

PrayKids!®

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word on...

Thankfulness

To be **thankful** means “to express gratitude.” Sometimes we feel glad because someone did something nice for us, but we never get around to telling that person. **Thankfulness** is being so full of **thanks** that we can’t keep it inside! We just have to tell God “**thank You**” or we’ll burst!

Sometimes people confuse praising God with **thanking** Him. What’s the difference? Well, when we praise God, we celebrate Him for who He is. When we **thank** God, we celebrate Him for what He does. For instance, we praise God because He is love. We **thank** Him for loving us so much that He sent Jesus! ★

Don't Worry,

Do you ever feel as if you don't have any friends at school?

Do you ever get sad because your parents fight a lot? When those kinds of things happen, it's hard for most of us to see the good things God is doing. Sometimes it's just hard to be **thankful**.

That's because most of us only think of **thankfulness** as something we express when God or someone else does something nice or good for us. But did you know that we can (and should!) also be **thankful** even when things are hard? Our **thankfulness** doesn't have to depend on the things that happen each day. If it did, we'd be changing from happy to sad and back all the time! And that isn't much fun.

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Be Thankful!

By Amy M. Paulson



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In Psalm 50:23, God says, “But giving **thanks** is a sacrifice that truly honors me” (New Living Translation). God understands that it isn’t always easy to give **thanks**—it’s a sacrifice sometimes! But it’s worth it.

Philippians 4:6 says, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and **thank** him for all he has done” (New Living Translation).

What a thought! You don’t have to worry at all! You can tell God all the hard things in your life, ask Him to help you, and have a **thankful** heart, all at the same time!

If you do this, God has a great promise for you. The next verse, Philippians 4:7, says that God’s peace will guard your heart and your mind. That means His peace will keep you safe from worry and sadness, just like a bike helmet protects your head from getting hurt in a crash. It’s awesome to know that God loves you and will take care of you—not just your body, but your feelings, too.

Since it can be difficult to remember to be **thankful**, it’s a great idea to make it a part of your daily routine. Of course, you can express **thankfulness** at any time of the day . . . or all day! But it’s good to choose a certain time each day—like at bedtime or after breakfast—specifically to give **thanks** to God.

First, **thank** God for the things He has given you—anything from your family members to your house to your favorite book. Also, remember to **thank**

Win the War on Whining

The Bible tells us to **thank** God for everything. *Everything?* Even when something bad happens to us? Why should we do that?

Not giving **thanks** to God will turn our hearts away from Him and make us confused and foolish in the way we think (Romans 1:21-23). When we are **thankful**, it guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:6-7).

Thankfulness is a powerful weapon against the enemy. Think about this: if Satan tries to trick us or bother us, but we **thank** God anyway, Satan will realize that *he* is making us **thank God**—and he can’t handle that! He will get tired of trying to distract us with his schemes! If you want to read a story about how the enemy was defeated by praise and **thanks** alone, check out 2 Chronicles 20:21-24. ★

God for prayers He has answered for you, like healing your cough or helping your dad get a new job.

Next, **thank** God for who He is. Tell Him the things you love about Him, just like you would talk to a friend. For example, you could say, “God, you are so forgiving. God, you are so strong.” Then, after you’ve **thanked** Him for how special He is to you, go on to ask Him for things that you need or want, like for a sick loved one to get well or a new friend at school.

Thankfulness is something that comes from your heart. In fact, God created you to be **thankful** and to sing praises to Him! The Bible says, “No matter what happens, always be **thankful**, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, New Living Translation). So be **thankful!** Not only does this please God and bless your friends and family, but it also brings you great joy! ★

Amy M. Paulson is the mother of three small children. She is also a Sunday school teacher and a prayer team member at her local church.

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Mission Statement

The mission of PrayKids! is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 7 to 12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

Grown-ups!

