

## Today's Readings

2 Kings 5:14–17  
Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4  
2 Timothy 2:11–13  
Luke 17:11–19

## Prepare the Meeting Space

In the worship area, on a table draped with a green cloth, place:

- ☐ a Lectionary
- ☐ a battery-operated candle
- ☐ a festive houseplant or bouquet of fresh flowers
- ☐ a basket of different colored paper strips for younger children
- ☐ a basket of letters of the alphabet for older children (Scrabble® tiles would do)

## Suggested Music

See page 62 for more information.

### GATHERING:

**"Thank You Song"**  
(Seeds CD-1, Track #5)  
or **"Yes, Lord, I Believe"**  
(Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #26)

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

**"Alleluia"** (Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #24)



# Remember to Thank God

## PREPARATION

### Children's Leaflet

Have on hand copies of the Children's Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies either at the start of the session or before the children return to the assembly.



### We Pray

Lord Jesus, you give us so many blessings each day. Help us be thankful. Amen.

### The Word of God This Week

**Remember to Thank God**  
One day ten men who were all covered in sores begged Jesus to cure them. They had a terrible disease called leprosy. Jesus told them to go and the priests who could decide if the men were no longer sick. On their way, the men saw that their sores were gone. Jesus had healed them! One man went back to thank Jesus. "Weren't ten men healed? Why did only one come back to thank me?" Jesus asked.



## PREPARE WITH PRAYER

*"If we died with Christ, we will live with him. If we don't give up, we will rule with him. If we are not faithful, he will still be faithful."*

(2 TIMOTHY 2:11, 12, 13)

## Scripture Background

Thankfulness is one of the themes evident in today's readings. We see it expressed first in the Old Testament story of Naaman, a Syrian general who is cured of a dreadful skin disease through the intercession of Elisha, a Jewish prophet. After learning about the wonder-working prophet from his maidservant, at her urging Naaman sets out for the land of the Jews to seek a cure.

Today's reading begins right after Naaman has fulfilled Elisha's instructions to plunge into the Jordan River seven times. Overcome with gratitude for the healing he receives immediately following the seventh dip, Naaman wants to give the prophet a thank-you gift. Elisha rightly refuses it, however, because it was God, not he, who had accomplished the cure.

On the spot, Naaman decides to worship only the God of the Jews from that time forward. To fulfill his intention, he orders servants to dig up a large amount of earth that he can take with him back to Syria. Why such a strange command? People of his day thought that a deity could be worshiped only on the home soil of the people who claimed that deity. For Naaman to worship the God of Israel, he would need the soil of Israel beneath his feet.

The cure of ten lepers in today's Gospel offers an observation that Luke often repeats in his writings: sometimes foreigners exhibit more faith in

God than do their Jewish neighbors. Jesus and his followers are traveling from Galilee in the North to Judea in the South, through the land of Samaria, when the lepers approach and beg to be healed. The only one who returns to thank Jesus for his cure is a Samaritan, whom Jesus praises for his show of faith. The message couldn't be more clear: our faith in God is incomplete if gratitude isn't part of it.

## CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS

A television ad to promote the arts for young children delivered this simple message: a childhood without the arts is no childhood at all.

The same can be said about faith without gratitude. It is no faith at all. For one thing, ingratitude indicates a lack of spiritual imagination. It shows a person unable to see the many blessings that fill a world made by a loving Creator. How can one appreciate the Giver if one does not appreciate the gifts? Not only is ingratitude harmful to the soul, it is also harmful to heart and mind. Consider two scientific findings:

- A study conducted at the University of California in Davis found that habitually grateful people are almost always happy people, whereas the ungrateful are more likely to suffer from bouts of anxiety and depression.
- Deborah Norville, author of *Thank You Power*, reports that gratitude can improve academic performance. In one study, children instructed to spend time recalling a happy memory before learning new material later tested higher on the material than children who were not asked to think of anything in particular. "Practicing gratitude activates the dopamine receptors in the cerebral frontal cortex—the place in the brain where reasoning and logic take place," Norville told *Newsweek* magazine (October 3, 2007).

The good news is that gratitude can be learned by anyone at any age. Dr. Michael McCullough, co-author of *The Psychology of Gratitude*, is among the many experts who assure us of this, and that is why today's liturgy encourages children to make daily acts of gratitude a lifetime habit.

## More About ...

### Leprosy in the Bible

In ancient Israel, leprosy was not the same condition we know today as Hansen's disease, which covers the body with runny sores and causes loss of feeling in the extremities, as well as their eventual paralysis and disappearance. Hansen's disease is found in hot, humid places such as Hawaii.

In biblical lands, leprosy was the term used for a wide variety of skin ailments that included eczema and psoriasis. Because the Jews thought it the result of personal sin and/or demonic possession, leprosy rendered its sufferers ritually unclean. Until the condition passed, lepers were banned from towns, cities, and temple. Anyone who touched a leper or accidentally brushed up against one became unclean as well. In order to return to normal life, a leper had to be declared disease-free by a priest at the temple, then offer an animal sacrifice and be anointed with its blood.

