

KIDS of  
INTEGRITY

Thanksgiving

merci.



SPECIAL  
SEASONAL LESSON

**Make a scarecrow, bake “manna” wafers, and hear how God provided for the Israelites when they were “pilgrims” journeying to a new land. You can use this lesson in connection with Thanksgiving, or at any time of year.**

The activities in this lesson are designed to help kids:

- develop a grateful attitude
- remember to thank God and others
- trust God to provide everything they need
- grow in joyfulness and praise.

In addition, this lesson helps address ungratefulness, greed, self-pity and complaining.

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## Parents’ prayer

Before you begin leading your children through this study, spend time alone with God interceding for His help. Ask Him to help you grow in thankfulness, and to release His power in your children. If you wish, you can use the sample prayer below to guide you in praying for your kids’ character development.

### Sample prayer

Lord, You are the giver of so many good things (James 1:17). I have so much to be thankful for, yet I find it so easy to fall into an “oh poor me” attitude. Instead of praising You, I use my voice to complain and model ungratefulness for our kids. In my mind I keep records of injustices. I complain that I am always the one who (*mention all that apply and add some of your own*):

- \_ cuts the grass
- \_ changes dirty diapers
- \_ tidies the kitchen counter
- \_ sweeps the floor
- \_ scrubs the toilets
- \_ makes the bed(s)
- \_ picks up dirty laundry
- \_ fills the ice cube trays
- \_ empties the dishwasher
- \_ replaces the toilet roll
- \_ makes sure the homework is done
- \_ answers the phone
- \_ fills the car with gas
- \_ takes the car in for an oil change
- \_ pays the bills
- \_ reads to the kids
- \_ puts the kids to bed
- \_ drives the kids around
- \_ referees the squabbles
- \_ empties the garbage
- \_ apologizes first

Please forgive me for being like an ungrateful Israelite, whining about water and manna in the desert (Numbers 11:10,13,18,20). Will You send Your Spirit to fill me with joy instead of self-pity? Will You help me find 100 reasons to praise You today? I want to be joyful always and ready to give thanks in all circumstances because this is Your will for us in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19). For Your love and patience, I thank You! Amen.

## Kids talk with God

This section will help you teach your children to reach out to God in all things.

### Sample prayers

Dear God, I give You thanks because You are good. Thank You for giving me \_\_\_\_\_ (name anything you wish). Amen.

Dear God, I am tempted to complain about \_\_\_\_\_ (name an area of dissatisfaction). Please help me to find ways to praise You, even when I am not feeling thankful. Amen.

Dear God, please help me to be joyful always and to remember to give You thanks for all things (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19). Amen.

Dear God, please forgive me for complaining like the Israelites did in the desert (Numbers 11:10,13,18,20). Amen.

## Speak a blessing

Your affirmation will give tremendous encouragement to your children as they strive to be more thankful. Use this section as a reminder to “speak a blessing” when you see evidence of this godly characteristic.

- I noticed that you said “Thank you.” It makes me happy when you are thankful. God likes to hear you say “Thanks” too!
- What an awesome attitude of gratitude you have!
- \_\_\_\_\_, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_. (Model thankfulness by thanking your child for something they have done.)

## Memory verses

Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God’s Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse that your kids can learn in a pre-determined period of time. Aim to review the verse at least once every day.

Psalm 34:10 “The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”

Psalm 107:8-9 “Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men, for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

Psalm 145:7 “They will celebrate Your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of Your righteousness.”

## Kick-off craft

This fun scarecrow serves as a visual reminder of how praising God “scares” away ungrateful attitudes. The scarecrow has a large “thankful heart” to remind kids to thank God in all circumstances.

Short on time? Print a picture of a scarecrow from the Internet instead, then go straight to the questions for discussion and key concepts.

### A thankful scarecrow

#### Directions

You will need the following supplies to create your scarecrow:

- cardboard tubes from paper towels, wrapping paper etc.
- straw, yarn or string
- a cereal box or a similar cardboard box
- paper plates or circular pieces of cardboard
- a hole punch or object for piercing holes
- paper tubes

- scissors to cut shapes for eyes, nose and mouth
- glue or tape
- paint for handprints and footprints, or a pencil for tracing
- coloured paper and any additional items for decorating (e.g. fabric, wallpaper, felt to make clothes)
- extra little hearts or sticky notes (optional)

- 1** Check the questions for discussion and key concepts sections below for points to discuss with your children while you build your scarecrow together.
- 2** Begin constructing your scarecrow by making the hands and feet. Place a sheet of thick white paper or cardstock on the table (for hands) or on the floor (for feet). Paint your child's hands and make handprints and do the same with their feet. (This can be messy and challenging to coordinate, but it will personalize the scarecrow. If you prefer, simply trace your child's hands and feet.)
- 3** Cut a circle of cardboard or use a paper plate for the scarecrow's head. Let your child draw on the face, or design it from the pre-cut shapes for the eyes, nose and mouth. If you prefer, you can print a photo of your child's face. Next, select yarn, ribbon, grass or straw for the hair and secure it with staples or a glue gun. As an alternative, thread yarn or ribbon through holes punched in the paper plate.
- 4** Punch a hole at the top of the scarecrow's head and tie a loop of yarn to serve as a hanger. Punch another hole below the chin so the head can be attached to the body.
- 5** Use a small- to medium-size cereal box for the body, or cut a piece of cardboard measuring 18 x 27 cm (7 x 10.5"). Punch a hole on either side of the body at shoulder height and punch two more holes at the bottom. (These holes will serve to tie on arms and legs.) Punch a hole at the top of

the cereal-box body and use yarn to tie the head to the body.

- 6** Now your child can "dress" the scarecrow in "clothing" by cutting shapes from wallpaper, coloured paper, craft foam, felt or fabric. You can even use old clothes.
- 7** For the arms and legs, use cardboard tubes or make some tubes yourself by rolling up thick paper and taping it so it stays rolled. Punch a hole close to the ends of these tubes and tie them to the appropriate places on the body.
- 8** Secure the handprints and footprints at the end of the tubes that serve as arms and legs.
- 9** Cut a large heart from paper or fabric and attach it to your scarecrow.
- 10** Make a sign displaying your memory verse for the scarecrow to hold.

