

We Thank God

Bible Basis: Deuteronomy 16:13-15

Like their neighbors, the Israelites relied heavily on local agriculture for survival. However, unlike their neighbors, Israel enjoyed a special covenant relationship with the Lord, the Creator of all things. As part of their covenant agreement, the Lord promised to provide for the nation's needs, including their agricultural needs (see Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

Along with this promise came an annual schedule of festivals and feast days. Not surprisingly, many of these festivals were tied directly to times and seasons in the agricultural year, such as planting and harvest. The Festival of Shelters (traditionally referred to as the Feast of Tabernacles) was to mark the end of the agricultural year, when all final harvests had been gathered in (hence, in Exodus 23:16 it is called the Festival of the Final Harvest). It was one of three festivals requiring a pilgrimage to the central sanctuary to offer sacrifices (see Exodus 23:14-17).

Most of all, it was to be a time of great celebration and joy. In the midst of celebrating the provision of rain and crops, the Israelites observed a special ritual to direct attention to something even more important and worthy of celebration. They were to build boothlike huts out of branches and foliage to commemorate their living in makeshift shelters after God delivered them from slavery in Egypt (see Leviticus 23:42-43).

Believers in every generation have similar reasons to celebrate: God provides not only for the physical needs of his people, he provides a way for their salvation as well.

Four Lessons on We Thank God

| Lesson | Emphasis | Page |
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| 10 | We thank God for food and clothing. | 137 |
| 11 | We thank God for family and friends. | 151 |
| 12 | We thank God in many ways. | 165 |
| 13 | We thank God for his love. | 177 |

Parent Page

We Thank God

For the next four weeks, the toddlers and 2s class will be learning about thanking God. The children will use their five senses to discover some of the many reasons to thank God, and they'll express their thanks in different ways. Use these Parent Page ideas to help reinforce the point that we thank God.

Tips for Ts and 2s

“Thank you” to a toddler can mean anything from “I’m glad I have a cookie” to “You’re nice.” But through the sensitive modeling of parents and other loving caregivers, young children soon learn that being thankful isn’t just saying words, it’s how we feel inside. For the next few weeks, encourage family members to look for reasons to be thankful and to express their thanks often. Soon your toddler will understand that thankfulness isn’t just something “nice” to say—it’s a way of life!

Together Time

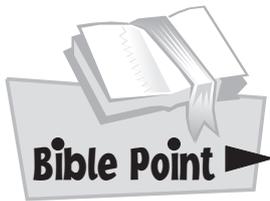
- Enjoy “together time” with your toddler outside in the beautiful fall weather. Point out things you’re thankful for, such as warm jackets to wear, bright autumn colors, and the happy crisp-crunch as you step on fallen leaves. If you live in a warmer climate, you may wish to visit the library and look through magazines with photos of autumn leaves. Remind your child that we can thank God for these special autumn gifts.
- Invite your child to help create a special autumn treat. Let your toddler spoon applesauce into small bowls, and then put a tiny dollop of butter and sprinkle cinnamon and sugar on top. Microwave your applesauce treats for one minute. What a delicious way to take the chill off crisp autumn evenings!
- Sing this action song with your toddler:

We Thank God (adapted from Psalm 107:1)

(sung to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me”)

**Thank you, God, for food and friends
And your love that never ends.
Thank you for the clothes we wear
And for church where we can share.**

