

It's time to make thankful trees! Making thankful trees is so much fun! The colors get prettier and prettier as the trees get bigger and bigger. And, it feels so good to think about and write down what we're thankful for – for an entire month!

This time of year helps us refocus on all the good in our lives. And there is SO much good when it comes to God. Because God is good! Is what we want preschoolers to learn this month. God is good and we have A LOT we can thank Him for.

So, get ready to create those thankful trees and tell God, "Thank you." For all the good things He's made and done! We can't wait to celebrate thankfulness all month long! And in case you didn't know, we are very thankful for you and all that you do to help preschoolers know that God made them, God loves them, and Jesus wants to be their friend forever.

WEEK 1

Story Focus: I can thank God for good things. During week one, we will talk about how every good and perfect gift comes from God. So when our preschoolers see something good, we want them to say "Thank You, God!" Did you see a red bird on a branch? Thank You, God! Did you see a beautiful yellow flower? Thank You, God! Did you see a colorful rainbow after the rain? Thank You, God!

WEEK 2

Story Focus: I can thank God for food. Week two, we will hear the story about Elijah and a widow who only had enough food left for one small meal—that is until God showed up! God gave the widow all the food she needed. So when our preschoolers see food, we want them to say, "Thank You, God!" Mac and cheese... Mmmm... Thank You, God! Vanilla ice cream... thank You, God! Apple slices... Thank You, God!

WEEK 3

Story Focus: I can thank God for family who help me. Week three, we will see Aaron helping his brother, Moses. Moses was tired and couldn't hold his arms up anymore, but Aaron came through and saved the day—or at least saved Moses' arms. We want our preschoolers to look at their families and say, "Thank You, God!" Did big brother help you tie your shoes? Thank You, God! Did Daddy read you a book? Thank You, God! Did Grandma give you a bandage? Thank You, God!

WEEK 4

Story Focus: I can thank God for people who help me. Week four will be filled with blocks and tools as we pretend to help Nehemiah repair the wall. Nehemiah had so many people helping him, and our preschoolers have a lot of people helping them too. We want our preschoolers to see the teachers, doctors, neighbors, coaches, and grocery clerks who help them and say, "Thank You, God!"

WEEK 5

Story Focus: I can praise God because He is good. Grab your shakers for week five, because we are having a praise party! We want to lead our preschoolers in praising God, because God is good! It will be a special time when we read all of the leaves on our Thankful Trees, praise God for all He has done, and remember that God is good.

Today's Suggested Schedule—November 22, 2020, Week 4

Today's Bible Story: I can thank God for people who help me.

Nehemiah Builds a Wall • *Nehemiah 1–6*

Memory Verse: “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good.” Psalm 107:1, NIV

Key Question: Who is good?

Bottom Line: God is good.

Basic Truth: God made me.

10:30-11:00 SMALL GROUP

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Build That Wall

Pasta Building**

Community Dress-Up

11:00-11:10 Clean Up

11:10-11:30 LARGE GROUP

WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

“Special” and “Just Wanna Thank You”

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

Bible Story

Memory Verse

11:30-11:50 SMALL GROUP

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Happy to Help

People Who Help

Thank You

Prayer

11:50 Clean Up and Snack

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 minutes)

Activities that encourage preschoolers to enter the classroom and begin engaging with peers and Small Group Leaders by providing age appropriate and hands on fun while introducing new concepts they will hear in the day's Bible story.

Prepare to offer the following activities as your preschoolers arrive. Let one or two teachers lead activities in different areas of the room while another teacher greets parents and children at the door.

1. Build That Wall

What You Need: cardboard bricks

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Place a box of bricks in your activity area.

During the Activity: Encourage the children to work to build a wall around your classroom.

After the Activity: Have the children return the bricks to the box for clean-up.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: "Friends, come over here with me. Let's build a wall around the room with these bricks. You can stack them any way you want. Let's work together, because this is a big job!"

After the Activity: "Wow! What awesome builders you are. In our Bible story, we'll hear about a man who wanted to rebuild a very large wall. But he needed help! Let's find out what happened."

2. Pasta Building**

What You Need: plastic tablecloths, Play-Doh®, straws, and rigatoni pasta

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Cover the tables with tablecloths. Place a lump of Play-Doh at each spot at the table. Take a straw and stick it upright in each lump.

During the Activity: Have the children select a spot at the table. Show them how to thread a piece of pasta onto the straw. Encourage them to build onto it by adding more pasta.

After the Activity: Gather all the pasta and straws to set aside. Return all Play-Doh to containers.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “Friends, can you find a spot at the table?”

During the Activity: “Do you see the straw in the Play-Doh in front of you? Let’s add some pasta on the straw, like this. (*Demonstrate.*) You can add more pasta to keep building.”

After the Activity: “Awesome building, friends! Let’s head to Large Group to hear about another builder—but his building project was crazy big! Come on, let’s go!”

3. Community Dress-Up

What You Need: Community helper dress-up clothes such as firefighter, police officer, and mail carrier costumes, doctor coats, and any other community helper dress-up clothing

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Place all of the supplies in the activity area.

During the Activity: Encourage the children to play with and try on all of the costumes and dress-up items. Be sure each child has a turn to play with the dress-up items. Sanitize items between uses.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “Let’s be community helpers!”

During the Activity: “We have some really cool items to dress-up with!” (*Hold up Items. Do activity.*)

After the Activity: “You look awesome! Community helpers help us every day. Today, we’ll hear a story about people who help us in our Bible story!”

Transition: Move to Worship and Story by continuing to pantomime building a wall.