Throughout your study on thanksgiving, when your children forget to be thankful, go to the scarecrow together, review the memory verse and ask God to help everyone have grateful hearts. When your kids *do* express thankfulness, you can also visit the scarecrow, review your verse and thank God for the joy that accompanies a grateful heart. To affirm your child's thankful attitude, give your child extra little hearts to further decorate their scarecrow.

### Questions for discussion

1. What are some things you often thank God for?
2. Why is it easy to praise God for these things?
3. Is there anything you find it hard to thank God for?
4. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15)?
5. How can being ungrateful take the joy out of blessings? (For example, whining about not getting two scoops of ice cream can steal the joy of having any ice cream at all.)

## Key concepts

Farmers use scarecrows to scare away birds that might want to “steal” the farmer’s harvest. Satan is like those birds: he wants to steal joy from our lives by making us ungrateful for all that we have. He wants us to think about what we *don’t* have, instead of being thankful for what we *do* have. Instead of showing gratitude, Satan wants us to have a “sad-itude” (John 10:10).

Our scarecrow is a reminder that thanking God “scares” away an ungrateful attitude (a “sad-itude”). The best way to scare away sad-itudes is to have a thankful heart and to praise God for everything He gives us. That’s why we pinned a large “grateful heart” on our scarecrow: it’s a reminder to thank God in all circumstances.

## Relevant Scripture

Luke 12:14-15 “Jesus replied, ‘Man, who appointed Me a judge or an arbiter between you?’ Then He said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ ”

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

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## Bible stories

This Thanksgiving lesson is structured a little differently from most of the other Kids of Integrity lessons. **With this lesson, it would be best to cover all six Bible stories, perhaps one each consecutive day.**

## Bitter water, bad attitudes

*Prepare ahead (optional): Make some “bitter water” for your children to sample during your Bible story. Add three tablespoons of lemon juice to one cup of water.*

*Set the scene for this Bible story by reading this brief summary of the preceding events:*

*God helped the Israelites escape from Egypt, where they had spent 430 years working as slaves for the Egyptians. Pharaoh, the ruler of the Egyptians, finally agreed to set the Israelites free and let them leave the country. This*

*sounds like good news, but shortly after Pharaoh let the Israelites go, he changed his mind! He wanted his Israelite slaves back!*

*The Egyptian army came chasing after the Israelites as they fled through the desert. The Israelites were travelling on foot, with their wives and children, and carrying everything they owned. But the Egyptian army had horses and chariots, and they caught up fast. Soon the Israelites found they had nowhere to run: they were trapped by the Red Sea! But God performed a miracle by piling up the water of the Red Sea to the left and right, so the Israelites could safely cross by walking on the ocean floor. When the Egyptian army tried to follow them, God closed the water back over top of the army. It was simply amazing!*

Now read Exodus 15:22-24.

## Questions for discussion

1. What is a desert like?
2. What were the Israelites complaining about when they were in the desert?
3. Would you like to try some bitter water? (*Offer each child a cup of lemon water.*)
4. Would you complain if you were in a desert and this was all you had to drink?

*Add a tablespoon of sugar, honey or agave nectar to each child’s cup and let them sip it while you continue telling the story.*

Read Exodus 15:25-27.

5. What do you think the Israelites said after they tasted the sweet water?
6. Do you think God would have let the Israelites die of thirst in the desert?
7. When the Israelites complained to Moses, who were they really grumbling against?
8. When you complain about something, who else hears you?

9. What did God promise the Israelites?
10. What was it like at Elim – the place that the Israelites came to next?
11. What can you do when you are worried about not getting something you think you need?

### Key concepts

God knew the Israelites needed water and He provided it. There was so much water and so many trees at Elim, we know that God provided more than enough water for the Israelites. At the end of this story, God promised the Israelites that if they listened carefully to His voice, paid attention to His commands and did what was right, that He would not let the diseases that He gave the Egyptians make them sick. God said, “I am the Lord who heals you” (Exodus 15:26). This was another way that God reminded the Israelites of His ability to care for them. You could say that God was even going to be their “doctor in the desert.”

This story helps us understand that God knows what we need and He will provide it. When we are tempted to worry or complain about not having something, we need to remember that God cares for us and will provide what we need (Philippians 4:6-7). If we grumble and complain like the Israelites did, it shows that we are not trusting God. Instead of whining when we think we need something, we should pray and trust God to give us the things we need.

### Make it real

As an exercise in thankfulness, set up a lemonade stand and offer free lemonade. When people stop by for a glass, instruct your kids to tell them, “We are giving away lemonade just to say ‘Thanks for being such great neighbours.’” If it is cold out, you could set up a coffee or hot chocolate stand instead. Alternatively, you could make cookies or pumpkin muffins and deliver them to special neighbours with a thank-you note.

Take time to pray, asking God to teach you to trust Him to take care of you and to give you thankful hearts. As a parent, model thankfulness by noting aloud what you appreciate about the other people

who live in your neighbourhood. If you complain about your neighbours, let your kids hear you pray about your whining, asking God to help you trust Him to take care of any stressful issues in your neighbourhood.

### Relevant Scripture

Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

### Whining about Wheaties

*Prepare ahead (optional): Bake some homemade “manna” using the recipe presented at the end of this Bible story and let your children snack on the manna while you read the story. Or, if you prefer, make your manna together after the Bible story.*

*Short on time? Purchase a slightly sweetened whole grain breakfast cereal to serve as your manna. Some good options are Life, Shreddies, Corn Bran, Kashi’s Honey Sunshine cereal or Weetabix.*

*Set up a make-believe campfire by placing a flashlight under red and yellow tissue or cloth, then cozy up together beside your “fire” in sleeping bags or favourite blankets while you enjoy this Bible story.*

Read Exodus 16:1-16.