**We thank God.
We thank God.
We thank God,
And we love him, too.**



Bible Point ▶

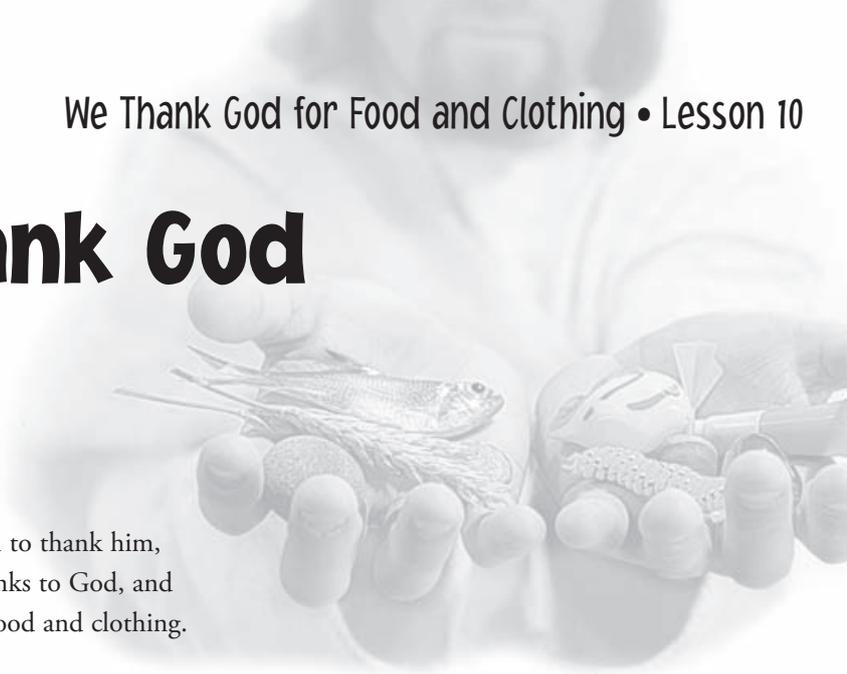
We Thank God

Bible Verse

We thank God (adapted from Psalm 107:1).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- understand that God wants them to thank him,
 - discover that people can give thanks to God, and
 - express their thanks to God for food and clothing.



Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- We thank God for food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 16:13-15



The next time you encounter someone who wrongly thinks the Bible is a stodgy book full of nothing but do's and don'ts, direct their attention to today's passage. How often today do people have a party that lasts seven whole days? The Festival of Shelters was but one such festival in Israel's sacred year. After many months of planting, tending, and harvesting the nation's food supply, it was time to celebrate. However, it was not just a time to celebrate the fact that there was food. Rather, it was a time to celebrate the One who had ultimately provided the food—God.

In our lives today, we often ask God for things. And he faithfully provides. How often, though, do we spend purposeful time thanking God for his provision? Not just a prayer of thanks, but a true celebration of the heart. How might our view of things change if we took time to truly revel in the joy of being children of the God who so faithfully meets our needs?

Even young children love to celebrate. Help them see how God's wonderful provision is a reason for them to celebrate.

Prayer

- Read Matthew 6:25-30.
- Do you tend to worry about having the things you need? Think of times God provided for your needs.
- In your spiritual life, do you take time for joyful celebration of God's blessings? In what way—big or small—might you celebrate God's blessings in your life today?
- Pray: Lord, you have given me such good gifts in Christ Jesus. You bless me beyond my recognition. Help me demonstrate to the children I teach the joy that comes from knowing you take care of us and all of our needs.

Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

| | What Children Will Do | Classroom Supplies | Learning Lab Supplies |
|--|--|---|---|
| Arrival Activities Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives. | Welcome Time —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher and Cuddles the Lamb. | Name tags (p. 8), marker, tape or safety pins, CD player |   |
| | Option 1: Stop 'n' Shop —“Shop” and “work” in a pretend grocery store. | Variety of clean, empty food containers; medium-sized boxes; grocery sacks | |
| | Option 2: Warm and Woolly —Dress up in warm outer wear. | Variety of scarves, mittens, jackets, and sweaters | |
| | Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they help clean up the room. | CD player |  |
| Bible Story Time | Bible Song —Sing a song about the Bible. | Bible, CD player |  |
| | We Thank God —Interact with sensory items on the StoryBoard as they learn about being thankful from Deuteronomy 16:13-15. | Bible, scissors, tape, napkins, apple slices, cereal loops, bowl, a mitten from Option 2 |   |
| | We Thank You, God —Sing a quiet song to thank God for the things he gives us. | CD player |  |
| Bible Activities | Paper Plate Pictures —Decorate paper plates with pretend food, and remember that God gives them good food. | Paper plates, red marker, crayons |  |
| | Interactive Bible Bulletin Board —Review the Bible Point with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together. | Food patterns (pp. 148-149), tape, scissors, markers, apple slice, light yellow paper, brown construction paper or grocery sack |  |
| | Sing It Out —Sing a quiet song to thank God for the things he gives us. | CD player |  |
| | Bible Craft —Create wearable “food.” | Food patterns (pp. 148-149), scissors, crayons, tape or rubber bands, heavy-stock paper | |
| | Bible Game —Learn an action rhyme while they dress in warm clothing. | Mittens and scarves from Option 2 | |
| Closing  | Banana Buttons —Say a prayer, and have a snack. | Bananas, napkins, knife, fruit-flavored gelatin powder | |