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This is a *free* monthly newsletter, including timely PrayKids! articles you may have missed, exclusive subscriber-only offers, and updates on newly released resources and tools. It’s perfect for Sunday school teachers, children’s workers, Christian school teachers, homeschool parents, and anyone else who has a heart to encourage kids in growing their prayer lives! Just go to www.praymag.com, look at the lower left under the newsletter sign-up section, check the box next to PrayKids! Online Newsletter, and click the SIGN-UP button!

Kidnapped!

Prayer Provides the Way

By C. Hope Flinchbaugh

Are you **thankful** for tests? Ten-year-old Daniela from Colombia (South America) had a big test of faith one Sunday while sitting in church with her grandmother.

The service had just started when, suddenly, 30 men in green uniforms with guns appeared at the doorway shouting, "Get out! Get out of here! There's a bomb in the building!"

Everyone in the church was herded into canvas-covered trucks. But the men were lying—there was no bomb. The people had been tricked, and now they were kidnapped!

Fear tugged at Daniela's heart—she knew that these men had evil hearts and would probably kill anyone who tried to get away.

Daniela thought about her Aunt Maria, who went to another church and often prayed with her. Now, as her faith was being tested, Daniela quietly prayed to Jesus.

The truck finally stopped, and the guerillas commanded everyone to get out and walk up a huge mountain. (Guerillas are people who fight, usually against the government, for a cause in which they strongly believe.)

After two hours, Daniela's grandmother told her she couldn't walk up the mountain anymore. Daniela bravely told the guerilla leader, "My grandmother can't walk anymore. She needs to rest, and I'm not going to leave her here alone."

The guerilla leader answered, "Well, then, leave right now!"

Daniela looked at her watch. It was 12:45 p.m. Daniela **thanked** God for giving her favor with the guerillas as she and her grandmother carefully walked down the mountain, then to a police station. After they told the police their story, they called Aunt Maria, who came to the police station. Daniela told her what had happened.

"The guerillas let us go at 12:45," Daniela told her aunt.

"Daniela!" cried Aunt Maria. "Our whole church was praying for you at exactly 12:45 this afternoon!"

This test was the hardest one Daniela had ever taken. But she is **thankful** to know that the power of prayer made it possible to pass this test of faith! ★



Daniela, around the time of her kidnapping

Thank You, GOD

Words of **thanks** are found all through the Bible. Many of God's people took time to **thank** the Lord. You can take the prayers of those people and turn them into your own. They will help you remember who God is and what He can do, giving you courage, peace, and contentment (satisfaction with what you have). Remember that you can use a concordance to look up all the verses in the Bible that say **thank, thanks, thankful, thankfulness, or thanksgiving**.

Here is a prayer of thanks that King David wrote many years ago:

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"Give **thanks** to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done" (1 Chronicles 16:8).

You can put this prayer into your own words like this: "Dear heavenly Father, I want to give **thanks** to You. O Lord, I call on Your name. I will let everyone I talk to know what You have done" (name some things that He has done for you this week).

Now try it yourself. Use these Scripture verses to **thank** the Lord in your own way: 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Psalm 77:13-14, Psalm 107:8. ★

—By Jan Merritt

Thanks, I By Sandra needed that!

A fictional Bible story based on Daniel 2

"Wake up, Daniel!" Arioch, the king's messenger, shook Daniel's shoulder.

Daniel rubbed his eyes and tried to figure out why someone was shaking him awake in the middle of the night.

"King Nebuchadnezzar has ordered you and all the other wise men in the kingdom to be put to death!" the messenger whispered.

The king wanted him dead? That woke Daniel up!

