Giving Thanks for God’s Blessings

I will thank you for ever, because of what you have done.
In the presence of the faithful, I will proclaim your name, for it is good. Psalm 52:9

Introduction
Thanksgiving is an important part of prayer and spiritual life. A development of gratitude and appreciation for God’s gifts is relevant to food issues and applicable through faith-based lessons. Managing our resources efficiently and reducing waste is an expression of gratitude in practice.

We have learned in the other lessons about the goodness of God’s creation. From the very beginning in the book of Genesis God creates and God calls creation good and very good! We have also seen the many ways we can respond to that goodness with our choices and actions as caretakers and stewards. In this module we explore one of the simplest ways we can respond to the goodness of creation. We can simply say “thank you.” Yet, even though this can seem simple, our challenge is to mean it. To be sincere in our gratitude to God. Not just one time, but to live with an attitude of gratitude. That attitude can then inform, inspire, and sustain every other action we take to care for God’s good creation. This is spiritual work. It is soul work. Deep. How do we say thank you and mean it? How do we show our gratitude through the choices we make?

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Prayer

Thank You for the World So Sweet

Thank you for the world so sweet.
Thank you for the food we eat.
Thank you for the birds that sing.
Thank you, Lord, for everything. Amen.
Song

For the Beauty of the Earth

For the beauty of the earth
For the glory of the skies
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise

For the wonder of each hour
Of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower
Sun and moon and stars of light
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise

For the joy of human love
Brother, sister, parent, child
Friends on earth and friends above
For all gentle thoughts and mild
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise

For each perfect gift of thine
To your people so freely given
For thy constant love divine
Peace on earth and joy in heaven
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise

To hear the melody for this song, visit YouTube. (Words are slightly different than our version printed here.)

Secret Calls and Caterpillar Walk

These games offer opportunities to build teamwork and encourage team members to solve problems together. They can be played indoors or outdoors for as long as you need to entertain the children before their next activity.

**Time Needed:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Blindfolds (men’s ties, bandanas, scrap fabric, etc.)

**Secret Calls:**
1. Two to three players form a group. Each group agrees on a special signal (e.g., chirping, hissing, or whatever the players think of themselves).
2. Team members are blindfolded and mixed up throughout the room.
3. The members of the groups must now try to find each other. Touching is not allowed and no other signals or words are allowed other than the agreed upon call.
4. Mix up group members and do it again. New signals should be agreed upon.

**Caterpillar Walk:**
1. Players form a line like a long caterpillar. Everyone takes the leg of the player in front of her/him and holds it in her/his hand.
2. Then everyone hops at the same time after the first player (who is a leader) hops.
3. See how many hops can be accomplished without falling over or dropping anyone's legs!

*Adapted from YouthWorkPractice.com*
**Leaf Sun-Catcher**

**Time Needed:** 1 hour

**Materials:**
- Leaves (not dried)
- Sticks and twigs
- Twine or string
- Glue
- Needle and thread

**Instructions:**
1. Take a walk and collect leaves, sticks, and twigs of all different sizes. Do not use leaves that are dried out or brittle.
2. Make a frame using the sticks and twigs. Place the sticks in a rectangle formation and tie the corners together using the twine or string.
3. Glue leaves so that they overlap, filling the frame area.
4. Place a heavy book or object on top of the leaf mat so that they dry flat and stick together.
5. Use the needle and thread to attach each corner of the glued leaf mat to the corners of the frame.
6. Use another piece of string or twine to create a loop to hang the sun-catcher.
Honey Cinnamon Peanut Butter with Apple Slices

Makes 10 servings.

**Time Needed:** 10 minutes

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup of peanut butter
- 4 Tbsp of honey
- Cinnamon to taste
- 10 apples, cored and sliced
- Optional: ground flax seed

**Instructions:**
1. Mix the peanut butter, honey, and cinnamon together with a fork until thoroughly blended. Add ground flax seed if desired. Use as a dip for apple slices or other snacks such as pretzels or crackers.

*Ask if any participants have nut allergies before preparing this snack. Sunflower or pumpkin seed butter can be substituted for peanut butter.*
What? So What? Now What?

This module – Giving Thanks for God’s Blessings – is a very good one to end the week. This activity helps the children to reflect on everything that they’ve learned through the conversations, prayers, songs, and other activities, and to reinforce the lessons you’ve taught.