Arrival Activities

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: name tags (p. 8), marker, tape or safety pins, CD player



- Play “We Thank God” (adapted from Psalm 107:1) (track 15) from the *CD* as children are arriving.
- Use Cuddles the Lamb to help you greet each child by name and with a warm smile.
- Tape or pin a name tag to each child’s clothing.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► we thank God.**

Option 1: Stop ‘n’ Shop

SUPPLIES: variety of clean, empty food containers; medium-sized boxes; grocery sacks

Before class, collect a variety of empty paper or plastic food containers such as yogurt cups, cereal boxes, milk jugs, pudding boxes or cups, and juice cartons. Be sure the containers are clean.

Set out the empty food containers and several grocery sacks. Provide medium-sized boxes to use as “shopping carts.” As children arrive, invite them to set the food containers on tables and bookshelves to create a “grocery store.” Then encourage children to “shop” and take turns pushing the shopping carts. Let children bag the items in the grocery sacks.

As children play, make comments such as “I’m thankful God gives us good food to eat” and “I like lots of different foods. What foods are you thankful for?” Mention that children will hear a Bible story today about being thankful for all that God gives us and that ► we thank God.

Option 2: Warm and Woolly

SUPPLIES: variety of scarves, mittens, jackets, and sweaters

Set out a variety of warm clothing for children to try on. Include items such as soft mittens, woolly wraparound scarves, snuggly sweaters, and jackets.

Invite children to try on different articles of clothing. Circulate among the children and ask questions such as “Isn’t it nice to have warm clothes on chilly days?” and “What’s your favorite thing to wear outside?” Explain that God gives us many things to keep us healthy and warm. Tell children that ► we can thank God for clothes that help keep us warm. Mention that today’s Bible story is about thanking God for all that he gives us.

Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



As Arrival Activities draw to a close, gently mention that it will soon be time to clean up. Encourage children to help you pick up things in the room as you lead them in singing “Let’s Pick Up All Our Things” (track 2). Use the *CD* and sing the song to the tune of “Looby Loo.”



Keep the boxes used in Option 1 as you’ll use them during the next few lessons.



If you live in a warm climate, provide baseball caps and lightweight jackets or sweaters for this activity.





Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things
 And put them all away.

Everyone here can help.
 Everyone here can help.
 Everyone here can help.
 Let's put it all away.

Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things.
 It's time to stop our play.

teacher tips

It's important to say the Bible Point just as it's written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

Bible Story Time

■ Bible Song

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player

BIBLE VERSE ▶



Say: **Who do we thank for our food and clothes? ▶ We thank God. How do we know that? The Bible tells us so in Psalm 107:1. Show children the Bible. The Bible is God's special book. The Bible tells us about God and Jesus. Let's sing a song about the Bible.** Using the *CD*, lead the children in singing "God's Special Book" (track 3) to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."



This is God's special book.
 Yes, it's God's book you see!
 I learn about all God has done
 And his love for me!

(Repeat.)

Bible!

■ Bible Story: We Thank God

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors, tape, napkins, apple slices, cereal loops, bowl, a mitten from Option 2



Before class begins, prepare your StoryBoard by following the assembly instructions provided in the Learning Lab. Also cut out and assemble the two baskets using the woven basket patterns in the Learning Lab box. The purpose of the StoryBoard is to provide an interactive, sensory learning experience for your toddlers and 2s. Please attach the sensory items securely so the children can touch them without danger of pulling the items off or putting them into their mouths.



Place a folded napkin or paper towel in the bottom of each basket. Place several apple slices and cereal loops in the baskets. Have extra apple slices and cereal loops in a bowl for children to eat. (Make sure apple slices are thin so they don't present a choking hazard.) Set aside one apple slice for later in the lesson. Have children wash their hands.