### Questions for discussion

1. Do you enjoy camping?
2. Where is your favourite place to camp?
3. What do you think it would be like to camp in a giant field of sand?
4. In today’s Bible story, what were the Israelites complaining about?
5. What did God do to provide food for the Israelites?
6. When we whine and complain, who are we really complaining against?



7. What do you think God thought when the Israelites whined and complained?
8. How can you remember to have a thankful attitude, even when you feel like complaining?

### Key concepts

In our last Bible story, the Israelites were in the Desert of Shur, where God showed them that they didn't need to worry about water: He provided them with all the water they needed. But right after that, when they reached the Desert of Sin, the Israelites began to worry and complain about not having any food. (They sure complained in the Desert of Shur, and sure enough, they sinned in the Desert of Sin!)

So God provided the Israelites with quail to eat in the evening, and in the morning He sent a very special food, called "manna," that covered the ground in flakes. When the people first saw the manna they said, "What is it?" They called it manna, because "manna" in their language means "what is it?" That would be like us calling our breakfast cereal "whatisit."

The Bible says the manna was white like coriander seed and tasted like it was sweetened with honey and baked with olive oil (Exodus 16:31, Numbers 11:7-8). God sent the manna for the Israelites to eat for forty years – the entire time they were in the desert (Exodus 16:35).

Even though God provides food, water and shelter for us every day, when things get hard we can be tempted to doubt God's ability to care for us. In Genesis 22 there's another story about how God provided. This time, God provided Abraham with a lamb to sacrifice. Overjoyed, Abraham called the place "The Lord Will Provide" and he called God by the special name "Jehovah Jireh," which means "God is the God who provides." When we feel worried or begin to doubt if God is going to take care of us, we can pray and call God by the name "Jehovah Jireh" to remind us that we can trust God to take care of all our needs.

### Make it real

Here's the recipe for manna wafers. Before you enjoy your manna snack, make a list of the things you

require to live (i.e., a home for shelter, food, water, clothing and a family or friends to love). Pray and thank God for providing everything you need.

### Manna wafers

3¼ cups whole wheat flour  
 1 tsp. baking soda  
 ½ tsp. salt  
 ½ tsp. coriander (optional)  
 ⅛ cup butter, melted, or olive oil  
 ½ cup honey  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 ½ cup unsweetened applesauce (equals one 111 g container of Mott's brand)  
 1 egg  
 sugar to sprinkle on top (optional)

- 1 Preheat oven to 375 °F.
- 2 Use a hand mixer to blend the butter, honey, vanilla, applesauce and egg together.
- 3 Sift in just one cup of the whole wheat flour, 1 tsp. baking soda and ½ tsp. powdered coriander (optional – note that the Bible says manna was *like* coriander in looks, not necessarily taste).
- 4 Mix the dough until it is uniformly blended. Continue adding flour until the dough is stiff enough to roll out.
- 5 Roll the dough as thin as possible. The thinner you roll it, the more authentic it will be, as manna was described as being flaky.
- 6 If you want to sweeten the wafers slightly, sprinkle the surface of the rolled-out dough with white or brown sugar. Gently roll over the sugared surface to adhere the sugar to the dough.
- 7 Cut the "manna" into squares or use cookie cutters to punch out a variety of shapes.
- 8 Place the wafers on a non-stick cookie sheet and bake in the oven at 375 °F for 8-10 minutes. The manna wafers are done when they are lightly browned and spring back when pressed lightly with a fingertip.

## Relevant Scripture

Genesis 22:14 “So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.’”

1 Timothy 6:17 “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.”

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## Whining about water . . . again!

After the Bible story you may want to play the M&M game, which is explained below under **make it real**.

Read Exodus 17:1-7.

## Questions for discussion

1. What were the Israelites whining and complaining about in this story?
2. Who were the Israelites demanding water from?
3. Do you think Moses had any water for the Israelites?
4. Who should the Israelites have been asking for water?
5. How did God provide water?
6. Why do you think God chose to make water come out of a rock?
7. What do you need in order to live?
8. What is the difference between wanting something and needing it?
9. Do you believe God can give you the things you need?
10. What can you do to remind yourself not to complain about eating \_\_\_\_\_? (List some foods that your child prefers not to eat.)

## Key concepts

Usually when children really want something from you you would think that after seeing all the previous miracles (the journey through the Red Sea, bitter water being made sweet and food from heaven) that the Israelites would have learned to trust God. Unfortunately, they continued to doubt God’s ability to provide for them.

It’s easy for us to make the same mistake the Israelites did. Instead of appreciating and thanking God for all that we have, we demand more and more. In Isaiah, God explains that even the wild animals honour Him because He provides water for them in the desert. God also says that He will provide water for His people so that they will praise Him. God wants to hear us praise Him for taking care of us (Isaiah 43:19-21), and He certainly deserves it!

## Make it real

Add some fun to this lesson by introducing the M&M game in this way:

In the Bible story, we learned that the Israelites quarrelled with Moses and tested God’s patience. So Moses called the place “Massah and Meribah.” “Massah” means “testing” and “Meribah” means “quarrelling” (Exodus 17:2, 7).

To play the M&M game, every time anyone complains, the rest of the family gently says “M and M” or “mmmm,” reminding everyone of the words “Massah and Meribah.” This is a polite way of saying that you don’t want your home to be full of quarrelling, or a place where you test God’s patience.

As a “penalty” for complaining, the person who whined needs to think of three things to thank God for instead. Here is an example of how an episode might play out:

**Parent:** “Please pick up those toys before supper.”

**Child:** “I don’t want to. Get my brother to do it. He played with them too.”

**Parent:** “M and M.”

**Child:** “But I don’t want to clean up.”



**Parent:** “Oops! I just heard you complain again. Can you think of three things to thank God for? I can help you get started. Which toy on the floor is your favourite?”

