



# GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

2 CHRONICLES 20

## GOAL

- ▶ **To teach children about the power of thanksgiving.** Show them how thankfulness is a spiritual weapon that defeats fear and anxiety and creates faith and trust in God. Even as armies came against King Jehoshaphat, he ran to God for help, clung to God's promises, and responded in thanksgiving and praise—even before the promised victory was won! The king continued the theme of thankfulness, and marched into battle with worshipers leading the way. God gave King Jehoshaphat victory that day, and the procession of thanksgiving continued as the troops returned in joyful triumph.
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## WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Thanksgiving/Praise:** thoughts and feelings that express gratitude toward someone. In the Bible, praise and thankfulness toward God includes admitting the truth about His power and perfection and confessing the need for Him.
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## MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **2 Chronicles 20:21:** Give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever.
- Philippians 4:6:** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.



## OVERVIEW

▶ **Read 2 Chronicles 20:** This is a story about the power of thanksgiving. The righteous King Jehoshaphat was suddenly faced with the danger of war. Although he was at first afraid, he took his fear and anxiety to the Lord by leading his people to fast and pray. He helped restore courage in the hearts of the people by reminding them of how powerful their God was, and how faithful He had always been to them. The king lead the people in thanksgiving to the Lord, and God responded to their faith with the promise of a swift victory. The people praised and worshiped God all the way to the battle field, and the battle was won. No weapons, no struggle—just the power of God!

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## SUGGESTIONS

▶ The story of King Josephat's victory over his enemies shows us that the correct response to danger and difficulty is to cry out to God, recount his faithfulness, and offer up praise and thanksgiving to Him. Give the children an opportunity to discuss difficulties they've faced in the past and think about how they handled it. Encourage them through the story, that although fear and anxiety are natural responses to trials, God will show Himself strong on our behalf as we call to Him for help and praise Him for his faithfulness.



## PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

**Ages 5-7** **Toss of Thanksgiving** | **Supplies:** a rubber ball.

Arrange the students in a big circle. Give the rubber ball to the first child and instruct him or her to say, "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_, and I am thankful for \_\_\_\_," and then throw the ball to another child across the circle who will do the same. To make the game even more active, any time a child drops the ball, the game halts as that child runs around the outside of the circle, returns to his or her place, states his or her name and what he or she is thankful for, and throws the ball to the next child.

**Ages 5-7** **Pin Thanks on the Turkey** | **Supplies:** print-out of a turkey, colorful construction paper, double-sided tape, and marker-pens.

Ahead of time, draw or use a printout of a large turkey without feathers. Cut colorful strips of paper, rounded on one end, and put a piece of double-sided tape on one end to use as the turkey's feathers. Hand out feathers to the children and have them write different things they are thankful for (write for the younger children). Once all the children have something written on their feathers, have them take turns trying to pin the feathers on the turkey as close the right spots as possible while blindfolded.

**Ages 8-10** **Categorically Thankful** | **Supplies:** slips of paper and two containers.

Ahead of time, write each of the letters A through Z on a separate slip of paper and place them in a container. Also, ahead of time, write various categories of things that children should be thankful for, such as "things in the home," "things at school," or "things in nature." Place these categories into a separate container. To begin playing, divide the children into groups of 5-6. Have one child from each group select a letter from the alphabet container and another select a topic from the category container. On the count of three, all groups will come up with as many things they are thankful for within the category they selected that begin with the letter they selected. Older kids can write their words on a piece of paper, the younger kids can have a group leader write them down as they call them out. For example, a group with the letter "B" and the category "home," might come up with "bed," "baby-doll," "books," or "belt." The group that comes up with the most in 3 minutes, wins.



MEMORY  
VERSE  
MEANING

▶ **2 Chronicles 20:21b:** King Josephat showed his trust and reliance on God and His promises. Instead of having his mightiest men lead Israel into battle, he appointed worshipers to praise and thank God for His mercies toward them.

**Philippians 4:6:** When we are scared, afraid, or anxious, we should go to God for help. When we go to Him, we should thank Him for how He has helped us in the past and try to recall all the other times He showed His love to us. Think about how He died for us and solved our greatest problem—the problem of sin and eternal death!

POST-LESSON  
ACTIVITY

▶ **Ages 5-7 Pumpkin of Praise | Supplies:** small pumpkin or pumpkin printouts for each child and markers.

Have the children write and/or draw things they are thankful for on their pumpkins. Encourage them to be creative with color and design. Instruct them to make drawings, not just words. When they are finished, go around the room and give the children the opportunity to share what they wrote or drew on their pumpkin.

**Ages 8-10 Clear the Fear | Supplies:** For every 5 to 6 kids, you will need 1 small white bowl, finely ground black pepper, and a bottle of dish soap.