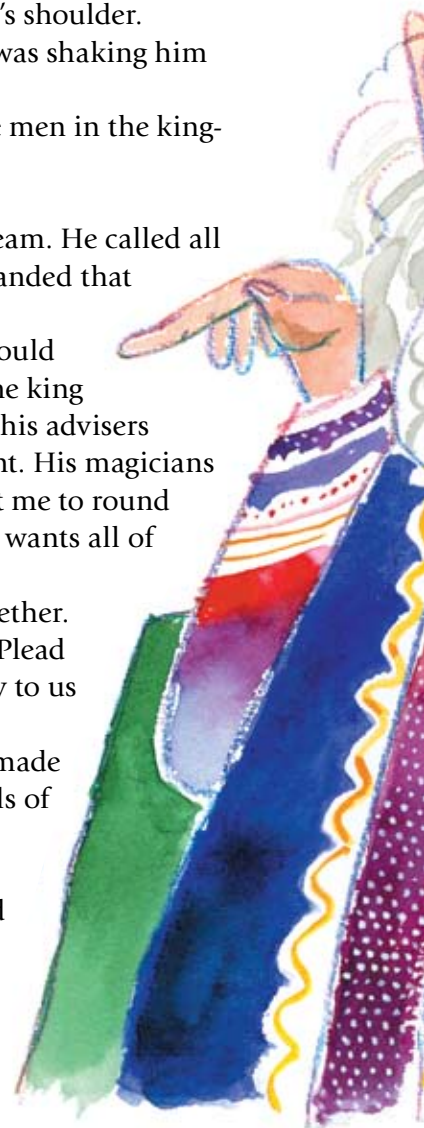
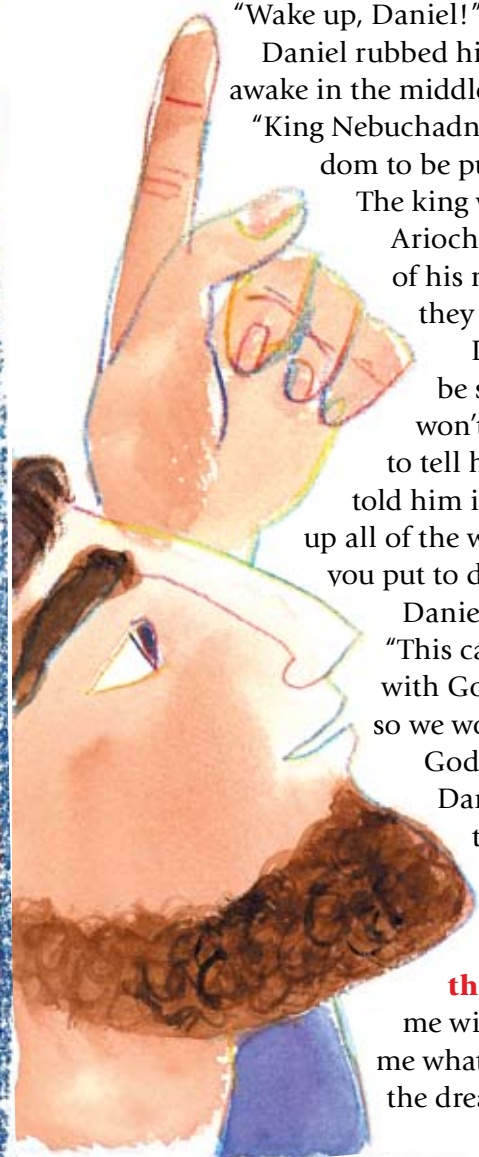
Arioch went on to explain. "The king had a bad dream. He called all of his magicians and astrologers together and demanded that they tell him what his dream meant."

Daniel was curious—what kind of a dream could be so important? The messenger continued, "The king won't tell anyone what the dream was! He wants his advisers to tell him what he dreamed as well as what it meant. His magicians told him it was impossible. Now he is furious! He sent me to round up all of the wise men in the kingdom—you included. He wants all of you put to death."

Daniel jumped up and called his three friends together. "This calls for some serious prayer," he told them. "Plead with God for mercy—ask Him to reveal this mystery to us so we won't be put to death."

God answered their prayers that very night! He made Daniel have a vision that gave him all the details of the king's dream.