LARGE GROUP (20 Minutes)

WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

Play music or dance videos-“Special” and “Just Wanna Thank You”

STORY: Communicating God’s truth in engaging ways

Bible Story

Memory Verse

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect through activities that are written to reach every learning style while reinforcing the Bottom Line that was introduced during the Bible Story and applying it to real life experiences. In addition, these activities provide preschoolers with an opportunity to build relationships with their Small Group Leader.

Offer as many of the following activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow. You may want to lead one activity at a time. Or, offer two activities at once and allow half the children to participate in each. Then switch groups and repeat the activities.

4. Happy to Help –Bible Story Review

What You Need: Little People® toy house and LEGO® DUPLO® blocks

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Build a wall around the toy house with the blocks, leaving several sections without any blocks.

During the Activity: Invite the children to sit with you around the house. Pretend to be Nehemiah as you review the Bible story, and ask each child to help fix the wall by filling a section in the wall with a block.

What You Say:

During the Activity: “(Say each child’s name), I need you to help me. (Sit around the house.) Let’s pretend this house is the city where Nehemiah tried to fix the wall. I’ll pretend to be Nehemiah.

“Hey, my name is Nehemiah! I came a long way to fix the wall around our city, but I can’t do it by myself. Will you help me fix the broken wall around the city? [Child’s name], you can fix this section with these blocks. [Child’s name], you can fix this section. (Continue giving each child a section to fix.) Look! The wall is fixed! I’m so thankful God gave me people to help!”

After the Activity: “Nehemiah was thankful God sent so many people to help him. We can thank God for people who help us, too. Do you know why God gives us people to help us? Because **[Bottom Line] God is good. Who is good? [Bottom Line] God is good.**”

5. People Who Help-Activity

What You Need: Butcher paper, markers, and wall tape

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Hang the butcher paper on the wall with the wall tape. At the top of the page, write “People Who Help Me” in large block letters.

During the Activity: Gather the children to sit in front of the butcher paper and name people who help them. Write their answers on the butcher paper.

After the Activity: Reread all the things listed on the butcher paper.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “Hey, friends! I need your help. Come sit in front of this paper.”

During the Activity: “I want you to think of someone who helps you. Raise your hand. When I call on you, I want you to name someone who helps you, and I’ll write it on the paper.”

After the Activity: “Let’s see, there are a lot of people who help us! There’s *(read all the names on the list)*. Tell me, who gave us all these people to help us? *(Pause.)* Yes, God did! God gives us GOOD things like people who help us. Why? Because He is good. **Who is good? [Bottom Line] God is good.**”

6. Thank You-Craft

What You Need: “Parent Note Thanks” Activity Page, cardstock, scissors, crayons, markers, and stickers

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Copy “Parent Note Thanks” on cardstock and cut apart, one per child. Cut blank cardstock in half and fold to make a card, one per child.

During the Activity: Talk about how God gave us a lot of people in our community who help us. Encourage children to decorate a card for someone who has helped them.

After the Activity: Talk about how we can thank God for people who help us like the people who helped Nehemiah in our Bible Story today. Send a “Parent Note Thanks” and the thank you card they made home with each child.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “In our story today, we heard how God gave Nehemiah people who helped him rebuild the wall. God gives us people who help us, too.”

During the Activity: “Let’s think about people in our community who help us. *(Pause.)* Do you have a mail person who brings you mail and packages? *(Pause.)* What about a police officer? Do you have one who helps in your neighborhood by keeping you safe or directing traffic? *(Pause.)* Who else helps us in our neighborhood? *(Pause.)* Do you have a neighbor who helps you? *(Pause.)* God gives us all sorts of people who help us. Let’s make a card to thank a special helper in your neighborhood. You can use markers, crayons, and stickers. *(Pause.)* Don’t forget to write your name on it! *(Pause.)* These cards are wonderful and will definitely put a smile on their faces!”

After the Activity: “When we have people who help, we should thank them and thank God for giving these wonderful people to us. **[Bottom Line] God is good** and gives us people who help. **Who is good? [Bottom Line] God is good.**”

7. Prayer

What You Need: Paperclipped “Memory Verse Card” in your Bible at Psalm 107:1

SMALL GROUP LEADER (SGL): “It’s prayer time!

“Our Bible story today was about a man named Nehemiah. Nehemiah had a big job to do. He wanted to repair the wall that went all the way around the city! It was a very big job. Did he do it all by himself? *(Pause.)* No way! He had lots of people help him. They marched right up and got to work. Do you think Nehemiah was thankful for the people who helped him? *(Pause.)* I do, too. **[Bottom Line] God is good to give us people to help us. Who is good? [Bottom Line] God is good!**

“Having people help us is another good gift God gives us. And the Bible verse we’re learning will help us remember to thank God because **[Bottom Line] God is good!** *(Turn the pages of your Bible to the Memory Verse Card.)*

“Give thanks to the LORD for he is good, Psalm 107:1. (Close Bible and lay it down.)

“Let’s stand up and say that Bible verse together with the motions.”

CHILDREN and SGL: *“Give thanks (clap on each word) to the LORD (point up) for he is good, (two thumbs up) Psalm 107:1.” (Open hands like a book.)*

(Repeat the verse with motions a few times.)

SGL: “Right now, we’ll sit down so we can pray and talk to God.

“Today, we’ll make a list of people who help us. This could be a very long list. Doctors, teachers, grocery clerks, librarians, friends, coaches, police officers, garbage collectors, farmers . . . there are SO many people who help us! So when I say your name, I want you to tell me one person who helps you!”

(Say each child’s name.)

SGL: “Let’s use this list when we talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray?”

(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)

Prayer

SGL: “Dear God, You are so good! You give us so many people to help us. We just want to thank You for some of the people who help us like *(read the list the children made)*. And I want to thank You for *(name each child)*, because they help me every time we come to church. We love You, God. In Jesus’ name. amen.”