If you have very young children in your class, let them simply find and touch the StoryBoard pictures and sensory items. Repeat the Bible Point often, and reinforce learning with hugs and smiles.

Panel 1



Insert the shelves on Panel 2. Set the baskets and bowl containing the apple slices and the cereal loops behind you. Place a mitten from Option 2, a Bible, and the detachable Bible and Cuddles figures beside you. Hold up the Bible and say: **Our Bible story today is about thanking God.**

Ask: • **What do you say when someone gives you something?** (Thank you; thanks.)

Say: **We say thank you when someone gives us something nice. Let's practice saying "thank you."** Hand the Bible to each child, and encourage him or her to say, "Thank you." Then set the Bible down.

Long ago God wanted his people to tell him "thank you." God wanted the people to have a special party to thank him for their food, clothes, and families. Then God said the people would be happy and he would give them even more good things. Isn't that wonderful? God gives us good things, too. Let's find some things to thank God for. Reveal Panel 1.

Ask: • **Do you see something good to eat? What is it?** (An apple.)

Say: **God gives us good food like apples.** Scratch and sniff the apple sticker. **Mmm, this apple smells good, too. Let's all smell the apple.** Have children scratch and sniff the apple sticker. ► **We thank God for apples. Let's see what else we can thank God for.**

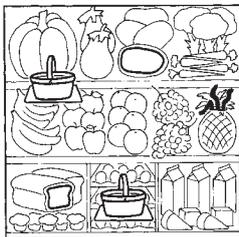
Rub your arms as if you're cold. Say: **Brrr, it looks chilly in the picture. Rub your arms and say "brrr."** Pause. **The children are wearing jackets and hats. Let's feel how soft and warm they are.**

Let children touch the jacket and the pompom on the child's hat. Hold up the mitten. Say: **Cuddly mittens keep our hands warm. Let's thank God for warm clothes. When you hold the mitten, say, "Thank you, God."** Help children pass the mitten to each other. Encourage each child to say, "Thank you, God" as he or she holds the mitten.

Then say: **God wants us to be happy and thank him for what he gives us. The people long ago thanked God for food and clothes, and ► we thank God, too. Let's see what else we're thankful for.**



Panel 2



Reveal Panel 2 of the StoryBoard. Point to the foods and say: **Look at the pretty foods in this store! Yummy! Rub your tummies to show how delicious the food looks. Let's play a game. I'll tell about a food, and you can find it on the StoryBoard.** Point to the appropriate StoryBoard food pictures as you ask the following riddles. Have children touch the pictures of the foods as each is named.

• **I'm orange and crunchy, and bunnies can munch me. What food am I?** (A carrot.)

- **I'm soft and white and make sandwiches right. What food am I?** (Bread.)
- **I grow in a bunch; I'm delicious to munch! What food am I?** (Grapes.)

Good for you! Now we can find other foods that God gives us. Help children point to the purple eggplant, the potato, the pineapple, and the orange. Then set the baskets containing the apple slices and cereal loops on the shelves on Panel 2.

Let's taste some food, shall we? When you take a snack, be sure to say, "Thank you, God." Pass around the bowl of extra fruit and cereal you prepared before class, and let children each take an apple slice and a few cereal loops. Each time a child takes a piece of food, help him or her say, "Thank you, God."

After the children have eaten their snacks, say: ► **We thank God for food. Let's see what else we can thank God for.**



BIBLE POINT ►

Panel 3



Unfold Panel 3 of the StoryBoard which shows children in a church setting.

Say: **Oh, my! Here are children just like you! They're in church with their friends. Can you smile like those boys and girls?** Pause. **They're happy to learn about God. Who can find the StoryBoard in the picture?** Have one or two children point out the StoryBoard. Then fasten the punch-out Bible to the teacher's hand. **Here's the Bible. I'm thankful that God gave us the Bible and Bible stories. Let's point**

to the Bible and say, "Thank you, God." Help children point to the Bible and say, "Thank you, God."

The teacher looks nice. We can touch his beard. Hold the StoryBoard so children can touch the beard.

Ask: • **How does the beard feel?** (Soft; tickly; nice.)

• **What are the children sitting on?** (Carpet squares; a rug.)