Even before telling the king, Daniel got down on his knees. He began to praise and **thank** God for what He had done so far. "I **thank** and praise you, O God. You have given me wisdom and power. You have made known to me what we asked of You. You have made known the dream of the king."



As soon as Daniel finished praying, he found Arioch and asked to be taken to the king. "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and tell me what it means?" the king asked, not sure Daniel could do what his own wise men could not.

"No wise man, enchanter, or magician can explain this mystery to you," Daniel replied. "But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has used this dream to tell you what is going to happen in the future."

Then Daniel told the king all about his dream and what it meant. Nebuchadnezzar was so amazed that he fell face down in front of Daniel.

"Your God really is the one true God!" he cried.

The king was so happy to find out what his dream meant that he placed Daniel in a high position. He made him ruler over all of Babylon and put him in charge of all of the wise men. On top of that, he showered him with gifts!

Daniel's prayer of **thanks** was for an answer that came just in time—it saved his life and the lives of the other wise men. ★

Sandra Higley is director of church relations for the Church Prayer Leaders Network.



Thanks in Advance

Have you ever thought about **thanking** God ahead of time for what He is going to do? That is a prayer of faith. God loves to answer those prayers! Try it next time you pray. Ask God for something, and then **thank** Him for the wonderful things He will do!

For example, James 1:5-6 says that God will answer when we ask for wisdom—no questions asked. Next time you don't know what to do and you need wisdom, **thank** God ahead of time that He is going to make you wise! Then believe it! ★





Let's Pray for Native Americans

Did you know that there is a group of people in the United States that many folks have forgotten about? They are called Native Americans or First Peoples. Maybe the only "Indians" you've seen are the ones in the movies or on television, but today there are almost two million Native American people living in the United States in 557 different tribes. Only about one-fourth of these people live on their own land, called reservations. The rest live in cities and towns—maybe even in yours.

Relationships are very important to Native Americans. Several tribes are related to each other because of their culture and language. Navajos and Apaches are related to each other, for example, but they are not related to the Sioux. It's all very complicated. Native Americans may not care what your name is; they may just want to know if you are related to



SIX

LOVER THE GLOBE

How you can pray for Native American kids:

1. Pray that Native American children will understand that Jesus is the only one who can forgive their sins.
2. Pray for the Native American Christians to be strong in their walk with the Lord and understand that they can be Christians and still be good Native Americans.
3. Pray that Native American Christians will go as missionaries to other tribes who don't know about Jesus.
4. Pray that Christian Native American parents will encourage their children to follow Jesus.
5. Ask God to meet the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of Native Americans living on reservations. ★

them. You can see that it might be difficult for people not related to Native Americans to share the good news of Jesus with them.

Today, the Navajo people are the only tribe that have the entire Bible translated into their own language. God's Word is not translated into the "heart" language (the traditional language) of many tribes. It would be hard to read the Bible in a language you didn't understand, wouldn't it?

Grandfathers were the traditional storytellers in the Native American tribes. But most of these older men don't know the stories in the Bible, so it's difficult for the tribes to learn about Jesus. Only three to eight out every 100 Native Americans are Christians.

God loves the Native American people, so remember to pray for them! ★

By Linda Wisdom, communications coordinator for Ameri Tribes (www.ameritribes.org).

Count Your Blessings

The Bible tells us that in everything we do, we should have gratitude in our hearts. No matter what we're doing, we can be offering prayers of **thankfulness** to God in Jesus' name. In *all* circumstances, we are to give **thanks** (Colossians 3:16-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Is it really possible to be **thankful** *all* the time? How can we do that?

First, we need to be able to remember the things we're **thankful** for. Sometimes, in the middle of hard circumstances, it's hard to remember all the good things God has done for us. That's why when we're celebrating a blessing, it's important to write it down for later. You never know when you'll need a "**thankful-**



ness reminder"!