Ahead of time, label the white bowl “mind,” label the shaker of pepper “fear and anxiety,” and label the soap “thankfulness.” For the activity, divide the class into groups of 5 or 6 (or even smaller). Each group will get a white bowl of water, a shaker of pepper, and a bottle of dish soap. Discuss a distressing situation, such as problems with school-work, or problems with a friend. Have one child shake pepper (thoughts of fear and anxiety) into the bowl of water. The first response to difficulty is usually anxiety or fear, which clouds the mind. Now, have the next child squeeze some dishwashing soap into the murky water. The pepper will cling to the sides of the bowl and leave the water in the center clear. Explain how talking to God, recounting His faithfulness, and expressing gratitude to Him through praise and worship clears away anxiety.



## Ages 8-10 Steps in Thankfulness

This game is like “Mother May I” and works better with smaller groups. Line up the kids shoulder to shoulder, facing the group leader. The leader will call out a child’s name from the group and give them an example of a fearful situation (such as, “the dark is sometimes scary”) and tell them to take a certain number of steps forward. The child must first say, “Give thanks to the Lord, His love endures forever” before taking the number of steps forward. If they forget, they must go back to where they were standing. Make it an even more active game by asking them to hop or skip forward.

TAKE  
HOME



This week, practice the right response to difficulties.

Imagine you are moving to another part of the country, leaving the home you are used to, and the friends and family you love. How would you feel—sad, maybe anxious? What did you learn today that will help you through a difficult time like this?

**1. Talk to the Lord about your fear and anxiety.**

**2. Rehearse the promises He’s made:** He loves you, He will never leave you, He is your friend, He will provide what you need, and so on.

**3. Express thankfulness to God for what He has already done for you:** He died for you, He loves you, He has provided for you, and will continue to do so, and so on.

**4. Recite His Promises:**

This week when you are tempted to be fearful or anxious, take your concerns to God in prayer, remember that He promises to be with you, and express thankfulness for all the things He has already done for you.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 1



**Q1a:** What bad news did the messengers bring King Jehoshaphat?

**A1:** The messengers brought King Jehoshaphat news that three armies had declared war on him.

**Q1b:** Have you ever received bad news?

**TN:** Everyone has received bad news. When we face such situations, we have a choice: panic and respond out of the fear and anxiety we feel, or turn to God for help. God is always with us, and He promises to give us wisdom on how to deal with it; all we have to do is ask!

### SLIDE 2



**Q2a:** Where did the king and all the people of Jerusalem and Judah gather?

**A2:** They all gathered at the Temple of God.

**Q2b:** Who is the best person to ask for help on your math homework: a family or your teacher?

**TN:** While our family members may very well know the answer, the best person to ask is our teachers. Our teachers are the ones who assigned the homework and are teaching us these specific math concepts. Like all leaders, King Jehoshaphat had advisors, some of whom were likely military leaders, who could have come up with all kinds of solutions to the problem at hand; however, King Jehoshaphat knew where he could get the best, wisest advice: God. When we are facing difficulties, it is important to know that we can always go to God for the best, wisest advice.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 3



**Q3a:** What did Jahaziel tell the king and the people?

**A3:** Jahaziel told the king and the people that God would fight for them.

**Q3b:** Before running a race, a friend tells you the secret to winning: run slowly. Do you take his advice?

**TN:** Running slowly is not how you win a race! This sounds like terrible advice! But what if this friend tells us that this strategy came to him after praying for you? Often, God's solutions don't make much sense to us. When King Jehoshaphat decided to act on the plan laid out by Jahaziel, he did so because he recognized that the suggestion to just stand in front of three fierce armies didn't come for Jahaziel, but from God. Without God, doing things like standing in front of an army or running slowly won't bring us victory. With God, and with our faith in His power and love for us, obeying what often sounds ridiculous will bring us victory and glory to God.

### SLIDE 4



**4a:** What were God's priests called?

**A4:** God's priests were called the Levites.

**Q4b:** You sit down to play a board game with a friend, look at the board, stand up, declare yourself the winner, and walk away. Did you really win?

**TN:** Well, no. We may have the best tactics in mind to win the game, but we have no idea how our friend is going to play, and how her moves would affect our plan. In order to win, we have to play the game until it is over. So, were the Levites a bit early in praising and giving thanks to God for their victory over the armies that were coming against them before the battle had even begun? No. In the board game scenario, we can't proclaim our victory because we don't know how the game will turn out. The Levites knew that not only does God know how the battle will turn out, He also has the power to fight and win the battle. When they praised and thanked God before the battle had even begun, they were showing their deep faith in their all-powerful and loving God.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



**Q5a:** Who marched out in front of King Jehoshaphat's army?

**A5:** Singers dressed in holy robes marched out in front of King Jehoshaphat's army.

**Q5b:** Which soccer team would you be more worried about playing against: the Cobras or the Hamsters?

**TN:** An army led by a pack of singers is about as threatening as a soccer team called the Hamsters. Although their name doesn't suggest it, the Hamsters could very well be the best team we ever play against. The army led into battle by a bunch of singers had the most powerful warrior on their side: God. The people of Jerusalem and Judah were told that God would fight for them, so they worshiped and thanked God all the way out the battlefield. The enemy may have thought they were crazy, but they knew the power they had on their side.

