parenting CHRISTIAN kids

Fall 2016 – 3

Church Logo and Information

Big Life Community Church

Worship Sundays 9:15 & 10:45 AM

197 E. Washington St.
Oswego, IL 60543

www.biglifecc.org

Always Give Thanks

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To remind your children of the many reasons they have to be thankful.
2. To help your kids express their gratitude through words and deeds.
3. To help your family members appreciate one another.

Because of Thanksgiving, November is associated with gratitude. But giving thanks merits more than just a once-a-year focus. The Bible reminds Jesus' followers to be thankful at all times and "in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Even when facing hardships and challenges, we all have many God-given blessings.

God, our Creator and Provider, places many special people, including our kids, into our lives. Let children know you're grateful for them. Also remind them to show gratitude to you, to other people, and especially to God. Here are some tips for filling your home and family with heartfelt appreciation in November and beyond:

- **Model thankfulness in the little things.** Thank your kids for picking up something you drop or for being patient with a sibling.
- **Encourage the language of thankfulness.** If children neglect to show gratitude, prompt (but don't shame) them with words such as "What can you tell your friend for sharing?"
- **Give small gifts at unexpected times.** Let children know that you think of them often and that you thank God for them.
- **Affirm children's feelings of gratitude.** When kids' eyes light up, for example, say, "I can see how thankful you are for that!"

©Group Publishing, Inc., 2016

parenting CHRISTIAN kids
Group Real. Bold. Love.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Overflowing Thanks and Praise

Do this activity outside, or stand over a sink or bathtub. Fill pitchers of water and set out a variety of cups. You'll also need a large bowl.

Read aloud Psalm 23:5, NLT. Say: **God gives us so many good gifts, or blessings, that sometimes we say "our cup overflows."**

Give family members each a cup. Have them fill their cups with water and pour the water into the bowl. For each cup of water that's poured, have that person name one blessing. When the bowl overflows with water, shout, "Our cup overflows!" Continue to see how many blessings you can praise God for.

Afterward, ask: **How easy or difficult was it to think of blessings to thank God for? What was it like when the bowl overflowed with water?**

Say: **God is so good! Let's remember to overflow with thankfulness as we spill out praises to God for all his blessings**. Say a prayer of thanksgiving, and close by shouting together, "Our cup overflows!"

©Group Publishing, Inc., 2016

parenting CHRISTIAN kids
Group Real. Bold. Love.

Living Out Our Gratitude

Thankfulness is contagious. When children see parents and other adults giving thanks for all things and in all circumstances, they'll learn to do the same. Remember to thank your own kids for everything from helping you around the house to helping you grow in your own faith. Speaking of faith, be sure to highlight biblical examples of thankfulness. Scripture is full of "great gratefulness." God rescued people from danger, Jesus healed the sick from all types of infirmities, and early Christians praised God despite hardships and persecution. As you worship with your children, point out all the ways God's people give thanks. Also brainstorm creative, meaningful ways to say thanks joyfully—and to live out that gratitude by helping others.

Don't "Leaf" Anything Out! Cut out leave shapes on colorful construction paper. Then have family members write or draw people and things they're grateful for. Together, tape the stems onto string to make a festive garland filled with reminders of your gratefulness.

Cornucopia of Thanks Together, choose some items that remind your family to be thankful; for example, an apple, a toy car, a stuffed animal, a key, a school paper or drawing. Place the items in a cornucopia or basket so family members can think often about God's special blessings.

Thankfulness Makes "Sense" Serve a special snack while playing worship music and using potpourri. Then have family members use their five senses to notice some blessings they might otherwise take for granted.

Gratitude Newsflash During November, give each family member a disposable camera (or take turns using a digital or phone camera). Have them take snapshots of people or things they're thankful for—ideally when no one is looking. (Help younger children.) Come up with creative methods, such as taking a picture a person's photograph. Print the pictures and share them with one another after your family's Thanksgiving meal.