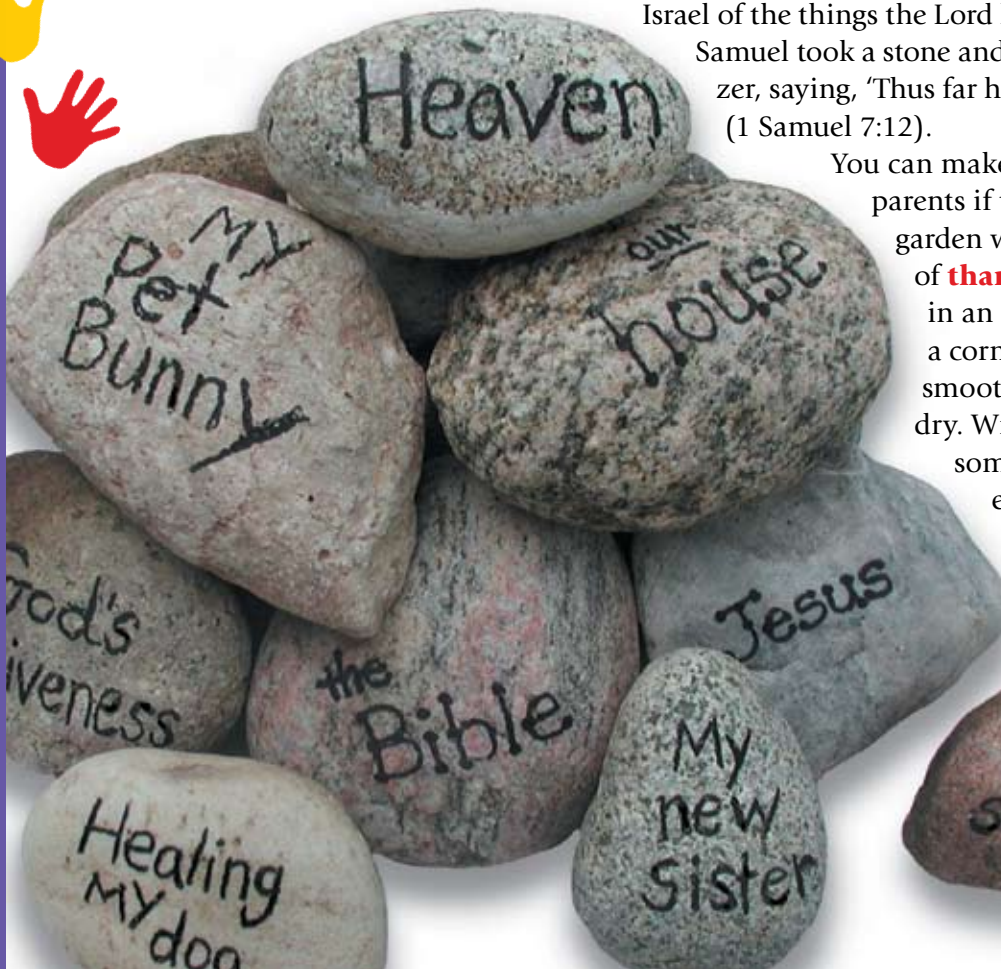
You can make a game out of remembering what to be **thankful** for—a "Count Your Blessings" game. Write down all the things for which you are **thankful** to God. See how many blessings you can come up with. When you can't possibly think of any more, start going through your list and express your **thankfulness** out loud to God. You can **thank** Him for several blessings every day. Add more to your list as you think of them, and keep on **thanking** God every day. Soon, you will have an entire **thankfulness** journal. Then keep your journal where you can look at it often, as a **thankfulness** reminder, so you can count your blessings every day! ★

Make an Ebenezer

The biblical prophet Samuel set up a monument to remind the people of Israel of the things the Lord had done to help them: "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up. . . . He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far has the LORD helped us'" (1 Samuel 7:12).