SLIDE 6



**Q6a:** What did God cause the three enemy armies to do?

**A6:** God caused the three enemy armies to fight against each other.

**Q6b:** What are some other ways God could have defeated the three enemy armies?

**TN:** Let students answer and be creative; however, remember this is a story of a battle, so try to keep them from making too many violent suggestions. No matter what they say, all of their answers are correct! God is all-powerful, and He could have defeated the armies in any one of the ways the students suggest. For example, He could have turned them all to dust and then sent a strong gust of wind to blow them away, or He could have turned them all into a lovely field of flowers.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



**Q7a:** What did King Jehoshaphat and his men find in the enemy camp?

**A7:** They found more equipment, clothing, and valuables than they could carry away.

**Q7b:** What are some ways God has blessed you that you are thankful for?

**TN:** Let students answer. It can be family, friends, pets, possessions, or help through a tough situation. God has blessed us all in many wonderful ways! Once the students who want to share have had a chance to answer, ask them all to join you in saying, or even shouting, "Thank You Lord! Your love is forever!"



**MEMORY  
VERSES**



**2 Chronicles 20:21:**

Give thanks to the Lord, for His steadfast love endures forever.

**Philippians 4:6:** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

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**BIG IDEA**



God is on our side, and for that, we are eternally thankful!

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**CLOSING  
PRAYER**



Dear Lord, help us to be thankful in response to everything. When we are sad, hurt, or lonely, help us to come to You for help, remember all the ways You have already been faithful to us, and praise and thank You. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 1



Thanksgiving is when we give God thanks for his favor and kindness. It's easy to be thankful when life is good. But can we be thankful in times of trouble? This was the very question a good king, named Jehoshaphat, had to face, when messengers came to him with terrible news.

The concerned messengers stood before the king and told him, "Three armies have joined together and declared war on you! Jehoshaphat, you must act now!" King Jehoshaphat was terrified. He immediately called the entire nation together to seek God's help through fasting and prayer.

### SLIDE 2



Overcome with fear, the people of Jerusalem gathered together at the temple of God. Typically, gatherings such as this would have been a time of rejoicing and celebration, thanking the Lord for all he had done. But with a vast army approaching, what reason did Jehoshaphat and his people have to be thankful? The king lifted his voice in prayer. "God of heaven and earth, we are desperate for your help. Please hear our cry and rescue us from this mighty enemy!" Every man, woman, and child joined Jehoshaphat in this prayer.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 3



Suddenly, the Spirit of God came upon a man named Jahaziel. He was standing in the midst of the crowd and boldly spoke: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all you people, this is what the Lord says! Do not fear, for tomorrow I will fight this enemy for you. Simply stand still and watch as I bring you victory." As Jahaziel spoke, the people were reminded that God had not gone anywhere. He was with them, he heard their cries, and he would save them by his unfailing love.

### SLIDE 4



King Jehoshaphat was in awe. As he pondered what the Lord had spoken, he was overcome with gratitude. Jehoshaphat fell to his knees and bowed low with his face to the ground. There, before all the people, Jehoshaphat worshipped God from a thankful heart. Everyone in the crowd did the same, following the king's good example. This worship ended with God's priests (called the Levites) standing and then crying out to praise God at the top of their lungs!

### SLIDE 5



Early the next morning, King Jehoshaphat's forces marched out to face the enemy. But along the way, the king did something quite unexpected. He appointed singers, dressed in holy robes, to lead his army. With the king's army following them, the singers proclaimed these words: "Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!" What amazing faith Jehoshaphat had. Even though a mighty army had invaded his land, God's promise of victory was reason enough for the king to give thanks. Jehoshaphat would face this trouble not with sword or shield, but by thanking God for his faithful love!



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 6



As this song of thanksgiving rose to God, something truly miraculous occurred. God caused the enemy force, which was made up of three different armies, to go to war against each other! The battle was so intense that not one enemy soldier survived. When King Jehoshaphat arrived, he found the entire invading army defeated. God had won the victory just as he promised. In that moment, Jehoshaphat learned that God's love is always with us and stronger than any enemy we face. His unfailing love conquers every fear, doubt and worry. Because of this, we have reason to thank God every day!

### SLIDE 7



Later, King Jehoshaphat led a joyful parade of singers and soldiers back to the city. As the good king entered the city, musicians of every kind played in celebration. In the most difficult of times, God demonstrated his unfailing love to Jehoshaphat. Later, he would show the whole world just how great his love is by sending his Son, Jesus. God's love never stops, never fails, and never gives up. It rescues us in the darkest of times from the most dangerous of enemies. Because of this, we too can sing the words: "Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!"