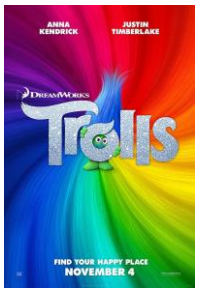
Memorable Montage Create discussion-starter place mats for your Thanksgiving meal. Have family members each select several photos (or images from magazines). Cut and arrange them on a large sheet of construction paper. Glue photos down and cover both sides with Contac paper. Then share special memories, reminisce about fun activities, and let family members know they're greatly appreciated.

Thanksgiving Countdown As the holiday approaches, take turns naming:

- Seven people outside our family who blessed you in some way.
- Six things in creation you couldn't live without.
- Five experiences our family had this year that made you happy.
- Four things you're thankful for about our family.
- Three things you're thankful for about our family's faith.
- Two things you've learned about God this year that have changed your life.
- One gift you've received this year that you're thankful for.

"Whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father."
—Colossians 3:17, NLT

MEDIA **MADNESS**



MOVIE

Title: *Trolls*
Genre: Animation, Adventure, Comedy
Rating: PG
Cast: Anna Kendrick, Zooey Deschanel, Justin Timberlake
Synopsis: In this brightly colored film, Dreamworks brings frizzy-haired troll dolls to life. The overly optimistic creatures are always singing, and the soundtrack is filled with mashups and original pop. The trolls live in fear of Bergens, monsters that eat trolls.
Our Take: The plot seems pretty typical (good guys going on a quest to save their village), and product marketing will likely be intense. But the happiness theme is a nice treat. After seeing the movie together, discuss problem solving and maintaining a positive outlook on life.

BOOK

Title: *Pax*
Author: Sara Pennypacker
Synopsis: Pennypacker, author of the popular "Clementine" series, tackles the effects of war in this book for fourth through sixth graders. Peter must give up Pax, the fox he found as a kit, now that his father is fighting in an unnamed war. Peter has to go live with his grandfather—but then treks 300 miles alone to reunite with Pax, who's been learning to survive on his own.
Our Take: This book examines war's effects on humans and animals. It's described as a sickness, much like rabies. Certain scenes might be too intense for some kids. Ultimately, Pax is interested in finding hope in a world that seems hopeless.

Games, Sites & Apps

Rocket League
In this enticing physics-based game, players in crazy cars bump a giant soccer ball. Players can earn points that unlock goodies. Although the game is rated 10+ for fantasy violence, it's not bloody or crude. Kids can play split-screen with friends or online with strangers, so monitor their usage.

DuckDuckGo
Because this search engine doesn't track or profile users, it's gaining popularity among people concerned about their privacy. Kids can still search for objectionable material, though; those searches just won't be saved. The browser is customizable, and parents can opt to turn off ads.

Sit With Us
After sitting alone at lunch for all of seventh grade, a teenager built an app that helps kids find a lunch buddy. Natalie Hampton, now 16, says the app saves students from public rejection. Users who designate themselves as ambassadors can post "open lunch" events that welcome all eaters.

©Group Publishing, Inc., 2016

parenting CHRISTIAN kids

Group Real. Bold. Love.

This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.

CULTURE & TRENDS

Wearable Artwork Girls can now bring their drawings to their closets. An entrepreneur mom founded Picture This, which transforms art into dresses. Each dress costs $49, and matching doll dresses are also available. *(picturethisclothing.com)*

Distressing Style Don't throw out your kids' beat-up tennis shoes! People are paying top dollar for new designer shoes that look distressed, complete with duct tape. Fashion experts say the shoes look "effortlessly cool." *(usatoday.com)*

QUICK **STATS**

Speak Up Only about one-fifth of parents tell teachers about a major illness, accident, death, or divorce in the family. Teachers say that communication gap prevents them from offering support to affected students. *(vitalsmarts.com)*

Bullying Battles Almost 43% of sixth graders are bullied in school. That number decreases to 36% for seventh graders. *(statisticbrain.com)*