Say: **We can touch the carpet square.** Have children touch the square. Then say: **Do you suppose Cuddles is there, too? Let's call for Cuddles. Cuddles! We'll give our friend Cuddles a pat.** Remove the Bible and fasten the figure of Cuddles to the teacher's hand. Give each child a turn patting the Cuddles figure.

It's fun coming to church with our friends. ► We thank God for church. There are so many things we can thank God for and so many ways to thank him. Right now, let's thank God with a nice song.

■ **We Thank You, God**

SUPPLIES: CD player



Using the CD, lead the children in singing "We Thank God" (adapted from Psalm 107:1) (track 15) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." Encourage children to fold their hands while they sing.



Important: Put the StoryBoard away and out of reach of children.



BIBLE POINT ►



Thank you, God, for food and friends
And your love that never ends.
Thank you for the clothes we wear
And for church where we can share.

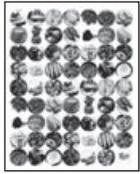
We thank God.
We thank God.
We thank God,
And we love him, too. (*Nod your head.*)

(Repeat.)

Say: It's nice to sing quiet prayer-songs to God. Singing to God is a good way to tell God "thank you." The people in the Bible story had a party to tell God thank you. We have a party on a special day called Thanksgiving. That's a good time to tell God how thankful we are for all that he gives us, especially good food! Let's make some pretend good food right now!

Bible Activities

■ Paper Plate Pictures



SUPPLIES: paper plates, red marker, crayons

Remove the *food stickers* from the Learning Lab.

Gather the children around a table. Give each child a paper plate. Set out crayons for children to share.

Ask: • **What's your favorite food to eat?** (Pizza; hot dogs; cereal.)

• **Who can you thank for good food to eat?** (God; my mommy; Daddy.)

Say: **Let's make our own pretend plates of food to help us remember that ► we thank God for our food. Pretend that the plate in front of you is your very own plate at dinner or dessert. In a minute, you can draw a picture of your favorite foods on that plate! But first, I'm going to draw a big red heart on each plate to help us remember that God gives us good food to eat and that ► we thank God for our food.**

Go around the table and use a red marker to draw a big heart on each child's plate. Then let children draw their favorite foods on the paper plates. (It's OK if only *they* can recognize what they're drawing.) Then distribute the *food stickers*, and let children use them to decorate their plates.

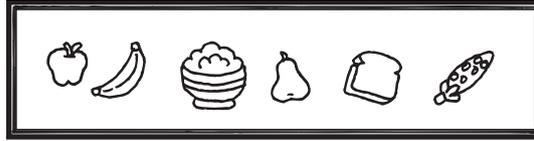
Say: **God gives us good food to eat and clothes to wear to keep us warm. ► We thank God for food and clothes and everything!**

Right now, let's put a Thanksgiving table of good food on our bulletin board.



■ Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: food patterns (pp. 148-149), tape, scissors, markers, apple slice, light yellow paper, brown construction paper or grocery sack



Before class, cover the bulletin board with light yellow paper. Cut a large rectangle from brown construction paper or a grocery sack. Tape the rectangle along the lower portion of the bulletin board for a tabletop. Photocopy the food patterns. Color and cut out a food picture for each child.

Before class, cover the bulletin board with light yellow paper. Cut a large rectangle from brown construction paper or a grocery sack. Tape the rectangle along the lower



Have an apple slice nearby. Bring out Cuddles the Lamb.

Cuddles: *(Holding his tummy and whispering to it)* Shh—don't be so loud!

Teacher: Hello, Cuddles! Who are you talking to? Who's making noise?

Cuddles: I'm talking to my tummy.

Teacher: To your *tummy*?

Cuddles: Yes, my tummy's making a lot of noise. It's saying, "Urr...urrrRRR." Listen.

Teacher: *(Listening to Cuddles' tummy)* I know what your tummy is saying, Cuddles. Your tummy is saying you're hungry!

Cuddles: I didn't eat all my breakfast this morning. Guess I *am* hungry for some good food.

Teacher: We've been learning today that ► we thank God. And we can thank God for the food we eat. Would you like to help us put some pretend food on the Thanksgiving table?

Cuddles: Yes, I like to help. And I like to eat!