**Child:** “I like this giraffe best.”

**Parent:** “Great. Let’s see if you can put it in the toy box before I can say, ‘Thank You, God, for the giraffe.’ Can you think of two more things you are thankful for?”

**Child:** “Blankie and Bunny.”

**Parent:** “Thank You, God, for Blankie, Bunny and Giraffe. Thank You too for \_\_\_\_\_ (insert all of your children’s names here). Please give us thankful hearts. Amen.”

To add a fun twist to the game, also give out a candy M&M each time a child expresses appreciation or thanks unprompted. Don’t tell your kids why you are handing out candy, and see how long it takes them to figure it out.

When someone whines or complains, you can also use your choice of the verses below to remind your children of the importance of praising God instead. Pray with your child, thanking God for His love and goodness. Encourage your child to ask God to forgive their ungratefulness. Thank God specifically for the good things He provides and then close by asking God to give your child a thankful heart.

### Relevant Scripture

Psalm 107:8-9 “Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men, for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

Isaiah 43:19-21 “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor Me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to My people, My chosen, the people I formed for Myself that they may proclaim My praise.”

Isaiah 63:7 “I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which He is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us – yes, the many good things He has done for the house of Israel, according to His compassion and many kindnesses.”

### Mad about manna

**Prepare ahead (optional):** Before you read this Bible story, liven things up a little by finding a picture of a hot dog or a cut of meat. Each time you read the word “meat” in the story, hold up the picture as a sign that you want your kids to chant “We want meat! We want meat!” (You might want to review the passage first to identify the best points in the story to hold up the “meat” sign.)

After the story you may want to share your own “manna meal” together, as described under the header **make it real**.

Read Numbers 11:4-23, 31-34.

### Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever become tired of eating a certain food? If so, what was it?
2. If you were camping in the desert on vacation and all you had to eat every day was pancakes, would you complain?
3. Once you got tired of eating pancakes, what might you wish you could eat instead?
4. In today’s Bible story, what did the Israelites want to eat instead of manna?
5. Why was God angry with the Israelites?
6. What special new food did God send for the Israelites to eat?
7. What did the Israelites name the place where they buried people who died in the plague?
8. How can we be thankful, even when things are not going the way we want them to?

## Key concepts

It's easy for us to sit here in our comfortable home where we eat a huge variety of foods each day and criticize the Israelites for worrying about water and whining about eating manna. But realistically, if we were living in a hot, dry desert and ate nothing but manna for days, we would likely do our share of complaining too.

God considers it sin when we are not thankful for the good things we have. If we think about what we don't have, it is easy to start complaining. The best way to avoid having a "sad-itude" (an "oh poor me" attitude), is to praise God for what we *do* have, even when we think life is difficult or we don't have all the things we think we want.

## Make it real

For one meal, eat only one unsweetened, carbohydrate-based food, for example, brown rice, whole grain bread, potatoes, popcorn, crackers or oatmeal. Eat your "manna" with no salt, seasonings or extras such as ketchup, sauces, dips, dressings or butter. As you eat your meal that's lacking in colour, variety, texture and flavour, talk about how the Israelites must have felt eating manna every day for forty years while camping in the desert.

During your meal, you can also discuss children in underprivileged countries who are constantly hungry and have only one meal of rice each day, and also review your choice of the Scriptures below.

Practice being thankful for everything, even your "boring" meal. Here's a thankfulness prayer based on Philippians 4:12: *Dear God, Please teach us the secret of being content in any and every situation. Help us to remember to thank You, whether we are well fed or hungry; whether we have lots of things or very little. Thank You. Amen.*

## Relevant Scripture

Psalm 107:9 "... for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things."

Psalm 111:5 "He provides food for those who fear Him; He remembers His covenant forever."

Philippians 4:12b-13 "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

1 Timothy 6:8 "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."

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## Long "time out" in the desert

*Prepare ahead (optional): Take a peek at the first idea under make it real; you may want to do this exercise before you read the story. An ideal time to tell this story is when you are on your way to visit a friend's or relative's home for Thanksgiving dinner.*

Read Numbers 13:1-3, 17-21, 25-33; 14:1-11, 21-30, 36-38.

## Questions for discussion

1. Do you remember all the ways God had already taken care of the Israelites in the desert?
2. What were the Israelites grumbling about this time?
3. Why do you think they still doubted that God could take care of them?
4. Who tried to encourage the Israelites?
5. If you had been there with the Israelites, what would you have said to encourage everyone to trust God?
6. What do you think would have happened if the Israelites had chosen to praise God instead of grumbling?
7. Can you think of some things the Israelites could have been thankful for?
8. What are you going to do the next time you are tempted to complain about something good God has provided?

## Key concepts

Just like Mom and Dad do a very good job of taking care of you, God was taking very good care of the Israelites in the desert. First, God brought them out of Egypt, where they had been miserable working as slaves. Then He performed the miracle of opening up a road through the Red Sea as an escape route when they were being chased by the Egyptian army. God also made sure the Israelites had food and water in the desert. He made the bitter water sweet enough to drink, He fed them delicious munchies, called manna, and provided much more meat than they could eat. God even made water suddenly appear, flowing out of a rock.

After all the miracles God had done for the Israelites, you would think they would have figured out that God was big enough to take care of them. When the spies returned from the Promised Land and told the Israelites there was no way they could take over the land because the people living there were too big and strong, God was not pleased with the Israelites for doubting that He could take care of them. God sent the Israelites away from the Promised Land for forty years! It was like God gave them a very, very long “time out” in the desert.

We can learn a lesson from what happened to the Israelites and make sure that we trust God and thank Him for caring for us. Always remember that God is who He says He is, and that He will do what He says He will do.

