



November 30, 2011

THANKSGIVING

Leader Notes

Tradition holds that Moses is teaching his people how, to whom and why they should give thanks. Moses doesn't make it to the promise land with the other Israelites but he is preparing them for that day. Coming into the land that God had promised them was a seminal event and Moses is ultimately concerned with the people recognizing who gave them the gift. Moses reminds them of their history starting with Jacob. Moses reminds them that by going to Egypt Jacob's family were able to escape the famine. Moses reminds them in Egypt God's promise to Abraham that he would have a numerous descendants was fulfilled. He then reminds them that when they were under oppression God freed them. "There is much to be thankful for", says Moses, "Remember and give thanks."

Opening Prayer

Make sure you take time each week to open in prayer.

Giving God, you are generous and you have been faithful to us. We recognize your good gifts of life, love, hope, family, friendships and our group. Open our hearts, speak to us tonight as we seek to know you more and be a more thankful people. Amen.

KICKER

Leader: Have each person in your group think of a gift that they would give to the person on their right. Each person should think about what the person on their right would really want. It can be any gift. No really, anything that they can imagine can be a gift. After each person in the group has thought of the gift they would give to the person on their right, take turns and have each person share with the group what that gift is.

What was it like to be able to give the gift? What was it like to receive the gift?

Kicker Notes:

DISCUSSION

Discussion Notes:

A part of the talk tonight focused on what it must have been like for God to be able to give the perfect gift to the people.

Have you ever received the perfect gift?

There is a whole other side to gifts though. It's the response of the receiver that our focus is on tonight. The response of the receiver is usually one of giving thanks. What are some ways that you have given thanks for receiving gifts?

Have you ever received a gift and forgotten to say thank you? What did that feel like?

Have you ever received a gift and not wanted to say thank you? What did that feel like?

BIBLE

In our reading for today Moses is reminding the people that they should be a people who give thanks.

Someone read Deuteronomy 26: 1- 3
What is Moses telling the people to do?

What are the first fruits of the harvest?

Why would they have to use the first fruits of the harvest?

Someone read Deuteronomy 26: 4 – 10
What is Moses telling the people to do?

Why does Moses tell them recite history?

We talk about God as the perfect gift giver. What gifts has God given to you? (You may need to do what Moses told the people to do. You may need to recite your history as well.)

Someone read Deuteronomy 26: 11 – 12
What is Moses telling the people to do?

There are two different groups of people that are affected by the Israelites giving thanks. Who are these groups? (Trick question: The second group is a collection of 4 different groups.)

Bible Notes:

CRUNCH

CRUNCH NOTES:

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Have you ever wondered why we should give thanks to God? I mean really. Does God need our thanks?

I understand that we should give thanks to our grandma or someone who has given us a gift because they really do want and need our thanks. I can remember a time when I forgot to give my grandma a thank you card one year and the next year I didn't get a gift. Kinda brutal but does God work that way?

Reflect back on the scripture. Who benefits by the people giving thanks to God?

SO WHAT

So What Notes:

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We are in a season when people are buying gifts galore. Many of us are searching for that perfect gift. Well, what if that perfect gift was our thanks?

What if we took Moses's instructions seriously and gave thanks to God as our perfect gift.

What would that look like?

Who could benefit by our thanks giving?

How could the world be different if all of us took Moses seriously?