Have Cuddles distribute the food pictures to the children. Help each child identify his or her food picture and tape the picture to the table on the bulletin board. Each time a child places a food picture, help him or her repeat the Bible Point.

Teacher: Here's an apple slice to thank you for helping us, Cuddles.

Cuddles: Wow, thank you all a lot! Now my tummy won't talk so much.

Teacher: It's fun to say thank you. Let's sing a song and tell God thank you for all that he gives us.

Have children tell Cuddles goodbye. Set Cuddles out of sight.

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■ Sing It Out

SUPPLIES: CD player



Using the CD, lead the children in singing “We Thank God” (adapted from Psalm 107:1) (track 15) to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” Encourage children to fold their hands while they sing.



**Thank you, God, for food and friends
And your love that never ends.
Thank you for the clothes we wear
And for church where we can share.**

**We thank God.
We thank God.
We thank God,
And we love him, too. (Nod your head.)**

(Repeat.)

Say: ► ***We thank God*** for lots of things, like food and clothes. Now let’s make something fun to wear.



■ Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: food patterns (pp. 148-149), scissors, heavy-stock paper, crayons, tape or rubber bands

Before class, photocopy the food patterns on heavy-stock paper. Cut out two food patterns for each child.

Set out crayons. Hold up the food cutouts, and let the children identify each one. Then say: **Just as God wanted the people long ago to thank him for their food, God wants us to be thankful, too. We can make “fun foods” to remind us how thankful we are for all that God gives us.**

Let each child choose two food cutouts. Invite children to use crayons to scribble-color the cutouts.

When the children have finished, attach the fun foods to the children’s shoes with rubber bands or tape. Encourage children to model their special decorations and tell each other what “foods” they’re wearing.

Say: **My, you look nice in your fun foods. But our food pictures aren’t real food, are they? ► *We thank God*** for real food and clothes because they help us. Food helps us grow healthy, and clothes keep us warm when it’s cold. Let’s play a game with warm, cuddly clothes.



■ Bible Game

SUPPLIES: mittens and scarves from Option 2

Sit with the children in a circle on the floor. Hand each child a mitten or scarf from Option 2. (If you chose not to do Option 2 or if you’re short on warm clothing items, you may want to provide clean socks for the children to wear on their hands as “mittens.”)



Most toddlers lack the motor skills necessary to hold their papers while manipulating crayons. Use newspapers during the Bible Craft to prevent stray marks on tabletop surfaces. You may also want to tape children’s papers to the table to keep them from slipping.

Say: **Let's put on our warm, cuddly scarves and mittens. Then we'll say a fun rhyme.** Lead children in the following action rhyme.

I'm as warm as I can be (*hug yourself*)
Because God gives nice clothes to me. (*Turn in a circle; then raise your arms upward.*)

After the rhyme, invite children to trade their “warm clothing” with a friend, and then repeat the rhyme. Have children switch mittens and scarves a few more times; then set the clothing aside.

Say: **I'm so glad that God takes care of us. He gives us good food to eat and clothes to wear. It's important that we thank God for all that he gives us. Now let's put on pretend “tiptoe shoes” and tiptoe to the snack table.**



Closing

■ Banana Buttons

SUPPLIES: bananas, plastic knife, napkins, fruit-flavored gelatin powder

When children have gathered at the snack table, say: **In our Bible story today we learned that God wants us to tell him “thank you.”**

Ask: • **What can we thank God for?** (Food; clothes; Mommy; Daddy.)



Say: ► **We thank God for everything! We especially thank God for Jesus. Jesus came to earth and died for us so that we could know how much God loves us. Jesus wants to be our forever friend. If we love him back, we can live with him someday in heaven. Let's thank God for all this with a prayer. Fold your hands. Pray: Dear God, thank you for all you give us. Thank you for our food and clothes. Thank you for Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Say: **We can eat banana “buttons” to remind us how thankful we are that God gives us clothes to wear.** Have children wash their hands. Hand each child a napkin with six banana slices on it. For a festive touch, sprinkle fruit-flavored gelatin powder on the slices before serving.