## Make it real

Pick a destination you know your kids will be excited about. It might be a favourite restaurant, a grandparent’s home, a pool, water park or indoor play zone. When everyone is loaded in the vehicle, ask your kids what you are supposed to do next. (Ideally they will tell you to start the engine!) You can also hint at it by saying, “Hmmm, I wonder if I’ll be able to start the car today.” After you get the engine running, ask your kids if they thought you would be able to start the car, or if they had doubted your capability. As you are driving, remind them how the Israelites doubted God’s ability to give them the Promised Land as He said He would.

When you arrive at your destination, pretend that your kids are the spies Moses sent out to explore the Promised Land. Have them bring you back unfavourable reports about your destination. For example, *The park is full of red ants. They’ll get in our pants!* Or, *The park smells like garbage. There are pigeons flying all over and they will poop on us!* Then invite one of your children to try to convince the others that God will protect you all, despite the ants, pigeons or other “dangers.”

Pray with your kids, borrowing a prayer from Jeremiah 32:17: *Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You. Please help us to trust You to care for us and give us thankful hearts. Amen.*

When you notice someone grumbling, whining or doubting, send the child for a “time out” and remind them of the long time out the Israelites had to serve when they complained. When the time out is over, read one of the verses from below aloud and pray with your child asking God to give him or her a trusting and thankful heart. Here’s a sample script you could use: *Please help \_\_\_\_\_ (your child’s name) to trust that You love him/her. Please remind him/her to sing and praise You for all the good things You do (Psalm 13:5-6).*

## Relevant Scripture

Psalm 107:9 “. . . for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

Jeremiah 32:27 “I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?”

Mark 10:27 “Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.’”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

## Elephant altar

*Prepare ahead (optional): Begin by looking through a family photo album with your children. Point out that*

*when special events take place – weddings, birthdays, graduations and vacations – people take pictures so they can remember the special event. Tell your kids that today’s Bible story is about an extraordinary event that took place so long ago that the people back then didn’t have cameras to take pictures.*

*Set the scene for today’s Bible reading by summarizing the previous story:*

*In our last Bible story, we read how God gave the Israelites a very long “time out”! He made them wait forty years in the desert, because they had not trusted that God would protect them from the dangerous-looking people who lived in the wonderful land God wanted to give the Israelites. But now the forty years have passed and God is about to lead the people across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. Let’s find out what happens . . .*

Read Joshua 3:9-4:24.

### **Questions for discussion**

1. The Israelite children had only *heard* stories of how their parents had miraculously crossed the Red Sea. Do you think the children were excited that they were about to see a similar miracle?
2. Do you think the priests at the front of the ark were afraid when they stepped into the flooded Jordan River?
3. What happened when the priests stepped in the water?
4. Is that something you would want to take a picture of?
5. How was the altar that God told the Israelites to make like a photograph?
6. What did God want the Israelites to remember?
7. What were the Israelites to tell their children who asked about the twelve stones?
8. Can you name an animal that people say “never forgets”?

### **Key concepts**

The Israelites didn’t have cameras to take pictures, but God had another plan to help the Israelites remember the day they crossed the Jordan River. God told Joshua to build an altar made of rocks from the riverbed. The purpose of the pile of rocks was to help the Israelites remember the good things God had done for them and to remind them that He would be with them in the Promised Land. Just like kids enjoy hearing stories about the past, we can guess that the little Israelite kids probably asked their parents to tell them the story of crossing the Jordan River over and over again, every time they saw the big pile of rocks. From this story, we learn that God wants us to plan ahead, creating reminders so that we don’t forget His goodness and care.

### **Make it real**

Build your own altar as a way to remember to thank God for His presence in your home and for the good things He provides for you. Have fun involving your children in the building of the altar using things they are thankful for. It could be food, toys, clothing and other basic necessities. Leave the pile visible as a reminder to let God know how thankful you are for all that He provides for you. If you’d like to tie in the idea that “an elephant never forgets” you can try to build your altar in the shape of an elephant. If you’re short on time, simply place a basket on your kitchen table and fill it with items you are thankful for.

In the future, when it appears your kids are forgetting to be thankful, you can encourage them to look at the altar and read Deuteronomy 8:10-18 as a reminder of the importance of remembering to thank God for the many ways He cares for them.

### **Relevant Scripture**

Deuteronomy 8:10-18 “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land He has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe His commands, His laws and His decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of



the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your ancestors, as it is today."

Acts 7:36 "He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the desert."

1 Timothy 6:17 "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."

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## Hands-on options

These ideas make it easy for you to build thankfulness into your day-to-day activities. Read over the options at the beginning of your week and choose a few that will suit your family.

### Praise brigade

*drive time or any time*

Mom or Dad, pick a day that suits and say thank you to God, out loud, for everything! (Don't tell your children beforehand; see if they catch on). Thank God for fresh water every time you turn on a tap, for electricity when you turn on a light switch, and for food when you have something to eat. Thank Him for friends and family who phone, text or email. You can thank God for difficulties and problems as well. The sky is the limit – and you can thank Him for that too! Finally, ask your kids if they are tired of hearing you praise God. Whether they answer yes or no doesn't matter, just let your children know that God *never* gets tired of hearing our praise.

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## Thankfulness jam

*drive time or any time*

While driving in your car, open up discussion by inviting your kids to tell you what life would be like without a car or a vehicle for transportation. Work together to include your kids' ideas in a short rhyme of praise. For example, *God, thanks for our car; without it we couldn't go far!*

Each time you drive somewhere, repeat the jingle and add another verse like this one: *God, thanks for our food; not to say thanks would be really rude!* This is a fun way to remember to thank God for all the ways He provides for your family.

Other things you can praise God for include shoes, food, clothing, pets, stores, water, health, friends, family, freedom and books. See how many verses you can add to your "thankfulness jam" and still remember them!

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## Day-starter praise

*any time*

Sing the song *This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made* (or another suitable song) as a wakeup call or at breakfast each day. The lyrics to *This Is the Day* are widely available on the Internet.