**Time Needed:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**
- Piece of paper for each child
- Crayon or pencil for each child

**Instructions:**
1. **What?** Start with asking people to write down 5 things they’ve thought about or learned, or that you discussed since you started the camp, including what sorts of things they are thankful for that they hadn’t thought about before. Ask people to share these answers with each other; make a list, and add to it if anyone thinks of anything new.
2. **So what?** Ask what difference it makes. Now that you know what you know, does it matter to you?
3. **Now what?** The group may have come up with some things that could change about their lives, their family’s lives, or your faith community through this process. Spend some time as a group talking about some possible further action everyone could take.

*Adapted from Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table Middle School Version by the Presbyterian Church USA*
Solar Oven Pizza

**Time Needed:** 90 minutes

A Pizza Box Solar Oven is a great cooking activity for kids that can help them better understand the wonderful gift that is the sun, as well as the science behind **solar energy**: the energy inherent in the sun’s powerful rays which so abundantly cover our planet Earth. The heat from the sun is trapped inside your pizza box solar oven, and it starts getting very hot. Ovens like this one are called “collector boxes,” because they collect the sunlight inside. As it sits out in the sun, your oven eventually heats up enough to melt chocolate, or cook a pizza!

How does it happen? Rays of light are coming to the earth at an angle. The foil reflects the ray and bounces it directly into the opening of the box. Once it has gone through the plastic wrap, it heats up the air that is trapped inside. The black paper absorbs the heat at the bottom of the oven, and the newspaper makes sure that the heat stays where it is, instead of escaping out the sides of the oven.

Your solar oven will reach about 200° F on a sunny day, and will take longer to heat things than a conventional oven. Although this method will take longer, it is very easy to use, and it is safe to leave alone while the energy from the sun cooks your food. You can also pre-heat your oven by setting it in direct sun for up to an hour.

The principles demonstrated are:

- **Solar Gain:** Arranging for sunlight to enter a device as a source of energy. In this case, the gain is accomplished both by reflection and direct gain. This principle also includes using dark surfaces to absorb the solar energy that enters a device.
- **Insulation:** Containing heat by trapping air inside and around a device to contain heat, and reflecting thermal radiation back into a device.

**Materials:**

- Cardboard pizza box (the kind delivered pizza comes in)
- Box knife or scissors
- Aluminum foil
- Clear tape
- Plastic wrap (a heavy-duty or freezer Ziploc bag will also work)
- Black construction paper
- Newspapers
- Ruler, or wooden spoon
- Flat pita bread, tomato sauce, cheese, vegetables, and herbs from the garden

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Solar Oven Pizza (continued)

Instructions:
1. Use a box knife or sharp scissors to cut a flap in the lid of the pizza box. Cut along three sides, leaving about an inch between the sides of the flap and the edges of the lid. Fold this flap out so that it stands up when the box lid is closed.
2. Cover the inner side of the flap with aluminum foil so that it will reflect rays from the sun. To do this, tightly wrap foil around the flap, then tape it to the back, or outer side of the flap.
3. Use clear plastic wrap to create an airtight window for sunlight to enter into the box. Do this by opening the box and taping a double layer of plastic wrap over the opening you made when you cut the flap in the lid. Leave about an inch of plastic overlap around the sides and tape each side down securely, sealing out air. If you use a plastic bag, cut out a square big enough to cover the opening, and tape one layer over the opening.
4. Line the bottom of the box with black construction paper to absorb heat. The black surface is where your food will be set to cook.
5. To insulate your oven so it holds in more heat, roll up sheets of newspaper and place them on the bottom of the box. Tape them down so that they form a border around the cooking area. The newspaper rolls should make it so the lid still closes but there is a seal inside of the box, so air can’t escape.
6. The best hours to set up your solar oven are when the sun is high overhead, from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. Take it outside to a sunny spot and adjust the flap until the most sunlight possible is reflecting off the aluminum foil and onto the plastic-covered window. Use a ruler to prop the flap at the right angle. You may want to angle the entire box by using a rolled up towel.
7. Let the students make their own pizzas with the pita, tomato sauce, cheese and veggie toppings. Try to put all the pizzas in at the same time because every time the box is opened a large amount of heat is lost. So the paper at the bottom doesn’t get dirty, put what you would like to cook on a clear plastic or glass plate. A pie plate would work well.
8. To take food out of the oven, open the lid of the pizza box, and using oven mitts or potholders, lift the glass dish out of the oven.

COMPLETE THE MEAL:
Serve with ½ cup of seasonal fruit and 1 cup of milk or milk alternative.

