Assign the following biblical passages to each group. If there are less than 10 groups, leave out readings from the bottom of the list. Have Bible commentary and dictionary available for use.

**Group 1:** Leviticus 7:11-15

Leviticus 22:29-30

II Chronicles 33:10-17

**Group 2:** I Chronicles 25:1-3

II Chronicles 5:11-14

**Group 3:** Nehemiah 11:1-3, 15-18

Nehemiah 12:8, 44-46

**Group 4:** Psalm 26:1-7

Psalm 42:4

Psalm 50:7-15, 23

**Group 5:** Isaiah 51:1-3

Jeremiah 30:18-19

Jonah 2:1-9

**Group 6:** Ephesians 5:1-4

Philippians 4:4-7

Colossians 2:6-7

Colossians 4:2-4

**Group 7:** I Timothy 4:1-5

Revelation 7:9-13

**Group 8:** I Corinthians 14:13-19

II Corinthians 4:13-15

II Corinthians 9:6-14

**Group 9:** Psalm 69:29-33

Psalm 95:1-3; Psalm 100

**Group 10:** Psalm 107:17-22

Psalm 116:17-19; Psalm 147:7-11

Post the following questions as a focus for reading and discussion of passages. These might be taped on the wall or printed on assignment sheets along with the passages to study.

- Who are the players in the drama of thanksgiving?
- What are the reasons for thanksgiving?
- What are the acts of thanksgiving?
- What is the setting for the acts of thanksgiving?
- What are the results of thanksgiving?

### Creating Definitions

*5 minutes*

Now have groups create a definition of thanksgiving, suitable for Webster's, based on their biblical study. Distribute pieces of newsprint and markers and invite them to write in large letters their definitions. Hang these definitions on the wall near the definitions from earlier in the session.

### Group Discussion

*10 minutes*

Discuss by asking the following questions:

- What is in the definitions that you expected?
- What is in the definitions that you did not expect?
- What strikes you about thanksgiving in its biblical setting?
- What thoughts do you have about thanksgiving in its modern context?
- Will there be a change in your personal celebration of Thanksgiving this year as a result of our study today?



# thanksgiving

*Use these 15-minute lessons to help children thank God for the gift of their bodies*

## Preschool-Kindergarten

**1. Classy Bodies**—Say: Today, we're going to celebrate Thanksgiving by celebrating a gift that God has given us for every day—our bodies.

Have children work together to create a "class body." Have each child contribute one part of his or her body by tracing an outline, then labeling, cutting out, and attaching it to the larger body. For example, one child traces his trunk and another child traces her elbow. Connect all the body parts until you've created an entire body.

**2. Wonderfully Made**—Read aloud Psalm 139:14 from the New International Version. Have each

child touch his or her part on the class body and tell at least one good use for this body part. For example, a child may say "God has given me my hand to help others," or "God gives me my ears to listen to my parents."

**3. Say It's So**—Place a long strip of masking tape on the floor. The tape must be long enough so each child can stand on it with some space for jumping. Stand at one end of the tape line and



have children face you. Establish right side and left side with the children. Then tell them you'll read some statements. If the answer for them is yes, they must jump to the right of the line. If the answer is no, they must jump to the left of the line.

Use these statements (add more if you'd like):

- *We show thanks to God for our mouths when we smile.*
- *We show thanks to God for our bodies when we eat junk food.*
- *We show thanks to God for our hands when we hit someone.*
- *We show thanks to God for our feet when we kick someone.*
- *We show thanks to God for our mind when we read Bible stories.*
- *We show thanks to God for our feet when we visit a friend.*
- *We show thanks to God for our mouths when we yell.*
- *We show thanks to God for our bodies when we exercise.*
- *We show thanks to God for our hands when we make a gift for someone.*
- *We show thanks to God for our mind when we watch lots of television.*

**4. Snack**—See "Food for Thought."

**5. Body Sculptures**—Have children touch a part of their bodies for which they especially want to give thanks to God. Have them freeze in that position. Now have each child name one thing he or she will do for others with that body part. When finished, stand together, holding hands, and repeat the first part of Psalm 139:14 together at least four times. End with a big amen and a group hug.

### Grades 1-3

**1. Make-a-Body—Say: Today, we're going to celebrate Thanksgiving by celebrating a gift that God has given us for every day—our bodies.**

Give each child a sheet of paper. Have each child draw a gingerbread-cookie-type person and then draw arrows from different parts of the body to the outer edge of the paper. From the head, have them write words that describe what they like to learn about; from the hands, things they like to do; feet, places they like to go; from the stomach, things they like to eat; and so on.

**2. Hopping-Popping Thanks**—Read aloud Psalm 139:14. Help the children better understand this verse by using their bodies to express the information on their gingerbread cookie papers. Have children think about kernels of popcorn. As it gets to just the right heat, each kernel bursts open into popcorn, but the kernels don't do it all at the same time. Invite children to burst open with their answers as each part of the body is mentioned.

Say: **We thank God for our minds to think about . . .** Have children jump up at different times and respond. After all the children have popped up and answered, go to the next body part.

**3. Body Benders**—Have children lie on the floor. Encourage them to imagine what it would be like if their bodies could not bend. Have them do those actions without bending any part of their bodies: get up, walk, talk, run, and sit down. Reread Psalm 139:14 at least four times.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**You'll need:** For every four children, you'll need a one-quart jar with a tight-fitting lid, 1-3/4 cups milk, and one small package of vanilla instant pudding. You'll also need small cups and spoons.

**Directions:** Put the milk and instant pudding in the jar and close it tightly. Have children pass the jar around the circle and shake it until it becomes pudding. This usually takes about three to five minutes. Encourage students to think about how they're using their bodies to help each other. Serve the pudding in small cups.