You can also sing this song together at any time of day; it's a great reminder when children are tempted to be ungrateful. As you sing the song, modify the verse by adding things or people you are thankful for. For example:

*This is our family (2x)*

*Whom the Lord has given (2x)*

*Let us rejoice (2x)*

*And be glad with them. (2x)*

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## Praise necklace

*creative crafts*

Make a "Psalm 148 praise necklace" with your kids. Begin by reading Psalm 148 and asking your children to identify any aspect of nature listed in the Psalm that brings praise to God. Each time they suggest

something, have your children choose a coloured bead to represent that thing from nature that brings praise to God.

For example, you might use blue beads for the sky, green beads for hills, brown for furry wild animals, yellow or gold for the sun, moon and stars, white for the clouds that bring rain, clear for the water in mountain streams, gray for stormy winds, and multi-coloured beads for fruit trees. When your children wear their handiwork, it will help them remember to thank God for His!

## Homemade cards

*creative crafts*

Purchase some cardstock with matching envelopes and work with your children to make a supply of handcrafted thank-you cards for use in the future, as the need arises.

If you need an idea to get started, you might like to decorate your cards with some of the phrases from the hands-on option “Fun ways to say thank you.” Print out your thank-you phrases in a variety of different languages and colours, then glue them on the cover of your card. Inside, write the caption “Many, many thank yous!”

Whenever you finish an enrolled session, be it a team sport, swimming lessons, music lessons or a school term, have your child take a thank-you card to the teacher or coach.

## Shining like stars

*getting into nature*

On a clear night, have your children look up in the sky and tell you what they see. As you continue stargazing, read Philippians 2:14-16a: “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life . . .”

Take some time to talk about how easy it is to complain instead of being thankful. We “shine like stars” when we do things without grumbling and have

an attitude of gratitude, rather than a “sad-itude.” (A sad-itude shows when a person is sad, upset or complaining because he / she is not getting what he / she wants.) The best way to stomp out a sad-itude is to think of a reason to praise God.

## Names of God prayers

*drive time or any time*

Most of us remember the childhood prayer that begins with the phrase, *God is great, God is good, let us thank Him . . .* Yes, *God is great* and *God is good*, but He is so much more too! To teach your children about the many dimensions of God’s character, keep an envelope in your car or at the kitchen table that’s full of slips of paper with various “names of God” written on them.

Every time you go for a drive or sit down to eat, have your child pull out one name for God and pray together, based on the name. For example, “The God of all Comfort” is one of God’s special names. You can pray a simple prayer together along those lines, such as, *Thank You God for being like a warm quilt on a cold night. When times are rough, what a comfort it is to have You as our Comforter! Amen.* (This name and prayer are based on 2 Corinthians 1:2-4.)

In the table on page 15 you will find more names of God to inspire praise. The columns listing the names of God and supporting Scriptures are reproduced, with permission, from *Time Out: Prayer Retreat Manual* by Mary Kassian (Kingdom Communications Inc., 2005).

## High-five prayer

*any time*

Praise God for the joy of having five senses with this “high-five prayer.” Start each sentence yourself, and have your children take turns finishing them. Finish by giving each other high fives.

*Dear God, thank You for my eyes. I like to look at \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Thank You for giving me ears. My favourite sound is \_\_\_\_\_.*

**Continued on page 16**



## Names of God table

Name of God	Supporting Scripture	Sample prayer of praise
<p>“El” Mighty One</p>	<p><i>Psalm 50:1-2 “The Mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.”</i></p>	<p>God Almighty, You are the Mighty One. As we see the sun rise and set each day, please remind us of Your beauty and Your power. Amen.</p>
<p>“El Shaddai” God Almighty</p>	<p><i>Revelation 4:8b “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”</i></p>	<p>Lord God Almighty, only You are holy. Thank You for being the Lord of yesterday and today. You are the Lord of tomorrow and the next day too. Amen.</p>
<p>“Borey” Creator</p>	<p><i>Isaiah 40:28 “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.”</i></p>	<p>God, You are the Creator of the earth. You never get tired and You never grow old. Thank You for making _____ Amen.</p>
<p>“Ha-El-ha-Nora” Awesome God</p>	<p><i>Nehemiah 9:32a “Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps His covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in Your eyes . . .”</i></p>	<p>Awesome God, today we want to praise You for being so amazing! Thank You for _____ Amen.</p>
<p>“El ha-Kavod” God of Glory</p>	<p><i>Psalm 29:3-4 “The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic.”</i></p>	<p>God of Glory, when I hear the thunder and it is scary, please help me remember that it is Your power making the big rumbles! Amen.</p>
<p>“Melek ha-Goyim” King of the Nations</p>	<p><i>Jeremiah 10:6-7 “No one is like You, Lord; You are great, and Your name is mighty in power. Who should not revere You, King of the nations? This is Your due. Among all the wise leaders of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like You.”</i></p>	<p>God, You are great! You are King of the nations! You are wiser than all the wise men in the world! Amen.</p>
<p>“Yahweh Rophey” Lord Healer</p>	<p><i>Exodus 15:26 “He said, ‘If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.’”</i></p> <p><i>Psalm 103:2-3 “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases . . .”</i></p>	<p>Lord God, today we want to thank You for being the One who makes us better when we are sick. Thank You for forgiving us too – healing the sin-sickness in our hearts. Amen.</p>
<p>“Yaweh Shalom” The Lord is Peace</p>	<p><i>Judges 6:24 “So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites ”</i></p> <p><i>Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”</i></p>	<p>God of Peace, we pray today, thanking You for _____ (name a stressful or difficult situation relationally). We ask You to give us peace in place of _____ (worry / fear / fighting etc.). Thank You. Amen.</p>

### Continued on page 16

The columns listing the names of God and supporting Scriptures are reproduced, with permission, from *Time Out: Prayer Retreat Manual* by Mary Kassian (Kingdom Communications Inc., 2005).