Adapted with permission from Home Science Tools
Photos courtesy of Liz Heinecke/KitchenPantryScientist.com
Tea Dyeing

Time Needed: 1 hour

Materials:
- Tea bags: black tea like Lipton or Tetley, green tea, hibiscus-based herbal tea like Red Zinger, or Celestial Seasonings Fruit Sampler (one tea bag per student)
- Unbleached cotton muslin cut into 3” squares (at least one square for each student)
- 8-ounce cup, 4 ounces water, stir stick

Preparation:
1. Prepare cotton muslin by cutting into 3” squares (or desired size).
2. Heat water, about half a cup for each student, until it comes to a boil, or bring water to a boil in a pot. The warm water speeds the steeping process and allows for better color saturation. A half a cup of water is recommended for each tea bag in an 8-ounce cup; more water will dilute the tea. Don't distribute boiling water to the students; the water should be tepid. The students should be instructed not to drink the tea.
3. Steep tea bags for around 5 minutes so the dye batches are ready for the students, but do not prepare too early or the tea will get cold and will not dye as well.
4. Compost used tea bags.

Instructions:
1. Discuss what herbs are and how some can be used as dyes to color fabrics.
2. Explain that you are going to dye some fabric with different types of tea. Walk the children through the vocabulary and the activity. (What is tea, dye, etc.?)
3. Ask them to make predictions about what colors might result from the tea dyeing (e.g. cranberry would be pink or red).
4. Ask the students to predict how long the squares will have to soak in the dye for the color to be absorbed. How does length of time affect how light or dark the squares come out? (You could also compare squares soaked in cold water and hot water and explain how heat energy changes the outcome, giving the dye more energy to penetrate the fabric.)
5. Dye some squares together as a class to test their predictions. (Minimum time recommended is five minutes, but optimum color saturation will occur at around 30 minutes. You may want to have some set up before class as examples.)
6. Have the students determine how long their squares will stay in the dye (i.e., one minute, five minutes, 10 minutes, an hour?).

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Tea Dyeing (continued)

Instructions (continued):
7. Have the students use a ballpoint pen to label each square with the dye used and the length of time the square will be dyed (for example, ‘G’ for green tea, and ‘10’ for 10 minutes).
8. Place cotton squares (up to 3 squares per half cup of water) into the steeped tea for desired length of time, stirring occasionally with stir sticks. Make sure each square is completely wet.
9. While the squares are dyeing, create a class chart by labeling the X-axis with the type of tea and the Y-axis with minutes (see example on next page).
10. After the designated length of time, remove the squares and evaluate color saturation. (Squares take approximately two hours to completely dry, color may lighten as they dry.)
11. Once the squares are out of the dye, stick them to the chart at the correct places. Allow time for students to explain the results and any patterns that develop. (Did length of time have an effect on depth of color? Did the teas produce the color the students expected?)

Discussion Questions:
1. Why would people want to dye fabric?
2. How do you think people learned about what plants dye fabric?
3. What is the difference between natural and synthetic/human-made?
4. How could you determine whether a plant might be a good natural dye?
5. Why are plants important to people?
6. How do you use plants every day?

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Type of Tea
Dancing the Ring Shout!
by Kim L. Siegelson

It is the last day of the harvest, and everyone at Appling Farm is preparing for the ring shout—a celebration filled with dance, song, and praise shouted out to God for the year's blessings. Everyone in Toby's family will play an instrument that speaks from their hearts directly to God's ears. Toby is finally old enough to join them in the event, but what will he bring? Sticks? A cowbell? Horse brushes? It's hard to decide, for it must feel right. And Toby's got to hurry—the ring shout starts tonight! Dancing the Ring Shout! is the first picture book honoring the longstanding ring shout tradition from West Africa and the American South.
Rainy Day Option: Garden Match-Up

On a dreary day, play this game of “Who am I?” Make your own cards based on the plants, tools, insects, or other creatures the children have already explored, or use the examples provided on the following pages. Print on cardstock or laminate to make them last multiple games. The matches can be exact, or could be related (e.g., bees and honey).

**Time needed:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**
- Matching cards created ahead of time (see pages J-15 to J-17)
- Single hole punch
- String or twine

**Instructions:**
1. Explain the rules of the game. Punch 2 holes in top corners of each matching card, and thread string/twine through them. Students should wear the cards around their necks with the card behind their backs.
2. Students must ask yes/no questions of each other to try to figure out what they are and find their match. “Am I a vegetable? Am I yellow? Am I corn?”
3. Once everyone has figured out what they are and found their match, the game is over.
4. If time allows, reshuffle the cards and play again. If some cards weren’t used in the first round, mix those new ones in so the children are less likely to know all the possible options.
Growing Faith with Food

Onions

Potatoes

Tomatoes

Cucumbers