

# Give Thanks

## 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

**Memory Verse:** 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *“In everything **give thanks**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

**Lesson Focus:** On this Thanksgiving weekend we want to challenge the kids to enter into the holiday season with an “attitude of gratitude”. In these few verses, Paul sounds like a coach providing very clear marching orders to his team. We will “coach” the kids through these few verses exhorting them to live out their faith with thanksgiving.

**Activities and Crafts:** Thank you Jesus Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.  
Activity for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders: Pumpkin Craft

**Starter Activity:** You Be the Coach!

We will get our lesson started by having a few kids pretend to be the class “coach”. To get them interested, begin by pretending to be a coach yourself. We will have a clipboard and a whistle \* that you can use. If you can bring a baseball cap or sporty clothing to play the role, go for it!

Begin by welcoming them as an energetic coach would. Use the whistle to get their attention and drum up enthusiasm by saying something like, *“Welcome team! After all of that stuffing and pumpkin pie you snarfed at Thanksgiving, I’m here to help you put some of those carbs to use! Who is with me? I couldn’t hear you! I said **who is with me?**”*

Once you have their attention get them started with a “warm-up”. Instruct them to do some jumping jacks or something simple that everyone can do. At this point step out of coach role and back into your teacher role and ask them this question:

Q: What makes a good coach? A: Someone who cares about his team, who lovingly pushes them toward a goal, and who provides very clear instructions!

Then invite at least one boy and one girl to come up and take a shot at being a good coach. Challenge them that they need to provide clear instructions to the team. We will provide you with a few silly party whistles \* that they can use for fun (instead of your whistle). Give them some ideas for activities they can lead the team in: (run in place, lunges, pushups, etc.).

Afterwards, transition into the lesson by pointing out how “coach Paul” cared about the churches enough to write them letters and encourage them on as Christians. Let’s see what he had to say to “team Thessalonica” about living for Jesus!

## Bible Study:

**1 Thessalonians 5:12a:** Our text begins with coach Paul **urging** the people. \*

Q: What is something that a good coach might **urge** his team to do?

A: Basketball: Pass the ball!

A: Track: Don't look to the right or left, but look ahead to the finish line!

A: Baseball: Keep your eye on the ball!

**1 Thessalonians 5:12b-13a:** Coach Paul also **urges** the church to honor and appreciate their leaders!

Q: If a team does not respect or listen to their coach, will they be any good? A: NO!

Boys and Girls: Have a look at your leaders. God wants you also to honor, appreciate, and respect them! \* Have you ever said "thank you" to them before? Do so now!

**1 Thessalonians 5:13b:** Coach Paul also **urges** them to be at peace with one another!

Q: If a team does not get along, but fights one another, will they be any good? A: NO!

So, a simple recipe for both a healthy team and a healthy church is summed up in these two verses: Honor and listen to your leaders and be at peace with another! And it works!

Now in the rest of our text, coach Paul gives some very clear instructions on how a good church or a good team is to behave. Let's listen in! (**Teachers:** Consider stepping back into your coach role as you read some of the instructions from "coach" Paul)

**1 Thessalonians 5:14:** There are four commands in this verse. Let's play a little role-play game where we act them out and you have to guess which one it was. **Teachers:** Invite a group of kids up and secretly assign one of the actions to them privately while the rest of the class guesses what it is. Write these four instructions on the whiteboard which summarize the four commands in this verse. See also an idea for role-play under each, but feel free to bring your own ideas and props as well!

- 1) Warn the unruly or lazy.
  - Have a couple of kids pretend to sleep-in and the other tries to wake them up.
- 2) Encourage those who are afraid.
  - Have one kid pretend to enter class scared and have another welcome them in.
- 3) Care for the weak.
  - Have one kid pretend to limp and another come and help him walk across room.
- 4) Be patient with everyone.
  - Have one kid read his Bible while several others interrupt him one at a time.

After each one, have a little discussion on what it means and why this is a good habit for a healthy church (or a healthy team). As we go through the rest of our lesson, consider writing the other instructions from "coach Paul" onto the white board.

**1 Thessalonians 5:15:** Here is a very important instruction from coach Paul. **Teachers:** Consider stepping into coach role again, blow the whistle, and get your kids' attention on this one. \*

Q: What does it mean to “get revenge”? A: When someone does something evil to you, “to get them back” with more evil. \*

Q: What might someone do to you that would tempt you to get revenge? (i.e. someone hits you, says nasty things about you, etc.)

This is what we see in the world everywhere. In movies, at school, on social media. But God wants His team to be different from the world. **Read Romans 12:21.** We are not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by doing good! \* This is hard! But guess who is there to help us: Jesus! \*

**1 Thessalonians 5:16:** Rejoice always! \* Always? This is a bit surprising from coach Paul when you consider what he and “team Thessalonica” have been through. Elsewhere in the Bible (**Acts 17:5-10**) you can read about how Paul was taken away from this team because of persecution. And as you read it sounds like a team that has gotten beat up!!

Q: Why do you think they can still rejoice? A: Because they know God is good and God is in control. And because God wins in the end, they know they are on the winning team!

**1 Thessalonians 5:17:** Pray always! \* Sometimes we get into the habit of only praying when we are at church or before meals. But God is ALWAYS listening, no matter where we are. **Teachers:** Consider having a volunteer come up and ask them if God can hear your prayers where they are standing. After they answer “yes”, move them to another part of the room and ask them again. Then ask them where they are going to be after service and if God can hear their prayers there.

The point is that God desires that we talk to Him and be in relationship with Him everywhere and every day!

**1 Thessalonians 5:18a:** Give thanks always! \* You can ALWAYS find something to be thankful for, even when things may not be going your way. \* Remember this is coming from coach Paul after he was imprisoned and kicked out of town.

**1 Thessalonians 5:18b:** Finally, we see WHY coach Paul gave these instructions. This is God's will for His team! This is what God wants! This all might seem super hard \*, but here is the best part:

**Key Point:** Jesus will help you! If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you belong to Him. We don't do any of these things to BE saved. We do them BECAUSE we are saved. We need coaches in our lives to urge us on to do what is good for us and that is what Paul is doing here for “team Thessalonica” and for “team RMC” as we read this letter. As you enter into the holiday season, enter it with an “attitude of gratitude”. Heed the marching orders of your head coach, Jesus! \*

# BRING IT HOME

Read 1 Thess 5:12-13

Who are some folks who work hard to take care of you? How can you show that you appreciate them?

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Challenge:

What is your favorite Part of Thanksgiving?

Read 1 Thess 5:18

What are five things that you can thank God for?

