



1 Give Thanks

WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

Jesus takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it, and gives it to his followers. The communion meal is the church's meal of thanksgiving. In the words of the prayers and the taste of the bread and wine, we give thanks for God's great love, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ. We give thanks for the communion meal and all the meals we share.

- As a family, make a gratitude jar to collect things you are thankful for. Decorate the jar. Every day, each family member writes or draws a picture of something they are thankful for and places it in the jar. Choose a day to look at all that you are thankful for together. Repeat!
- Prayer can be thought of like a sandwich. Start with the top layer of bread addressing or praising God, such as "Dear God" or "Gracious God." Then add gratitude ingredients. Maybe one ingredient is peanut butter representing thanks for the food on the table or the gifts God has given. How many ingredients are on your sandwich today? Then add a condiment, a little extra for the sandwich, asking for a blessing. Maybe jelly might be helping you get out of a sticky situation. Finish the sandwich, and prayer, with another piece of bread. This is thanking God—"Thank you, God, for my many blessings"—and ending with Amen.
- Learn a new song as a way to say thanks for a meal. Watch the YouTube video "Thank You God—Thanks Giving Prayer—Cartoon Videos—Kids Tv Nursery Rhymes for Toddlers" (bit.ly/FMThankYouGod, 1:21), singing along as the tune and words become familiar.

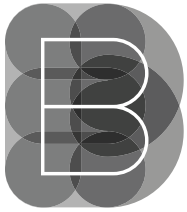
Gracious God, thank you for the meals we share and for all of the blessings you have given us. Amen.

Color in all the things you are thankful for. Below, write a prayer thanking God for these things.



Caring God, thank you for . . .

Amen.



BIBLE STORY

Based on Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus and his disciples traveled around telling people about God's love. People were interested in what Jesus was teaching and how he was helping people. More and more people followed him. One day, Jesus had been teaching and helping people all day long. It was getting late. A couple of his disciples came to him and said, "Jesus, it is dinner time. You need to send these people away so they can buy themselves dinner."

Jesus told them, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."

The disciples didn't know what to do. The crowd was very big, more than five thousand people. They told Jesus that feeding all these people would be very expensive, and they only had five loaves of bread and two fish. That was definitely not enough food.

Jesus said, "Bring the loaves of bread and fish to me."

He looked out at the crowd and invited them to sit down. Then he took the five loaves of bread and two fish, and he looked up to heaven. He blessed the food, giving thanks to God, and broke the food into pieces to share. The disciples passed out the food, and something amazing happened. Everyone ate until they were full, and there was *still* food left. So much food was leftover that the disciples filled twelve baskets with leftovers. More than five thousand people ate from those five loaves of bread and two fish.