You can make an Ebenezer too. Ask your parents if there is a spot in your yard or garden where you can make a monument of **thanksgiving** to God. If you live in an apartment, maybe you can use a corner in your room. Find several smooth rocks. Wash them and let them dry. With a permanent marker, write something God has done for you on each rock: food, clothes, friends, family, and so on. Be sure to write the date on the rocks. Pile your rocks into a heap.

Each time you pass your Ebenezer, be sure to stop and **thank** God for all He has done. ★



Four Ways to Teach Thanks

By Kim Butts

In the Old Testament, a **thank** offering represented an act of **thanksgiving** for answered prayer and blessings given. It expressed a voluntary desire on the part of the offerer(s) to **thank** God. Usually, **thank** offerings were given in gratitude for deliverance from sickness (Psalm 107:20-22), trouble (Psalm 50:14-15), or death (Psalm 56:12-13). God was honored by **thank** offerings (Psalm 50:23). Read Leviticus 7:11-14 for more information on **thank** offerings.

Because of Jesus, today we don't have to sacrifice **thank** offerings in the same way. When we pray, however, we should always remember to give **thanks** for His many blessings, in the midst of whatever circumstance we find ourselves (1 Thessalonians 5:18). It is always appropriate to honor God and **thank** Him when we are blessed!

What kinds of **thank** offerings could you make to the Lord as a family? Here are some ideas for you to try:

1. Give the Lord a **thank** offering of praise! Worship Him together with songs and read psalms that praise the Lord. Do this whenever

God blesses your family in a special way—whether it's big or small. Let your kids help plan and participate in the worship time.

2. Share your gratefulness to God with others. Prepare a special meal when you have been blessed (someone is healed, a new baby arrives, a relative gets a new job, and so on). Invite others to join in your feast of **thanksgiving**, and focus on **thank-ing** God with Scriptures such as 1 Chronicles 16:8-10, Psalm 7:17, and 1 Corinthians 15:57. Have the kids make invitations and decorate your home with posters using some of the **thanks** verses.

3. When your family is sad or discouraged (especially your kids), throw a "Count Your Blessings" party. Get as creative as you want to with games and prizes. Give each family member a piece of paper and pencil, and set a timer—see who can come up with the most things to be **thankful** for in a specified time.

4. Try "**thankfulness**" charades or Pictionary. Have each person think of something he or she is **thankful** for and try to get the rest of the family to guess what it is by acting it out or drawing it. Take

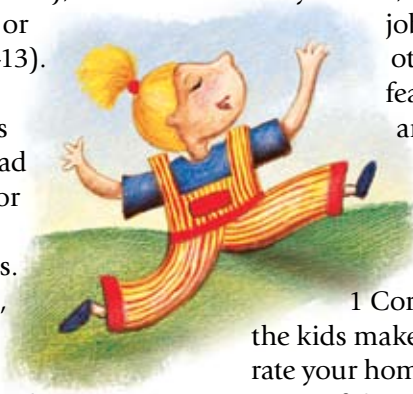
turns **thank-ing** God using sentence prayers for all of the things mentioned. Celebrate God's goodness with cake and ice cream!

Here are some other practical ways to show your **thankfulness**:

Give Him your time as a **thank** offering. Could you sacrifice a few hours to work as a family at a food pantry or serve food at a local rescue mission in **thanks** for God's abundance to you? Check with your church and community to find other ways you could serve as a family.

Donate food and clothing to the needy as a **thank** offering. As a family, you could clean out closets and make a special trip to a church or community agency to donate the items. ★

Kim Butts and her husband, David, direct Harvest Prayer Ministries. Check out their website at www.harvestprayer.com.



MEMORY VERSE

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

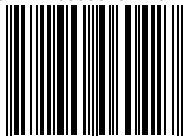
—Psalm 100:4

PRAYKIDS! TEACHER'S GUIDE: A Hands-on Guide for Developing Kids Who Pray

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