## Names of God table (continued)

Name of God	Supporting Scripture	Sample prayer of praise
"Hatsur" The Rock	<i>Deuteronomy 32:4 "He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He."</i>	God, You are our Rock! Thank You for being solid and strong like a rock! You are faithful and we trust You! Amen.
"Pele Yo-ets" Wonderful Counsellor	<i>Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."</i>  <i>John 14:26 "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."</i>	God, thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit as our teacher! We want to be willing to learn everything You want to teach us! Amen.
"Uzzi Yawhe Chizqi" O Lord, My Strength	<i>Psalms 59:16-17 "But I will sing of Your strength, in the morning I will sing of Your love; for You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. You are my strength, I sing praise to You; You, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely."</i>	God, when we feel weak, please be our Strength. We want to sing praise to You, even in times of trouble. Amen.
"Immanuel" God With Us	<i>Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel."</i>	Jesus, thank You for living on earth as a person. Thank You for being with us every day too! Amen.
"Ek Theos" Love	<i>1 John 4:16 "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."</i>	God, You are love! Please fill us with Your love so we can share it with others. Amen.
"Moshiach" Messiah / Christ	<i>John 1:41 "The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ)."</i>  <i>Philippians 2:8-15 "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."</i>	Jesus Christ, today we bow down and call You Messiah and Lord. You are Lord of this earth and Lord of the whole universe. We invite You to be Lord in our home and Lord in our hearts too. Amen.

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Thank You for creating skin. I really like the feel of \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank You for my tongue and the taste of \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank You for bad smells that warn me not to touch or taste! Thank You for good smells, especially \_\_\_\_\_. Amen.

## Praise placemats

### creative crafts

Make praise placemats for your dinner table that are decorated with the words, Thank You Jesus! Every time you thank God for something, add a picture of that item to your placemats. Remember that you can praise and thank God for challenges too.

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## Seeing the bright side

*drive time or any time*

Help your children understand that there is a positive side to everyday circumstances with this simple game called What's the Bright Side? You will need a blindfold (or a stretchy headband works well).

Begin by asking your children to help you think of some jobs or things you or your kids dislike. For a parent it may be scrubbing toilets. For a child, eating salmon for supper may tempt them to whine.

Explain to your kids that having a negative attitude means we are "blind" to the many good things in our lives. Then, take turns wearing the blindfold. Think of a scenario in which the person who is wearing the blindfold could be tempted to complain. The blindfolded person then has to think of a reason to be thankful in regards to that situation. (You'll need to explain that this is called "seeing the bright side.")

For example, the blindfolded person could say, *As much as I hate scrubbing toilets, I am thankful that we have an indoor toilet to use instead of an outhouse. Or, I don't care for fish, but I am thankful that I have food to eat.*

Let everyone have a turn wearing the blindfold and "seeing the bright side."

For follow up, model gratefulness for your children by stating aloud the things you are choosing to be thankful for. For example, as you load the dishwasher or wash the dishes you might say, *Thank You God for all these dirty dishes. Dirty dishes remind me that our family has food to eat.* When your children complain about little jobs or inconveniences, you can ask them to "see the bright side." Don't forget that you can also encourage them to thank God for difficulties and fears. For example, your child could say, *Dear God, I don't like being scared of the dark, but I'm glad that my fear reminds me to trust You to take care of me. Amen.*

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## Fun ways to say thank you

*any time*

Encourage your children to show gratitude by teaching them how to say *thank you* in a different language. Having fun using a "new" word will hopefully encourage your kids to say thank you more often. Here's a list you can use, or you can research other languages on the Internet.

### New ways to say "thank you"

**Afrikaans:** Dankie

**Albanian:** Faleminderit

**Arabic:** Shukran

**Bosnian:** Hvala

**Chinese:** Xie xie (pronounced "Shyeh shyeh")

**Czech:** Dekuji

**Croatian:** Hvala

**Danish:** Tak

**Dutch:** Dank je (pronounced "Dank yuhh") or Bedankt (pronounced "Buh dannkt")

**Filipino:** Salamat

**Finnish:** Kiitos (sounds like "Kee-tos")

**French:** Merci

**German:** Danke (informal; pronounced "Dahn-kuh")

**Hebrew:** Toda (pronounced "Toh Dah")

**Icelandic:** Takk Fyrir

**Italian:** Grazie

**Japanese:** Arigato (informal; pronounced "Ah-ree-gah-toh")

**Maltese:** Grazzi

**Norwegian:** Takk

**Polish:** Dziękuję

**Punjabi:** Dhannvaad

**Romanian:** Mulțumesc (pronounced "Mool-too-mesk")

**Russian:** Spasibo (sounds like "Spa-see-boh")

**Spanish:** Gracias

**Swahili:** Ahsante

**Swedish:** Tack

**Thai:** Khawp khun khrap (if you're male) or Khawp khun kha (if you're female)

**Welsh:** Diolch

**Vietnamese:** Cam on (pronounced "Caam-ungh")

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## God feeds you, me and the bumble bee

### getting into nature

Plan to go exploring outdoors to discuss how God cares for animals. As you walk with your kids, point out the animals you see and discuss how God takes care of them. Below you'll also find some facts about animals mentioned in the Bible: lions, wild donkeys, cows, mountain goats and sea life. Included with the animal facts are some additional ideas to use on your walk.

For each type of animal, invite your children to think about how God takes care of them.

### Questions for discussion

1. What does each animal eat?
2. How does it get its food?
3. Where does it live?
4. How does it stay safe?
5. Where does it get water?

Read aloud the animal facts provided later in this section. Point out that animals need the same things we do: food, water and protection from the weather and from enemies. The Bible tells us that God cares for the animals. The Bible also says that God considers us much more valuable than birds, so we can be sure that God will take care of us too.

Pray with your kids, praising and thanking God for His love and care. Here's a sample prayer based on Psalm 147:7-9 and Luke 12:22-24:

*Dear God, it makes me so happy to see how You care for us and for all the animals that I want to sing! You put clouds in the sky and send rain to help all the plants grow. Thank You for the rain that waters the earth! Thank You that we don't need to worry about being fed and that the animals don't have to worry either. Seeing what good care You take of the animals reminds me that You will take care of me too. Thank You Jesus! Amen.*

### Relevant Scripture

Psalm 147:7-9 "Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp. He covers the sky with clouds; He supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call."

