

Chapter 4

Featured Story

Thank God for All He Has Done for You (Colossians 3:12–17)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize the importance of being thankful
- to identify Sunday as a special day to honor God
- to understand that we pray, give thanks, and praise God at Mass

Lesson at a Glance

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer
Engage Activity

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story
Core Learning Activity

Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of the Eucharist
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 4 activity booklet
- a balloon; blank pieces of paper; and crayons, pencils, or markers

Music Suggestions

- "Lord, I Thank You," by Yancy & Little Praise Party (Yancy Ministries, Inc.)
- "Thank You, Lord," by Shout Praises Kids (David C. Cook)

We Give Thanks to God



Background Focus

It has been said that a person with a grateful heart is a person who knows great joy and little sorrow. This doesn't mean that a grateful person doesn't experience sad events in his or her life. It simply means that gratitude helps a person always stay mindful of all that is good and right, even in the midst of pain and sorrow.

If you've ever met a person who is truly filled with gratitude, you know that it can be disarming. Such people challenge the fact that, too often, we get stuck on all that doesn't seem to be working well instead of all of the good that surrounds us. We're not called to blindly ignore the realities of life, but we are called to celebrate and be thankful for all of the good.

This chapter focuses on the praise and thanksgiving we offer God in our lives and, especially, in the Mass. We thank God for all of the blessings we have been given, including the gift of Jesus. Helping your child express gratitude and thankfulness prepares them for the wonderful gift of the Eucharist.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 4 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet together. Invite your child to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

Engage Activity

- Write the following on a piece of paper before starting the lesson, and cover it with another piece of paper: “What are you thankful for?”
- Give your child a blank piece of paper, and make sure that they have something to write with.
- Tell your child that you have written a question on a piece of paper, and they will have to create a list of as many things as possible that answer the question. However, they will have only 1 minute to complete the activity. The goal is to make the biggest list they can.
- Uncover the question, and encourage your child to write as quickly as they can. Tell them that spelling doesn’t count for this activity.
- Set a timer or announce the end of 1 minute, then invite your child to count how many things they have listed.
- Explain that today they will be learning about what it means to be thankful and how we show thanksgiving to God in the Mass.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Colossians 3:12–17 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1864–1865).
- Direct your child to turn the page and place an “I found it!” sticker next to the Featured Story (page 1866).
- Ask your child to look at the two main images on pages 1866–1867, and ask what they think is happening in each.
- Invite your child to read the title of the Featured Story and the verses on page 1866.
- Ask your child how many times the Featured Story mentions the words *thankful*, *thanks*, or *thanksgiving* (*three*). Explain that these Bible verses are talking about qualities that Christians—those who follow Jesus—should have, and thankfulness is an important one.
- Invite your child to share why they think we should be thankful to God.

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1867.
- Ask questions about the reading or review these key points:
 - We should thank God because he has given us everything.
 - We can say, “Thank you, God,” whenever something good happens.
 - At Mass we thank God for Jesus and all he did for us.
- Tell your child that we have a choice: to be focused on the good things that are in our life or on the bad things. Ask them which they would rather be focused on. Remind them that we can say, “Thank you, God,” throughout the day when something good happens. This will help us be grateful and see all of the good things in our lives.

Live It!

- Read Live It! on page 1867 together.
- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. Read the directions, and invite your child to check off all of the things they are grateful for.
- Ask your child to think of and write one way they can show their thankfulness, or gratitude, through an action.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1867, and remind them that we can thank God at all times.
- Invite your child to share what the images might be telling us about the different ways we can thank God.
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

Balloon Thank-Yous

Note: A balloon is used in this activity. If your child has an allergy to latex, you should skip this activity.

- Tell your child to take a minute to think of all of the things they are thankful for.
- Blow up a balloon and tie it.
- Explain to your child that you are going to play a game called “Balloon Thank-Yous.” Tell them that you are going to hit the balloon in the air. The goal is to keep the balloon up in the air as long as possible by taking turns hitting it. If the balloon touches the floor, it is out of play.
- Tell your child that each time they hit the balloon, they must say something they are thankful for, trying not to say the same thing twice. If they forget to say something, the balloon is taken out of play. They must stay in their chair at all times and can’t stand up.
- Count to three, and hit the balloon in the air. Be sure to say something you are thankful for each time you hit the balloon as well.
- Time how long it takes until the balloon goes out of play. If this happens quickly, restart play and try to beat your best time.
- Invite your child to think about ways the activity shows us how much we have to be thankful to God for. Of course, in real life, we can thank God again and again for the same things.
- Remind your child that telling God we are thankful is important, and it is also important to show our thankfulness and gratitude through our words and actions.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of the Eucharist

- Invite your child to turn to pages 2 and 3 in *The Order of the Mass and Key Words* activity booklet. Explain that the Gloria prayer is a **hymn** of praise and thanksgiving that we pray on most Sundays at Mass during the Introductory Rites. Explain that the first two lines are the song the angels sang to the shepherds when Jesus was born. Read the prayer together, introducing any vocabulary that your child might have questions about.
- Tell your child that Sunday is the Lord’s Day—a special day to honor and thank God. Continue with the following points:
 - The word *Eucharist* means “thanksgiving.”
 - During the Mass, we pray, give thanks, and praise God.
 - We thank God for all of the blessings he has given us and we thank him that Jesus is with us.
- Ask your child if they can think of any other ways we honor and praise God through our words or actions at Mass. Explain some of the following actions that express honor and praise:
 - We show respect when we **genuflect** on one knee before the altar when we enter or leave the church. (*You may wish to practice this with your child.*)
 - We stand during the reading of the Gospel to show how important it is.
 - We also praise God by singing different songs, or hymns, during the Mass.
- Ask some questions to check for comprehension:
 - Why is Sunday a special day? (*It is the Lord’s Day; it is a special day to honor and thank God for all of our blessings; we especially thank God for the gift of Jesus.*)
 - What does the word *Eucharist* mean? (*thanksgiving*)

- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. Give them a few minutes to think about and write down different gifts from God they are especially thankful for.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Ask your child to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite them to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made:
 - It is important to express our gratitude and thankfulness.
 - Sunday is a special day to honor God.
 - During the Mass, we pray, give thanks, and praise God.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 4 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Have your child turn back to the Gloria found on pages 2 and 3 of *The Order of the Mass and Key Words* booklet.
- Model simple gestures your child can use when they come to the following specific words in the prayer:
 - *Glory*: Raise arms high into the air
 - *Peace*: Hold hands over heart
 - *Praise*: Hold hands out with upturned palms
 - *Bless*: Fold hands prayerfully
 - *Adore*: Bow
 - *Glorify*: Raise arms high into the air
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross and then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray the Gloria together, adding the gestures if you wish.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson, or a sung Gloria that your parish uses at Mass.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions

For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.