When children have finished, remind them to throw their napkins in the wastebasket. Be sure children wear their “fun foods” home and take their paper plate pictures with them.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Parent Page” handout (p. 136) for this module, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this module's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ *Thank You Very Much!*

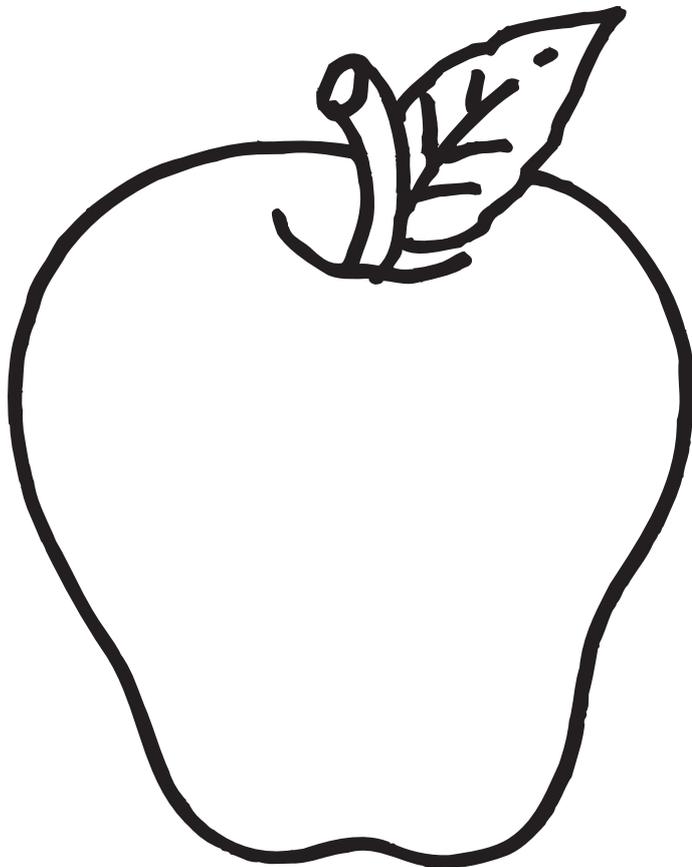
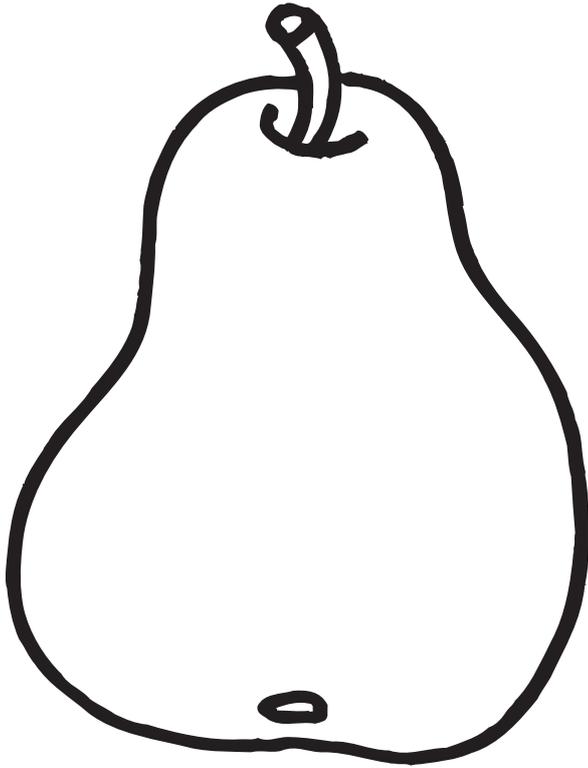
Have children spread out around the room and sit on the floor. Hand one child a toy or picture book, and then have him or her take the item to someone else. Encourage the person receiving the book or toy to say, “Thank you very much!” Then that person will take the item to another child. Continue until each child has had a chance to say, “Thank you very much” and deliver the item to someone else.

■ *Musical Dress-Up*

Use a musical CD of your choice, and let children play a game of musical dress-up using the mittens, sweaters, and scarves from Option 2. Have children form a circle and pass the clothing items around as the music plays. When the music stops, have children put on the items they’re holding and say, “Thank you!”

Patterns

Cut loosely around each pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outlines.



Patterns

Cut loosely around each pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outlines.