Luke 12:22-24 "Then Jesus said to His disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!'"

### Animal facts for discussion

#### Lions

*On your walk, invite one or two children to hide in the grass or trees, pretending to be lions who jump out on the rest of your group. After your "lion encounter," read Job 38:39-41 (see below). Explain that, in this Bible passage, God is reminding Job that He cares for the lions and the ravens. Now discuss the needs of lions using the facts below.*

**Habitat:** Lions live in grasslands, dense bush and woodlands, but not in jungles.

**Diet:** It may sound odd, but the female lions do much more of the hunting than the males. Their prey includes large animals such as wildebeests, zebras, buffaloes, young elephants, rhinos, hippos and giraffes. Lions will also eat smaller animals like mice, lizards, tortoises, warthogs, antelopes and even crocodiles. As for water, lions drink water daily if there is water around; however, they can go for four or five days without drinking any water at all.

**Protection and predators:** Their size, strength, sharp claws and teeth provide lions with protection from other animals; however, people kill lions for cultural rituals and for sport. Lions are now considered a protected animal in many parts of Africa.

Source for lion facts:  
[Outtoofraica.nl/animals/englion.html](http://Outtoofraica.nl/animals/englion.html)

## Relevant Scripture

Job 38:39-41 “Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?”

## Wild donkeys

Invite your children to pretend they are wild donkeys running around, kicking up their heels. You could even have a lion chase a donkey. After the frolic, call your wild animals together and read Psalm 104:10-13, 21-22. Next, discuss the needs of wild donkeys and your choice of birds.

**Habitat:** The African wild donkey lives in hilly and stony deserts and in the bushlands and grasslands. It avoids sandy areas.

**Diet:** Wild donkeys need to live where there is water to drink. The African wild donkey is considered a “grazer,” meaning that it eats mainly grasses and small shrubs or plants. It can eat even the hardest desert grasses because it uses its teeth and hooves to break up the clumps of grass.

**Protection and predators:** The wild donkey can run very fast! It can run as fast as cars typically drive on city streets (50 km/h). People still hunt donkeys, as do large wild cats. The African wild donkey is an endangered species, meaning there are so few left that they are in danger of being completely gone.

Source for wild donkey facts:

[Animalinfo.org/species/artiperi/equafri.htm](http://Animalinfo.org/species/artiperi/equafri.htm)

## Relevant Scripture

Psalm 104:10-13 “He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of His work.”

Psalm 104:21-22 “The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens.”

## Domestic cattle

Have your children pretend to be cows by finding some grass and pretending to eat it. Then read Psalm 104:14-15. Invite your children to think of food we get “from the earth.” (You can trace any food’s origin to the earth!) Now discuss the needs of cows and the ways cows provide food for us too.

**Habitat:** Cows can live almost anywhere in the world as long as their owners provide shelter and food for them. Cows can even live outdoors during the cold Canadian winter. There are many different kinds of cows. The breeds that are best at producing milk are called dairy cows. Beef cattle are the ones raised for their meat.

**Diet:** Cows eat grass, hay (dried grasses and plants), grain and silage (which is kind of like sauerkraut made with grass). Like humans, cows are happiest when they have water to drink every day.

**Protection and predators:** The farmer cares for his herd of cows by providing food, adequate shelter and protection from predators like coyotes. Coyotes will typically prey on very young or weak cows. The mother cow will protect her calf from predators by snorting and pawing the ground with her hooves. If need be, she will charge and head butt a person or any other creature who she thinks is threatening her calf.

Wild cows still exist in a wide range of species, including bison, yak, banteng, gaur, water buffalo, anoa, tamaraw and saola. Many of these animals are endangered. If you have children who are especially interested in nature, you could do some research on these animals together.

Source for wild cattle facts: [Wildcattleconservation.org](http://Wildcattleconservation.org)

## Relevant Scripture

Psalm 104:14-15 “He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate – bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.”



### **Mountain goat**

*Ideally you'll be able to find a play structure or some rocks where your children can pretend to be mountain goats. Read Psalm 104:18, then discuss the unique habitat and needs of mountain goats.*

**Habitat:** The Rocky Mountain goat lives in the mountain areas of Western Canada and the United States.

**Diet:** Grasses, leaves and evergreen trees are the foods favoured by mountain goats. Mountain goats drink from mountain springs and streams and can also eat snow for hydration.

**Protection and predators:** Bears and cougars are the mountain goat's main enemies. Mountain goats stay safe by being quick and sure footed. They are extremely agile on rocky ledges and are very efficient climbers. They can climb up 457 m (1,500 feet) in just 20 minutes. (At this rate a mountain goat could climb to the top of the CN Tower, the tallest building in Canada, in less than 25 minutes. The CN Tower measures 1,815.4 feet.)

Since the Rocky Mountain goat lives in areas where people don't usually go, or can't go, the mountain goat has not been as affected by human activity as many other large North American mammals have been.

Source for mountain goat facts: [Ultimateungulate.com](http://Ultimateungulate.com)

### **Relevant Scripture**

Psalm 104:18 *"The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coney."* (A "coney" or "hyrax" is a small mammal that superficially resembles a guinea pig.)

### **Sea life**

*Lastly, invite your children to pretend to be fish, or some other kind of sea creature. Read Psalm 104:25,27-28. If you wish, you can research the needs of the sea animals your children are most interested in.*

### **Relevant Scripture**

Psalm 104:25,27-28 *"There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number – living things both large and small. . . . These*

*all look to You to give them their food at the proper time. When You give it to them, they gather it up; when You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good things."*

## **Recommended resources**

For a list of children's stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **Thanksgiving** lesson at [Kidsofintegrity.com](http://Kidsofintegrity.com).