### The Children's Leaflet

The Children's Leaflet for this week helps the children learn about gratitude and thankfulness, through a prayer, a summary of the Gospel, and a creative activity.

If you distribute the leaflet now and time permits, you may wish to read with the children the summary of the Gospel in "The Word of God This Week" after you have read the Gospel. Point out the artwork and ask the children what is happening in the picture.

## Leaflet Activity

The attitude of gratitude becomes a game for the family. Children make a doorknob hanger that reminds them daily of their blessings.



## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### Gathering

In the worship space, let the children who know how to read, draw a letter from a basket. Next, let the pre-readers draw a strip of colored paper from the other basket. Tell the readers to think of one good thing in life that begins with the letter they picked. Have them share their thoughts. Then tell the pre-readers to think of one good thing in life that comes in the color they picked. Have them share their thoughts. Conclude by explaining that today's liturgy is all about counting our blessings and remembering to thank God for them.

### Collect

**LEADER:** Invite the children to bow their heads. At the end of each prayer repeat the last three words.

Then pray: Lord, your saving power is seen everywhere on earth. Lord, have mercy.

**CHILDREN:** Lord, have mercy.

**LEADER:** Christ, you have been faithful in your love for your people. Christ, have mercy.

**CHILDREN:** Christ, have mercy.

**LEADER:** Lord, you have been our ever-present help in times of need. Lord, have mercy.

**CHILDREN:** Lord, have mercy.

Invite the children to be seated. Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

### First Reading

**LEADER:** In our First Reading, we will see what happens when a man called Naaman is cured of a horrible skin disease with the help of God. Notice how Naaman decides to thank God.

Read 2 Kings 5:14-17. Then say, "The word of the Lord."

**CHILDREN:** Thanks be to God.

### Responsorial Psalm

The psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning the psalm, sing or announce the response.

**LEADER:** The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

**CHILDREN:** The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

**LEADER:** Read Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4.

### Second Reading

**LEADER:** In our Second Reading, Saint Paul reminds us that life goes better with Christ.

Read 2 Timothy 2:11-13. Then say, "The word of the Lord."

**CHILDREN:** Thanks be to God.

### Gospel Acclamation

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Acclamation, proceed to the proclamation of the Gospel.

### Proclaim the Gospel

**LEADER:** In today's Gospel, we see Jesus cure ten men of the same terrible disease that Naaman had. Notice what Jesus says when only one healed leper comes back to thank him.

The Lord be with you.

**CHILDREN:** And with your Spirit.

**LEADER:** A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

**CHILDREN:** † Glory to you, O Lord.

**LEADER:** *Read Luke 17:11–19. Then say,  
“The Gospel of the Lord.”*

**CHILDREN:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Ask the children to be seated.*

## Homily

Ask the children what Naaman did to thank God in the First Reading. Share additional information about his story from Scripture Background.

Ask what the Samaritan did to thank Jesus in the Gospel. Remind the group that our faith is weak if it does not include giving thanks for our many blessings. In fact, we should find time every day to thank God.

Ask if the children pray before they go to bed at night. What words do they say? Ask them, from now on, to include in their night prayers a few words of thanksgiving for the day's blessings. Recall for them some of the blessings they named in today's gathering activity; these items would be good for them to include in tonight's bedtime prayers.

## Profession of Faith

**LEADER:** Please stand for the Profession of Faith and respond to each question with, “Yes, I do believe.”

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, who gives you everything that is good?

**CHILDREN:** Yes, I do believe.

**LEADER:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who loves you just as much as the Father does?

**CHILDREN:** Yes, I do believe.

**LEADER:** Do you believe in God, the Holy Spirit, who lives inside you and teaches you to be grateful for all God's blessings?

**CHILDREN:** Yes, I do believe.

**LEADER:** Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, which God created to be a community of thanks and praise?

**CHILDREN:** Yes, I do believe.

## Prayer of the Faithful

**LEADER:** Let us pray with confidence to our loving God, who has blessed us many times in the past and is always ready to bless us again. Our response to each petition will be, “Hear us, O Lord.”

That our Holy Father, our bishop, and our pastor will faithfully convey the blessings of God to all the people in their care, we pray.

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** That all the people of our parish will live lives of thanks and praise, we pray.

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** That our fellow citizens will recognize the many ways our nation is blessed and thank God by sharing what we have with others, we pray.

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** *Invite the children to pray their own petitions. Then pray:*

Heavenly Father, when your Son Jesus healed ten lepers, only one of them returned to thank him. May we always remember to be like the thankful one and turn to you in thanks and praise every time we receive a favor. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Amen.

## Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. If you haven't already done so, distribute the leaflets. Remind the children to take the leaflets home and share them with their families. Encourage them to watch this week's Gospel Reflection video and complete the Family Corner activities as a family.