

Little Thanks

By Susan Vogt



creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/

Fall harvest gives God's people a natural prompt to give thanks for the bounty of the Creator. Thanksgiving Day can be a natural extension of this, as we give thanks for all the bounty of our lives. While thanking God for amazing things that grace our lives is good, offering thanks for the seemingly inconsequential blessings of daily life can help to balance and ground our faith.

For

Adult, Couple

Season

Fall

Needed

A disposition toward thankfulness

Activity Plan

1. Over the centuries humans have tried to organize and categorize prayer, the raising of the heart and mind to God. One simple and memorable system works with the acronym ACTS.
A: Adoration / Praise
C: Contrition / Confession / Sorrow
T: Thanksgiving / Gratitude
S: Supplication / Petition

This activity focuses on the "T" (Thanksgiving). As Christians, we believe that all life has its source in God. Giving thanks acknowledges God as the Supreme Giver. Begin by pausing to remember that you are in the presence of God, the Creator, and pray:

Generous God, source of all life, we give thanks today for the big things and also the little things that grace our lives. Amen.

2. Most Christians readily acknowledge God as Creator and thank God for food, clothing, shelter, and the financial wherewithal to afford what is necessary in life. Most give thanks for favorable weather, good health, loving families, and many other wonderful things in life.

What about those small, even silly, blessings that happen every day? Becoming more aware of them, can help us balance troubles with gratitude, notice God's presence in all moments of life, or simply get out of a funk. Try the following exercises for rejoicing in small blessings:



- **Notice little blessings.**

Sit quietly for a moment and look at your hands. Thank God for the things you can feel with your hands—even pain is a reminder that you are alive. Are your hands clean? Thank God for water to wash them. If your hands are dirty, thank God for the work you were able to do that made them dirty. Continue in this way with any other part of your body.

Listen to the sounds around you. Note any sounds you haven't noticed before. Thank God for ears to hear; and if your hearing isn't too keen, thank God for hearing aids and sign language. Thank God for the sounds of nature. Marvel at how animals, birds, insects, trees, wind, and rain all make their presence known through sound. Thank God for the sounds of your home—furnace, air conditioner, creaky boards, a leaky faucet. Thank God for the sounds of people.

Look at the ground. Whether it is wood, carpet, linoleum, grass, dirt, or pavement, inspect it closely. Pay attention to the fibers in a rug, the grain of wood, the dents in your floor covering, the shape of a blade of grass, the grains of dirt, or the different kinds of weeds. Thank God for the protection an indoor floor gives your feet and the marvel of nature's floor outside. Thank God for the people whose job it is to build floors or to protect nature.

- **Notice the absence of a problem.**

What are the blessings of things that didn't happen? For example, have you ever scooted through a traffic light turning red and given thanks to God that you didn't cause an accident? Consider events such as not catching a cold before leaving on a trip, not being hurt when falling off a bike, not being late for work. This could even be a humorous family challenge to give thanks to God for the most extreme or picayune problems you've escaped. Thank God for the ability to not to take yourselves too seriously and the ability to laugh at your foibles.

