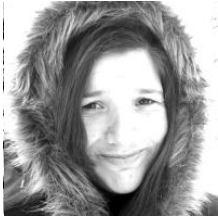


412 student ministries

MARCH 2011 PARENT NEED-TO-KNOW

...to see a generation bringing glory to God through authentic lives transformed by the Gospel!



FAMILY ACTIVITY: "ThanksBook"

Reprinted from *Real World Parents*, a ministry of *Youth Specialties*

This quick and easy exercise is a fun way for kids and parents to practice the fine art of gratitude. It couldn't be more simple, but the results are surprisingly powerful for the whole family. One of the most often heard complaints from parents about kids is that they are ungrateful. As parents, we know how much effort goes into providing for a family. Beyond the hours of work involved in generating an income to make ends meet, most parents willingly go the extra mile to give their kids the time, stuff, and foods they really enjoy. Parents like giving kids good things, right? It's not surprising, then, that it stings when our kids so obviously take what we do for them for granted, selfishly complaining about what they don't have instead of enjoying and being grateful for what we've sweated to give them.

When we're honest, we'll admit to occasionally displaying that same selfishness towards our Father in heaven, getting stuck in a rotten attitude about what we're missing in life instead of getting stuck in a delighted attitude about the avalanche of good things He's given to us. This month's activity is intended to help both parents and kids to be more intentional together about expressing our thanks to God. We're basing it on a radical belief in James 1:17: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." And we're pairing that with a radical attempt to more fully obey 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." In other words, we're convinced that every good thing in our lives—from God's forgiveness for our sins to the new Xbox game we just got to a particularly delicious ear of corn—is a gift straight from the Father to us. And we're convinced that He both enjoys and has commanded our "thank you's."

Try This

Get a journal or notebook or writing pad of some kind that can begin to serve as your "thank you" list. On the first page, consider writing the two verses listed above. Pick the time of day when most of the family is most likely to be together. That might be breakfast or dinner or bedtime. Please note, though, this is not "family devotions." Don't call it that or you might cause everyone within earshot to quickly glaze over. Instead, explain that you're going to take turns naming things you're thankful to God for, working around the table (or room) two or three times. Designate someone to write down the day's date and then list the "thank you" items under that entry. Finally, have someone read through the list and very briefly thank God for each item.

That's it. Period. Don't linger. Stop there and set the list aside until the next day. Then pick it up again and do the same thing. The real value will come in playing this little game most days over weeks and months. One rule: There are no rules about what's allowed on the list as long as it's a real thing that someone might really tell God thanks for. Our four-year-old always surprises us with things like, "salt and pepper," "manta rays," or the name of his favorite toy that day. That's just fine. The idea is to expand our thinking about all the things we can tell God "thank you" for, to let Him enjoy our gratitude for anything we can bring ourselves to take notice of. If you are able to make this a habit over a month or two, you'll start to enjoy looking back over the short lists of "thank you's" from the past. Not only will they remind you of how God is providing for you over time, they become a kind of diary of what good things were on your mind during those days and weeks.

As parents, my wife and I have found this activity extremely encouraging. Not only does it give us a proactive way to model gratitude for our family, it makes us accountable to practice intentional gratitude on the days when we'd likely avoid it. It also brings great joy to hear our son telling God thanks for things we ourselves so easily take for granted.

Name 412 Student Ministries

Location Benicia, CA

Web

<http://www.412studentministries.wordpress.com>

Bio The ministry to adolescents of New Harbor Community Church, which exists to reach students with the truth of Christ and encourage them to selflessly serve, be a part of God's family, Honor God with every part of their lives, and grow to be mature and fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.

1 following ??? followers

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RESOURCE LINKS:

Family Time... Promises, Promises (video)

<http://bit.ly/fAgK61>

Cultivating Courage in Your Kids

<http://bit.ly/h2bvzD>

Time Flies

<http://bit.ly/e8tDGI>

"Just You and Me" - The Importance of One on One Time with Your Kids

<http://bit.ly/gRMn6y>

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HEY PARENT – WELCOME TO THIS MONTH’S NEED TO

KNOW! Spring is nearly here – I can’t wait, if only for the reason that I can start wearing flip-flops again. These last two month’s have been amazing – winter camps, walking with Jesus through the Book of Mark, amazing life change and answered prayer – we have so much to be thankful for! We hope and pray that this is a useful resource, and offers opportunity for us to partner with you in the spiritual growth and maturity of your child. With that, here it is:

THIS QUARTER’S TEACHING – “IN HIS STEPS”: This last Tuesday, we reached the turning point in the Book of Mark – when Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do YOU say that I am?” This question is the turning point of the Gospel, and really the turning point in every person’s life – if we really want to follow Jesus, we have to decide for ourselves who we believe He is. I encourage you to dialog with your child about this question, and also to encourage them or even read along with them through the Book of Mark – we provide a reading plan each week. Let me know if you have any questions – we’ll be wrapping up our series at the end of April with the Resurrection.

THE PARENT SURVEY IS STILL GOING!: I would like to say a huge thank you to you parents that have taken the time to provide us with valuable feedback via our parent survey. If you’ve been meaning to fill it out but haven’t yet had the chance, it isn’t too late! You can access the survey at the following link: <http://bit.ly/hwjB1H>

THE 412 “GO” CENTER: Our GO center is up and running – we raised enough money last month to donate a water filter for a community in Haiti, and I’m excited to see what else Jesus wants to do through our little offerings! We’re asking students to bring \$1 every week, and it has been amazing already to see what God has done and is doing in the hearts of our students.

THE 30 HOUR FAMINE: We will be participating in the 30 Hour Famine again this year! This is a program organized by the Christian Aid Organization World Vision, and it is designed to cultivate personal awareness and compassion for those who are hungry around the world, as well as being acquainted with the feeling of hunger. This is an amazing experience, and we will be holding it at the church on April 1–2. We’re asking students to sign up on Tuesday night, and we’d love for you to encourage to be a part of this amazing experience! You can view a video that will tell you more about the Famine here: <http://bit.ly/e8prMQ>

THE 412 SPRING CLEANING: With the advent of Spring comes everybody’s favorite activity – spring cleaning! To make this a win-win situation, we want to take what may be your junk, but someone else’s treasure for our annual 412 Spring Cleaning garage sale, tentatively scheduled for April 16th. We will be having material drop off days at the church on April 3rd and 10th – if you might need assistance with items too large for you to personally carry, please contact Max at the church office. Thanks!

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Tweets 2

Following

THIS MONTH:

March 12th – Rock and Worship Road Show

March 22nd – Regular 412 during BUSD Spring Break

April 1st–2nd – The 30 Hour Famine

LOOKING AHEAD:

April 16th: The 412 Spring Cleaning (tentative, weather permitting)

May 20th: The 412 Road Show (Concert and Dessert Auction Fundraiser, tentative)

June 12–17: HS Summer Camp

June 18–23: MS Summer Camp