



FULL OF
Thanks
&
giving

simple family devotionals
celebrating Thanksgiving
and giving back through
Operation Christmas Child



how to use the devotionals

The heart behind this devotional series is to bring your family into the true meaning of Thanksgiving. Each devotional is designed to envision you with God's truth and to invite transformation as you connect with God. The overall vision is that we look at God and grow in admiration of God and we grow in thankfulness for what God has blessed us with. Through the overflow, we can then freely give to others. As you walk through these steps and lessons together, may your family be inspired by the Word and the ways of God!

The five devotionals are designed to be used for the Sunday's leading up to the packing party on November 17th from 4:30pm to 6:30pm. Each Sunday, you can use one of the included devotionals and complete the scripture readings, discussion, and prayer. Then, you can implement what you have learned and at any point in the following week you can complete the devotionals activity together.



Devotional 1: Sunday, October 13
Devotional 2: Sunday, October 20
Devotional 3: Sunday, October 27
Devotional 4: Sunday, November 3
Devotional 5: Sunday November 10



The intention for Devotional 3, is that you will begin to pack your shoebox for a child through Operation Christmas Child (OCC). Through this organization you can send a box of toys and other gifts to another part of the world for a child to open on Christmas morning. The goal of OCC is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world, and together with local churches worldwide to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is necessary to complete your box before the packing party on November 17th. If you follow the intended schedule for the devotionals you will have plenty of time to complete your shoebox.

Finally take this opportunity to pray that God would prepare hearts in your family for what God wants to speak. Let God lead your time together as you go through each devotional, and let God transform each member of your family. Invite God into this time and let God be the focus of it all.



DEVOTIONAL 1: HEARTS OF THANKFULNESS

Sunday, October 13

READ:

Luke 17: 12-19

As [Jesus] was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

DISCUSS:

What did the one leper who came back do that was different? How should we respond similarly to God? What does it mean to be thankful? Share a personal story with your kids of a time you saw God act (answered prayer, healing, etc) and how it made you thankful. You can even remind them of times God has worked in their lives.

PRAY:

Pray and thank God for the times He has been at work in your lives and in your children's lives. Pray the He would make your hearts quick to thank Him for what He has done.

ACT:

Print the leaf cards on page 8. You might want several copies. For younger children, cut them out and let them go around the house taping the leaves to things they are thankful for (people, stuffed animals, anything they come up with!) This will serve as a great visual reminder for them of the many blessings God has given and allow them to see things and appreciate them. If you have several kids, you can separate the leaves and give each kid a set of a certain color. For older kids, you can have them write down on each leaf something they are thankful for. Once they have written on the leaves, you can string these on a garland or hang them on some branches to make a "thankfulness tree." Continue to point out and talk throughout the week about things you are thankful to God for.



DEVOTIONAL 2:

THANKFUL FOR THE GIFT OF GOD

Sunday, October 20

READ:

Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 2:8

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast."

DISCUSS:

What do we deserve? What does God give us FREELY? How do we feel when we get a gift?

PRAY:

Start by praising God together! Pray (and help your children to pray) prayers of thanks for who God is and for His free gift of salvation and love towards us.

ACT:

For this activity, you will need several \$1 bills. Create a "dollar hunt" - place these throughout the house, peeking out from drawers or from behind pillows. (Alternatively you can hide coins in eggs and do the same thing.) Have your children search for the bills. Explain that they are a free gift and that you will have the opportunity later on (in Devotional 3) to use them to help buy a gift to give someone else. Emphasize how fun it is to receive a free gift, like the dollars. Giving and receiving is so fun!





DEVOTIONAL 3:

HEARTS OF GIVING

Sunday, October 27

READ:

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

"Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

1 Timothy 6:17-19

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

DISCUSS:

How should we act when we give? What does it mean to be rich? How has God made us rich (not just in resources but in wisdom, relationships, etc)? Does God want us to share that richness with others? Talk about Operation Christmas Child and the opportunity to give joyfully. You can even view videos and find more details at samaritanspurse.org.

PRAY:

Pray that God would make you cheerful givers, who love to "sow generously."

ACT:

Remember that this activity **MUST** be completed by November 17 so that you can drop off your shoe box for the packing party. In order to make your shoebox you must first decide if it is for a boy or a girl and what age. Talk about items that would be good to give to a child this age. OCC recommends packing a fun toy as well as hygiene items and school supplies. For more information go to Samaritans purse website. Talk about how these items might impact that Child's life and bring them joy. Make the process fun, inviting ideas from your kids and allowing them to pack the box. You can even include a personal note and photo if you like.



DEVOTIONAL 4: THE OVERFLOW OF GOD

Sunday, November 3

READ:

2 Corinthians 9:10-11

"Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

DISCUSS:

As we give, what does God promise to do (in the passage)? Why does God bless us with enough or more than enough? How can we use this to help others? When God gives us an overflow of blessings, what should we do with those resources?

PRAY:

Ask God for a specific way to bless someone else. Pray for a person, group of people, or cause. Have your kids wait and listen to God speak to them about how to move forward and act.

ACT:

Act on your prayers! Decide together on an idea to creatively bless someone this week. It could be anything from making encouragement cards to babysitting to baking to taking food to a food pantry...the possibilities are endless! Find ways for your kids to be directly involved in the process. Delight together in how fun it is to bring joy and give to someone else!





DEVOTIONAL 5:

PRAYERS OF THANKS & GIVING

Sunday, November 10

READ:

Colossians 2:6-7

"So, then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Psalm 100:4

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

Philippians 1:3

"I thank my God every time I remember you."

DISCUSS:

How can we make thankfulness and giving part of our everyday lives? What prevents us from doing these things? Why do we need to practice thankfulness and giving? What type of changes would it make in our lives if we were defined by these qualities?

PRAY:

Pray over your family, that their hearts would be set on God and overflow with thankfulness. Pray that you all would continue to give out of a desire to bless others in the way you have been blessed.

ACT:

Get several sheets of plain white paper. Record your family's prayers and prayer points for the child who receives your shoebox. Ask God to let this gift pave the way for salvation, and for it to connect them to a local church. In many places of shoebox distribution, children are invited into a discipleship program. Pray that your child would participate and establish a genuine relationship with Jesus! Use the papers to make PAPER AIRPLANES! In the same way that your shoebox will be flying and shipped to far away places, launch your paper airplanes as you pray. Make it fun and adapt to the age and stage of your kids - you can toss them through a hoop before you all pray, or have a distance competition. Keep it fun and also emphasize the power of prayer and the impact it will have on a child's life! Continue to pray over the coming weeks and if you chose to track your shoebox, check to see updates on where it ends up!



USE WITH DEVOTIONAL 1

You may want to print several copies (at least one sheet per child).




Mark the correct age category:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	2-4 Years Old	<h1>Girl</h1>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5-9 Years Old		
<input type="checkbox"/>	10-14 Years Old		
Mark the correct age category:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	2-4 Years Old	<h1>Boy</h1>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5-9 Years Old		
<input type="checkbox"/>	10-14 Years Old		

USE WITH DEVOTIONAL 3

Cut out the appropriate label and tape it to the top of your shoebox.

For drop-off information, packing tips, and more ideas,

visit samaritanspurse.org



ENTER HIS GATES WITH
Thanksgiving

&

HIS COURTS WITH
praise...

psalm 100:4